

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Divisional Policies for Funding of Graduate Students in the Department of Psychology

Graduate students receive financial support through the Department of Psychology from a variety of sources, including teaching assistantships, research assistantships, traineeships (training grants), internships, and University Fellowships as well as support from non-Departmental sources within and outside the University. The amount of money associated with each of these forms of support varies, as do arrangements concerning waivers of tuition and fees. In general, admissions of new students to the Department are determined by student/faculty ratios and availability of support within each of the four Department's divisions. Graduate student enrollment in each division attempts to reflect the available funding policy of each of the four divisions.

Graduate Student Funding Policy, Division I - Physiological - Division I presently admits all new students with funding for the first year. Wherever possible, this division shall continue the support for 4 years (3 years when the student enters with a master's degree). In those infrequent instances where incoming students do not want university support (as when students have extramural predoctoral fellowships or independent resources), students may be admitted without funding. If circumstances preclude full funding for students in years 2-4, then the current policy will be reviewed.

Graduate Student Funding Policy, Division II (Cognitive and Developmental) - Division II presently admits all new students with funding for the first year. Wherever possible, this division shall continue the support for 4 years (3 years when the student enters with a master's degree). In those infrequent instances where incoming students do not want university support (as when students have extramural predoctoral fellowships or independent resources), students may be admitted without funding. If circumstances preclude full funding for students in years 2-4, then the current policy, as described below, will be reviewed.

1. The policy of Division II is to fully fund students within the program before admitting new students with funds. Such funding is for a four year period for students who enter without a Master's degree in psychology, and for a three-year period for students entering with a Master's degree.

2. If, at any time, available funds fall short of those needed to cover the students in the program, they will be divided equally among the students.

3. Ordinarily TAs, traineeships, and any other sources of Departmental funding will be shared in proportion to the number of faculty in each of the two areas (cognitive and developmental) in the Division. We recognize, however, that one area might have sufficient funding (including RAs) to fund several new students while another area might have insufficient funds to cover its current group of graduate students. In such cases, Departmental funds will be shifted from the first area to the second. In short, in accord with (1) above, students anywhere in the Division must be funded before any area admits new students.

4. Students will be admitted only if we estimate that we have sufficient funds for them during the next four years, unless the student does not want funds, as occasionally happens.

5. Division II reserves the right to allocate funding slots available to the division to students beyond the fourth year. Decisions about funding students beyond the fourth year will be made by each Area on the basis of such criteria as good standing and performance in the program and what would be accomplished.

Graduate Student Funding Policy, Division III (Social Psychology) - Division III attempts to admit all new students with funding for the first year, and to continue support for four years (three years when entering with a Master's degree in psychology). In those unusual instances when incoming students do not want support, students may be admitted without funding. The division is committed to the policy of fully funding students already in the program before admitting new students with funds. Students will be admitted only if the division estimates that sufficient funds exist for them during the next four years. If, at any time, available funds fall short of those needed to cover the students in the program, students and faculty in the program will meet to discuss distribution of funds. It is likely that funds will be divided equally among present graduate students.

Graduate Student Funding Policy, Division IV - Division IV has access to a variety of funding sources, including teaching assistantships from the Psychology Department and the PSC; research assistantships from individual faculty grants and from community service agencies (e.g., Baystate Medical Center); fellowships from the University and from outside agencies (e.g., Ford Foundation); and practicum stipends offered by various community agencies. For the past few years, any student who has wanted funding has been able to get it, at least at the level to qualify for a tuition waiver.

Division IV allots funding in the following way. First and second year students are funded with Departmental TAs, University fellowships, and RAs. Third and fourth year students are funded with PSC TAs, RAs, practicum stipends and any remaining Department TAs. Fifth year students who are not on internship are funded through practicum stipends and RAs.

Students are asked to complete an F.A.F. form as an indication of financial need. In years when funding opportunities are low, financial need will be an essential factor in determining the allotment of funds.

Requests for and Deciding Who Receives Teaching Assistantships

Virtually all funding available to the department is used to meet the Divisional policies for support of students. Students who do not have funding through alternative means are eligible for teaching assistantships. Students who are interested in TAs are requested to make that information known to Division Heads. Division Heads, based on the above policies, then prioritize those who are eligible for TAs. He or she informs the Graduate Program Director of those students in need of support. The number of TAs available to each division is determined by the proportion of faculty associated with each Division.

Graduate students within the Department of Psychology are informed about which courses are expected to have TAs in May for the Fall Semester and in November for the Spring semester. At that time they are also asked to indicate their preferences for assistantships in specific courses. The faculty teaching a course in which an assistantship is available may also submit requests for specific graduate students to assist in their course as a TA. The Graduate Program Director uses these preferences and requests, along with other information about a student's background that may make them especially suitable for certain kinds of courses, in assigning TAs. A tentative list of assignments for TAs is distributed to graduate students and faculty for the upcoming semester, typically in December and June. Adjustments and changes to this preliminary list are then made as needed and as resources dictate up until the start of the semester.

Because funding is a major determinant of the number of students accepted into the Department's graduate program, it is extremely rare to have other than psychology students funded by a departmental Teaching Assistantship. The one exception involves graduate students enrolled in the Neuroscience and Behavior Program (NSB). Because many of the Department's faculty, particularly those in Division I, accept students through the NSB program, those students are also provided with information about availability of TAs via that program's Director.

Completion of TA Commitment

Teaching assistantships benefit both the recipient and the Department. Acceptance of one of these forms of graduate student support is regarded as a contractual agreement. The nature of this agreement is as follows:

1. Once a TA has accepted an assistantship, he/she is expected to complete his/her assigned duties. Faculty supervisors are responsible for informing TAs about these duties. TAs should be available from the beginning to the end of each semester, and not just during the period that classes are in session. Late arrivals or early departures must have faculty supervisor approval.

2. Acceptance of a TA obligates the student for the entire period of appointment. Early termination of an assistantship by the recipient requires approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

3. Normally, few, if any, problems arise in the performance of TA duties. However, if either a TA is thought to be performing unsatisfactorily or an instructor is believed to be treating a TA unfairly, the first level of resolution resides with the Director of Graduate Studies. If the problem cannot be resolved by the Director, the second level of resolution is with the Division which accepted the student. The Evaluation Committee (composed of Division Heads, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair) is the final level of resolution. Failures to perform appropriate duties may justify withdrawal of future Department funding, withdrawal of eligibility for Continuing Education assignments, and other actions.

Policy Regarding Teaching of Continuing Education Courses

Qualifications and Criteria for Selecting Instructors - Those who wish to teach CE Psychology courses must have a Master's Degree in Psychology, or equivalent, and teaching experience.

Hiring decisions are made by the Department Chair, after consultation with the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Such decisions are based on the strength of applicants' letters of recommendation, overall tone of recent course evaluations, quality of syllabus, and suitability for teaching the specified course. Those who are offered CE teaching positions are asked to sign a contract with the Psychology Department within ten days. Anyone who signs such a contract and then withdraws from the commitment receives the lowest priority for any subsequent CE Psychology courses.

If more than one qualified individual wishes to teach a particular course, assignments will be based on the priority system established by the Department.

Priorities for assigning Fall and Spring Continuing Education positions:

- a. First through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience who accept a position as primary source of funding.
- b. Fifth year students with a completed comps and an approved dissertation proposal and teaching experience who accept a position as primary funding. Re-specialization students who accept a position as primary source of funding.
- c. First assignment (based on a calendar year) for faculty.
- d. First assignment for first through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience who already have regular stipend.
- e. Second assignment for faculty.
- f. Second assignment for first through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience who already have regular stipend.
- g. Graduate students with teaching experience who do not meet above criteria.
- h. Psychology Department Adjunct Faculty .
- i. Qualified non-departmental psychologists.

Priorities for assigning January Term and Summer School Continuing Education positions:

- a. First assignment for first through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience.
- b. First assignment for faculty.
- c. Second assignment for faculty.
- d. Second assignment for first through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience.
- e. First assignment for fifth year students and re-specialization post docs.
- f. Second assignment for fifth year students and re-specialization post docs.
- g. Third assignment for first through fourth year students with M.S. degree and teaching experience.
- h. Third assignment for faculty.
- i. Graduate students with teaching experience who do not meet above criteria.
- j. Psychology Department Adjunct Faculty.
- k. Qualified non-departmental psychologists.

Graduate students in Neuroscience and Behavior who have Psychology advisors will be treated in the same manner as Psychology graduate students. Neuroscience and Behavior students must satisfactorily complete the major research project to quality.

Responsibilities of instructors who teach CE Psychology courses -

Those who teach CE Psychology courses must:

- 1) adhere to the Course Management Guidelines delineated in the current edition of "Undergraduate Rights & Responsibilities" (available in the Psychology Department);
- 2) submit an updated syllabus to the Chair at the beginning of each semester or session;
- 3) submit and updated address, phone number, and policy on availability to students at the beginning of each semester or session;
- 4) adhere to the University and Psychology Department policies on granting Incompletes;
- 5) distribute appropriate course evaluations at the end of the semester or session, and arrange to have such evaluations delivered to the Psychology Undergraduate Office.

Application Procedure - Applicants must submit the following materials to the Psychology Department Chair:

- 1) letter of application expressing interest in teaching a specific course;
- 2) current Curriculum Vitae;
- 3) two letters of recommendation (preferably, from Psychology faculty members);
- 4) all course evaluation material from previously taught courses, unless such material is already on file in the Psychology Department;
- 5) course syllabus expected to be used, unless already on file in the Psychology Department.