

## Best Practices for GSI – Faculty Relations

The Department of Philosophy supports the following best practices regarding GSIs in sectioned classes.

### 1. Lectures by GSIs

GSIs may lecture for 2 reasons: as a learning experience, and to fill in for a sick or absent professor. GSIs may offer to lecture or may accept an invitation to lecture. When invited or requested to lecture, GSIs are free to decline. In any event, GSIs should only lecture infrequently.

When a GSI is filling in for a sick or absent professor, the GSI shall be paid. In cases of anticipated absences, when a professor requests a GSI to lecture, the request should be made at least one week in advance. GSIs who agree to lecture under these circumstances should be informed in detail what subjects are to be covered, and lecture materials -- notes and/or slides -- should be provided.

Professors should not themselves ask GSIs to lecture with less than one week's notice. Arrangements with less warning should be made through the Department Chair or the GSI Committee Chair. Care should be taken not to pressure GSIs to lecture under these circumstances, and every effort should be made to provide full and adequate lecture materials.

When a GSI gives a lecture as a learning experience, the GSI may be paid, but only on an *ad hoc* basis as authorized by the Chair. In such cases, the professor should attend the lecture, to provide feedback and, if appropriate, offer to write a letter or notes for the GSI's teaching dossier.

### 2. Regular communications about class content

Soon after GSIs are selected for a course, professors should determine whether any GSIs are unfamiliar with the course content, should provide any such GSIs with a draft syllabus, and work out a preparation program for the course.

No less than two weeks before a course, all GSIs should be provided with a syllabus. In courses where sections are expected to be closely linked to lectures, GSIs who teach sections on the same day after a course meeting should be informed at least 24 hours in advance about the content of a lecture.

In cases where a professor has taught the same class before, with substantially similar content, GSIs should be provided with access to the CTools sites for earlier versions of the course.

### 3. Grading

By LSA regulations, the lead instructor has final grading authority. However, the Philosophy Department recognizes the importance of GSI autonomy in assigning grades. Students with complaints about grades should ordinarily be encouraged to discuss the situation with the GSI first. If instead they approach the lead instructor, they will ordinarily be directed to the GSI. However, in special circumstance the lead instructor may decide to consider the complaint themselves. For details about departmental grading grievance procedure, see [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/facstaff/saa/grade grievance/philosophydepartment\\_ci](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/facstaff/saa/grade grievance/philosophydepartment_ci).

Lead instructors should publicize policies regarding the treatment of academic dishonesty at the beginning of the term. GSIs should bring suspected cases of academic dishonesty and abusive behavior to the lead instructor for consultation. Special LSA regulations apply to such cases, and raise difficulties that require consultation.

In general, GSIs should grade all and only the work of students in their sections. However, other arrangements are permissible provided they don't increase the GSI's total workload. (For example, instead of having every instructor grade their own students' exams, it might be better for each instructor to grade X questions for all of the students in the course.) To ensure that the proposed arrangement is fair, the GSI should always be given the option--sincerely and without pressure--to decline the new arrangement and instead grade only the assignments of students in their sections.

The practice of asking GSIs to provide sample A, B, C, has been seen by many GSIs as inefficient and often unhelpful. Sending GSIs samples of A, B, C, ... papers, is appropriate and can be helpful.

Attempts to ensure uniform grading practices are appropriate. But practices for doing this should be negotiated in advance between the professors and GSIs, at the outset of the course.

### 4. Professor-GSI meetings

Frequent meetings between GSIs and professors throughout the term are usually unnecessary. There should, however, be a meeting prior to the beginning of the course. At that meeting, the professor and GSIs should agree on how often to meet, and how to address specific concerns as they arise.

### 5. GSI work hours

When GSIs find themselves devoting more than the expected maximum weekly time (normally 20 hours) to GSI duties, except in very exceptional weeks, this is a situation that needs to be corrected and that should be brought to the attention of the GSI mentor and the GSI Chair.

### 6. Students with special needs

Course syllabi should state that students must submit documentation of any special accommodations they need to an instructor by a specified date. That date should give ample time to make necessary arrangements before the first exam or assignment. Lead instructors in large courses should try to consolidate special examination sessions, to minimize the need for many proctored sessions.