



POLICY ON TEACHING BY GRADUATE STUDENTS

Teaching requirement

MCB graduate students are not required to serve as teaching assistants during their first year. As an integral part of Ph.D. level training in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, however, all MCB graduate students are required to complete the equivalent of two semesters of service as teaching assistants in MCB courses. One semester of this teaching experience will normally be in a laboratory course and one in a lecture course; each semester of service should correspond, in terms of the effort required, to the equivalent of a 50% Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) position (see "Workload" below). The Department feels that such teaching experience is critical for solidifying the student's basic understanding of the primary foundations of the disciplinary fields in MCB. This Departmental teaching requirement is normally fulfilled during one semester of the second year and one semester of the third year. To document completion of the teaching requirement, students will enroll in MCB 380 when they are teaching and they must receive a passing grade (see "Evaluation" below). MCB students receive direct compensation (GSI salary) for teaching service only as necessary to bring their total annual financial support to the set MCB standard (see "Remuneration" below). Recently the Department approved the opportunity for teaching a third time for MCB students interested in increasing their teaching experience. In return, the GSI will: 1) receive \$500 on top of the usual stipend for the semester in which s/he teaches, and 2) if s/he needs an extension beyond December 31 of the 6th year for completion of the experiments toward the Ph.D. degree, the extension will be automatically granted; this would not cost the Thesis Mentor any extra funds since during the third semester of teaching the stipend would come from GSI funds, not from the Mentor's grant. Approval of the full membership of the student's Thesis Guidance Committee will be required.

Appointment and selection procedures

The bulk of the teaching assignments are made in May of the prior academic year. Priority for teaching assignments in MCB courses is given to MCB students in their second or third year who have not completed their teaching requirement. In the late spring, the MCB Graduate Affairs Office (GAO) sends a questionnaire to those MCB students who are eligible for teaching service. On this form, students can list any relevant experience, areas of interest and expertise, and preferences for teaching in specific courses to be offered the following year. After this information is collected, it is given to the Divisional GSI Advisor (a listing of the current Divisional GSI Advisors is appended to this policy statement). All eligible MCB students will be tentatively placed based on projected needs for teaching assistants in the various courses to be taught by the MCB Department. Second-year students shall not be required to perform TA service in the semester in which they will be taking their oral qualifying examination, unless the student specifically indicates a willingness to do so. All instructors and teaching assistants will be notified by the GAO of their tentative assignments for the next academic year during the preceding summer. All teaching assistants will be supplied with a copy of the MCB Policy on Teaching by Graduate Students by the GAO. Prior to the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, when pre-enrollment figures are available, the Divisional GSI Advisor, in consultation with the GAO, will make any necessary adjustments in teaching assignments in order to ensure maximum uniformity in the undergraduate/teaching assistant ratio in each Departmental course.

If any vacant teaching assistant positions remain, the Divisional GSI Advisor, with the assistance of the GAO, will recruit qualified graduate students from other departments or Graduate Groups. To assist with this recruitment process, any vacant teaching assistant positions must be listed at the Campus Career Planning and Placement Center. It is the responsibility of the Divisional GSI Advisor to specify in these listings the minimum qualifications for any vacant teaching assistant position.

Foreign students must demonstrate their proficiency in spoken English before being assigned to a teaching position. Information on how to fulfill this requirement for a satisfactory demonstration of English proficiency is available in the MCB GAO.

Workload

According to the guidelines set forth by the Graduate Division, the amount of time necessary to fulfill the duties of a 50% GSI position should not exceed an average of 20 hours per week for the duration of the semester. The scope of work for lecture and laboratory courses is summarized below.

Lecture courses: The optimum ratio of students-to-50% GSI position in lecture courses has been set at 50 by the College of Letters and Science. However, due to limitations of both GSI funds and the number of available graduate students, the ratio of undergraduates per TA in MCB courses recently has been more like 75-80. To compensate for this situation, the number of paid Readers available to assist TAs with grading of examinations, problem sets, etc. has been significantly increased and the format of courses has been significantly altered. Nonetheless, each 50% GSI is expected to: attend all lectures; lead two weekly discussion sections (maximum of 40 students); hold office hours; and, assist the instructor as necessary with audio-visual aids, grading, proctoring exams with faculty, and the preparation and distribution of handouts and exams. Graduate students are not permitted to

deliver regularly scheduled lectures in MCB courses, except when the responsible faculty instructor is unavailable due to a medical emergency or another unforeseen circumstance.

Laboratory courses: The MCB Department strives to maintain a ratio of between 12 and 15 students per 50% GSI in laboratory courses. In laboratory courses that meet two afternoons per week, teaching assistants serve throughout the semester, i.e. for 15 weeks. In laboratory courses that meet three afternoons per week, teaching assistants serve for a total of 10 weeks during the semester. GSIs should attend lab lectures, supervise undergraduates, follow specific guidelines of instructor for each lab course. Perform technical demos of specific procedures, grade lab reports, hold office hours of at least 1 hr./wk., and proctor exams with faculty.

Bio1A: Teaching service in the MCB-sponsored Bio1A course involves leading both a discussion section and a laboratory section, and may fulfill either the lecture course or laboratory course teaching requirement.

Remuneration

All MCB students are guaranteed support throughout the normal period of graduate training at the set MCB stipend level, as specified in detail in the "MCB Graduate Student Funding and Time-to-Degree" policy statement. As discussed above (see "Teaching Requirement"), service as a teaching assistant in two courses is an essential element of the graduate training program in MCB and is required for the Ph.D., regardless of the source of funding for the student. Consequently, during their periods of teaching, MCB students who are appointed as GSIs receive no additional salary above the set MCB stipend, and receive GSI salary funds only if this payment is necessary to bring their total monthly support to the level of the set MCB stipend. Note that the Graduate Division requires that students who are not paid directly for GSI service sign a statement indicating their understanding of and agreement with the MCB funding policy.

Non-MCB students who are appointed as teaching assistants in MCB courses will be remunerated for the services they render strictly according to the guidelines established by the Graduate Division.

Training and supervision

All MCB teaching assistants work under the direction of a regular faculty member. Hence, course-specific training and supervision is provided by the instructors of record in the courses to which teaching assistants are assigned. This training typically takes place in the form of weekly (or more frequent) "TA Meetings". The MCB-sponsored Bio1A course has, in addition to the regular faculty instructors, an Academic Coordinator who trains and supervises teaching assistants in this course.

During orientation week in August, all entering graduate students in MCB receive laboratory safety training from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, which is relevant to their service as teaching assistants in laboratory courses as well as to their own dissertation research.

MCB students are strongly encouraged to attend the campus-wide GSI training conference sponsored by the Graduate Division Office of GSI Training prior to their first teaching assignment. They are also encouraged to attend the Graduate Assembly GSI training conference. Both of these events are usually held in late August. In addition, throughout the academic year the Graduate Division Office of GSI Training offers a number of informal workshops that all teaching assistants on campus are welcome to attend.

Evaluation process

MCB students who serve as teaching assistants in MCB courses will be evaluated both by the faculty instructor(s) and by the undergraduates enrolled in the same course.

All MCB students serving as teaching assistants enroll in the appropriate section of the course MCB 380 (there is one section for each Division) in order to document the fulfillment of their two semesters of teaching service. MCB 380 is graded S/U, and the grade will be assigned on the basis of a written evaluation of each teaching assistant that is provided at the end of the semester by the course instructors. A sample evaluation form is attached.

Student evaluations of teaching assistant performance also will be collected by each Division from students enrolled in the course both at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Mid-semester teaching evaluations are not kept on file; they are sent directly to the teaching assistants so that they can make use of this feedback before the course is over. Final teaching evaluations are forwarded by the Division to the Graduate Affairs Office, where they are kept on file and made available for individual GSIs to review. Sample evaluation forms for MCB courses are available in the Graduate Affairs Office. Non-MCB students who serve as teaching assistants in MCB courses will also be evaluated both by the faculty instructor(s) and by the undergraduates enrolled in the same course. These evaluations will be taken into account in considering requests for re-appointment of a non-MCB student as a teaching assistant.

Each year in March, the Divisions will nominate a specified number of teaching assistants for the University's Outstanding GSI Award. These nominations are normally based primarily on the outcome of the student evaluations. The bestowing of Outstanding GSI Awards will be conducted in a prominent forum (e.g., at Divisional Asilomar retreats) to emphasize their importance.

Grievance procedures

Grievances concerning assignments to specific courses should be referred to the appropriate Divisional GSI Advisor. Grievances concerning workload, working conditions, or relations with students, co-instructors (faculty or graduate students or staff) should be resolved between the student and the instructor, if at all possible. If necessary, unresolved grievances of this nature should be referred to the Divisional GSI Advisor. If a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved by the Divisional GSI Advisor, the Division Head will appoint an ad hoc committee to resolve the issue. The final board of appeal in the MCB Department for resolution of teaching assistant grievances lies with the MCB Graduate Affairs Committee. However, MCB students should feel free to utilize other avenues and procedures established by the University for the resolution of student grievances.