

POLICY FOR APPOINTMENT AND REAPPOINTMENT OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN RESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

(This Policy applies to: Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates for RAP GenEd Programs, Talent Advancement Programs and Thatcher Language Programs.)

1. Direct Appointment by an Academic Department

Most graduate students who are Teaching Assistants for Residential Academic Program (RAP) courses are appointed, funded, assigned, notified and renewed by the academic department which offers the course. The appointment procedures of the individual departments are followed in these cases and RAP is merely notified of the names of those individuals who will be teaching a course in a given semester.

2. RAP Participation in Selection

There are a few specific instances where RAP plays a role in the appointment or reappointment of TAs: 1) the six language departments which provide TAs for the Thatcher Language House: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish Language Programs; 2) TAs for RAP courses in Anthropology, Philosophy, Political Science and other departments. In these cases RAP participates in the process because the TA monies come from the Provost Office by way of Residential Academic Programs.

In such cases, these departments follow their normal process and nominate one or more candidates to teach the departmental course for RAP. RAP interviews the candidate(s) and determines if they are suitable for the position. RAP will interview each nominated candidate (see #3 below).

3. RAP Interviews

Candidates to be interviewed by RAP have usually been pre-screened by their academic department using that department's notification and selection criteria. RAP's interviews and decisions are based on the following criteria: substantive classroom teaching experience; ability and/or experience in interactive classroom teaching; inventive and creative strategies for engaging students; openness to teaching in the unique environment of a residence hall classroom. After interviewing all candidates recommended by the appropriate academic department, the Director or Associate Director of RAP will confer with the appropriate academic department Chair/Head about RAP's choice.

4. Initial Appointment

Only those graduate students determined eligible by the appropriate academic department are considered for appointment to RAP Teaching Assistantships. Candidates are pre-screened according to the academic department's criteria and then interviewed by RAP staff.

5. Duration of Award

A RAP Teaching Assistantship is officially granted for one academic year, at the end of which the Teaching Assistant's performance is reviewed. Continuation of the Teaching Assistantship is based on the quality of performance and agreement between RAP and the appropriate academic department. Normally, Teaching Assistantships in RAP can be held for two years. Usually only the most senior graduate students are nominated by academic departments for Teaching Assistantships with RAP. These students have been supported by their departments for several years prior to the nomination for a Teaching Assistantship with RAP. Teaching Assistants for the Thatcher Language Programs may be reappointed for a total of three years depending on the quality of performance and agreement between RAP and the appropriate academic department.

6. Notification in Writing

Written notification of funding and appointment or reappointment to a Teaching Assistantship will be made by the Director or Associate Director of RAP normally during the semester preceding the beginning of the appointment period (assuming that budget information is available at that time).

7. Posting of Employment Opportunities

Academic departments follow their own procedures for posting, screening of applicants, and notification of assignment to courses. RAP negotiates with academic departments to secure Teaching Assistants for RAP courses.

8. Policy on Equal Opportunity

The University of Massachusetts at Amherst prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, disability or handicap, or veteran status, in any aspects of the admission or treatment of students or in employment.

This RAP policy follows the guidelines of Article 22 in the Agreement negotiated between the Graduate Employee Organization and the University Administration.

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