

English Department Guidelines for Mentoring GTAs in Teaching

Qualified Ph.D. students who are graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) may, as part of their responsibilities as a GTA, be mentored by an experienced professor who is teaching a second-year literature course or a junior/senior-level course in a specialization. The GTA Mentoring experience for the GTAs entails attending each class meeting of the course being taught by the mentoring professor; participating in discussion of teaching methods with the professor; limited evaluation of homework, quizzes, papers, and examinations; teaching three to five class sessions; developing a complete syllabus for their own courses; developing lesson plans for their own courses; and contributing to the development of examinations for the mentored courses. At the end of the mentoring semester, each GTA will present to the mentoring professor a portfolio comprised of a complete syllabus, five to ten detailed lesson plans, and a statement of teaching philosophy. The mentoring professor will sign off on the Mentoring Form attesting to the readiness of the GTA to teach a solo course in the specified area. If the GTA has been mentored in a 2020 or 2030 course and would like to teach the course subsequently, the portfolio will be submitted to the department's Director of General Education. All portfolios will be submitted electronically to the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

While each individual faculty mentor may vary some of what s/he requires from the mentored GTA, the following guidelines should serve as a general structure for the mentoring.

- The GTA should read the assignments and sit in on the mentor's class in order to observe how the class progresses and to maintain a clear perception of the development of ideas and demands upon the students and the professor over the course of the semester.
- The mentoring professor should meet regularly with the GTA being mentored to reflect upon the class meetings and answer any questions.
- The GTA should be given the opportunity to teach at least three, but no more than five, classes in the course during the semester.
- The GTA should be actively involved on a limited basis in evaluating or responding to essays and other graded work over the course of the semester. For instance, the GTA might grade a duplicate set of papers or exams and compare the grades s/he would have assigned with those assigned by the mentoring professor. If the GTA is a seasoned and experienced teacher, then s/he might be entrusted with grading a set of papers or exams, particularly if the papers or exams cover a unit taught by the GTA. The mentoring professor will need to review and approve the GTA's grading in order to insure that consistent standards are being applied.
- By the end of the semester, the GTA should produce a detailed working syllabus, including outlines of five to ten lesson plans for her/his own course.
- Also by the end of the semester, the GTA should produce a statement of teaching philosophy deriving from what was observed in light of the GTA's perception of effectiveness and the effect of the observation semester on his/her own teaching philosophy and style.

Required Portfolio Components:

- Complete syllabus
- Five to ten lesson plans for the syllabus
- Statement of Teaching Philosophy
- Signed Mentoring Form on preparedness to teach in the specialized area

Qualifications of Ph.D. Graduate Teaching Assistants for Mentoring:

- Completed at least one year in the Ph.D. program at MTSU
- Satisfactory completion of previously assigned program-related duties

Benefit to the GTA:

- Preparedness to teach the subject matter of the course
- Insight, ideas, and perspective on teaching multiple courses
- Development of syllabi that may be used when applying for jobs
- Development of a teaching philosophy
- Opportunity to work closely with a professor in the GTA's area(s) of specialization
- Cultivation of a potential reference for grant and job applications

Benefit to the Mentoring Faculty

- Fulfillment of mentoring activity that may be listed in Digital Measures
- Preparing students in specialization for greater competitiveness in job searches
- Assistance in teaching and grading of the course
- Gaining insight, ideas, and perspective through discussion with the GTA being mentored
- Opportunity to participate in an activity of mutual benefit to the pedagogical practices of GTA and mentor

Mentoring Form

Name of GTA: _____ M-number: _____

Mentoring Professor: _____

Course: _____ Course title: _____

Semester: _____

Mentor's Evaluation

Class attendance:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Grading:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Syllabus:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Lesson plans:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching Philosophy	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Comments (Optional)

Mentor

Date