

Teaching Assistant Assignment Policy

Rationale

Department of Biology graduate students are guaranteed funding for the first five years of their studies through a combination of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and fellowships assuming the student consistently fulfills the responsibilities of said position and that they are making adequate academic progress.

In addition students within the first five years of study, the Department acknowledges that some students may require additional time to complete their degree, and has a strong interest in the continued support of these students. The following policy will guide the assignment of Department of Biology Teaching Assistant (TA) positions.

Assignment Process Guidelines

1. If a Biology doctoral student requests a TA position and falls within *all of the following categories*, the student will be guaranteed a TA position for the quarter in question:
 - a. The student is within the first five years of their PhD program*.
 - b. The student has not received a combined total of two or more unsatisfactory TA performance evaluations or unsatisfactory academic progress reports.
 - c. The student does not have an available and accessible externally funded fellowship (ex: NSF while on tenure, IGERT, etc.). Research Assistant quarters or departmental award quarters do not qualify as an “externally funded fellowship” for these purposes.
 - d. The student is in good academic standing with the program and University.
2. If one or more of the items above *did not* apply to the student in question, the student will be placed on the TA assignment wait list.
 - a. Students on the wait list will be ranked based on the following criteria, with a higher score meaning lower priority on the wait list:
 - i. Year in the program, with lower priority given to more advanced students (.25 point for every quarter past five years).
 - ii. Student’s progress in the program as evaluated by annual committee reports and meeting departmental milestones (ex: creating a committee, taking general exam) (1 point for each missed milestone or report[†]).
 - iii. Number of unsatisfactory TA performance evaluations or unsatisfactory academic progress reports (1 point for each unsatisfactory evaluation/report).
 - b. Additional information that will be considered when assigning positions from the wait list include:
 - i. Instructor preference for a specific student TA.
 - ii. Content area knowledge in available course sections and curricular/pedagogical needs.
 - iii. Past excellence in teaching (e.g., department or university award in teaching)
 - iv. Other available and accessible externally funded fellowships ex: NSF while on tenure, IGERT, etc.). Research Assistant quarters or departmental award quarters do not qualify as an “externally funded fellowship” for these purposes.
 - v. Evidence of effort to generate financial support for student’s research.

* Time on leave (for health or family reasons) will not count towards the 5 year total for purposes of this policy.

[†] Missed annual committee reports before the 2015-2016 academic year will not count towards the point total.

- vi. Service within, or on behalf of, the department throughout the duration of the student's tenure with the department.
 - vii. Immigration status (e.g., where visa is contingent on employment at UW)
 - c. Students on academic probation or final probation are automatically placed as lowest priority on the waitlist. The supervisory committee of a student on probation/final probation will be consulted as to whether or not a TA position is appropriate for the student.
- 3. Effort will be made to accommodate students with higher priority (lower scores), though flexibility is required due to the nature of the curricular/pedagogical needs of the Department.
 - a. To facilitate this preference, instructors with available positions after the initial assignment period will be contacted with the ranked list and asked to consider the higher priority candidates. Exceptions to the ranked list will be made based on reasonable requests and based on the "additional information" above.
- 4. Students on the wait list will be notified via email after the preference period has closed.
 - a. Students have the ability to request their point score, how it was calculated, and to know where they stand on the list.