

E. Graduate Employee Organization statement: Appointment and Reappointment Criteria and Procedures for Graduate Employees

It is the policy of the Chemical Engineering Department that all graduate students receive full stipends subject to: (i) satisfactory progress towards completion of the degree and (ii) availability of funds. Funding is made available via appointment as either a Research Assistant (R.A.) or Teaching Assistant (T.A.). The responsibilities of Chemical Engineering graduate students are the same whether they are in receipt of stipends as T.A.'s or R.A.'s. These responsibilities are:

(i) Satisfactory progress towards completion of a graduate degree, including completion of course requirements and satisfactory progress in the thesis research project.

(ii) Five hours per week of teaching duties for students beyond their first year of residence (acting as a teaching assistant in the department's courses at the undergraduate or graduate levels).

1. Appointment as an R.A.

This appointment is made by the department head on the recommendation of the faculty member who is the principal investigator on the research grant from which the project is funded.

2. Appointment as a T.A.

This appointment is made by the department head in consultation with the faculty member who is the chair of the graduate student's thesis committee.

3. Assignment of teaching duties

Prior to the start of each semester, the graduate program director provides each graduate student involved in teaching with a list of courses being offered for that semester. Each student then returns a list of preferred assignments. Assignment of graduate students to courses is then made by the graduate program director. Where possible, these assignments will reflect the stated preferences of the graduate students. The specific teaching duties for a particular course will be established by the faculty member responsible for the course in consultation with the graduate students assigned to the course.

4. Initial appointments

Graduate students are assigned to research projects during the first semester of residence in the program. Where possible, these assignments are based on the stated preferences of the graduate students and are made by the department head in consultation with the Chemical Engineering faculty. Students have the opportunity of hearing presentations by the faculty about the available research projects and of meeting with the faculty to discuss these projects.

It is expected that graduate students will remain assigned to these projects until the completion of their degree. Requests for changes in assignment by a graduate student, which involve a change in the chairmanship of the thesis committee, can only be approved by the department head and the graduate program director, in consultation with the faculty member currently serving as chair of the thesis committee.

5. Reappointments

Graduate students who are making satisfactory progress towards a degree can expect that their assistantships will be renewed, subject to the availability of funds, and every effort will be made to provide assistantships to those students over a normal period of residence. The normal period of residence for an M.S. student is intended to be less than 18 months and for a Ph.D. student 4 years. Funding for periods longer than these, while often possible, is subject to the approval of the department head and the chair of the thesis committee. It should be noted that Chemical Engineering graduate students are required to be in residence throughout the year, except for legal holidays and vacation periods (to be arranged in consultation with the chair of the thesis committee).

Teaching Assistantship appointments are normally made by the department head in early December and August for the Spring and Fall periods, respectively. Each graduate student in the program will receive notification from the department head by May 15 (for Summer and Fall appointments) or December 15 (for Spring appointments) of their reappointment for the following period. If by these dates the department head is unable to provide definite notification of funding, an estimate of whether funding is likely, possible, or unlikely will be given to the student concerned.

R.A.'s funded from research grants will receive notification from the department head six months prior to the expiration of these grants. This notification will include an estimate of whether the R.A. appointment will be continued, and from what source funding will be available. This notification will be updated sixty days and fourteen days prior to the expiration of the research grant, unless the department head has already given definite notice of renewed appointment by that time.

An updated list of active research grants is maintained by the department head and can be viewed by any graduate student on request to the department administrator. It lists the faculty member who is principal investigator, the total funding, the grant period, and the number of R.A.'s being funded from the grant for each active research grant.

Bobbie Bassett, Graduate Program Assistant
Chemical Engineering Department
159E Goessmann Lab
686 No. Pleasant Street
Univ. of MA, Amherst, MA 01003-9330
Tel: 413-545-6164, Fax: 413-545-1647