

Policy on Appointment and Reappointment of Teaching Assistants and Associates Department of Comparative Literature

I. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

A. Eligibility: All students accepted into the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in Comparative Literature are eligible throughout their graduate studies for a Teaching Assistantship or Associateship. Preference will be given to Ph.D. students in good academic standing, who have not received more than three years of assistantship or associateship support from the Department of Comparative Literature. Preference will also be given to students with demonstrated college teaching capability; students fluent in English, and capable of reading and grading papers in English; students with exemplary teaching records in particular courses in Comparative Literature; and students making good progress in their own program of study. As stipulated in the Department's Graduate Statement of Procedure, students with more than two Incompletes in courses taken for graduate credit shall be considered on probation, and ineligible for T.A. support. No student will be awarded a Teaching Assistantship or Associateship without having filed a formal application for such an award. Application forms shall be available to students at all times, and shall be kept on record in the Office of the Administrative Secretary. Students reapplying after a leave of absence or after three years of support are encouraged to update their applications each year.

B. Entitlement: Students awarded a teaching fellowship in their first year of graduate study shall be entitled to two further years of T.A. support, for a total of three years, subject to the following conditions: 1) academic progress must be satisfactory, 2) teaching performance must be satisfactory. The determination of academic progress will be based on three factors: 1) superior performance in graduate courses, as measured by grades and by faculty adviser assessment; 2) timely advancement from one stage of the program to another, e.g. from course-taking to Comprehensive Examination preparation, or from Comprehensive Examination preparation to the actual examination itself; 3) evidence of involvement in delivery of papers at conferences. The determination of performance in teaching will be based largely on student evaluations and on assessments by faculty course leaders for large lecture courses. For students wishing further faculty assessment of their teaching before the following round of T.A. assignments, the option of inviting faculty to visit the student's classroom is always available, and should be considered an opportunity for constructive and positive advice, as well as for visibility at the time of Graduate Studies Committee rankings.

a. Funding decisions shall be made by the department chair in consultation with the Graduate Program Director, and if need be, with individual members of the faculty. The Graduate Program Director will convene the Graduate Studies Committee in February (new student pool) and in April (currently enrolled student pool) for the express purpose of recommending graduate students for T.A. support for the Fall semester. Students will be ranked by the Committee and these rankings shall be communicated in writing to the Department Chair by the Graduate Program Director. One graduate student, appointed by the Organization of Graduate Students in Comparative Literature (OGSCL), shall be a voting member of the Graduate Studies Committee and shall have a vote in the recommendation of T.A.'s for the new student pool only, there being a clear conflict of interest in voting on the currently enrolled student pool.

II. TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

A. Notification of courses needing T.A.'s: After deciding who will receive funding and prior to making any formal assignments to currently enrolled graduate students, the department chair advises all funded graduate students (as per Article 22 of the Agreement between GEO and the University of Massachusetts) in the department of which courses are expected to be staffed with graduate student employees. Students are encouraged to express their preference(s) for assignments on the T.A. Application form. After receiving these indications of the preference from students, the department chair, in consultation with the Graduate Program Director and, if appropriate, with particular faculty members, makes assignments which take into account:

- 1) academic performance;
- 2) graduate students' preference

- 3) the needs of the department
- 4) the previous experience and qualifications of the graduate students; and
- 5) faculty and student schedules.

B.Posting for assignments available only to graduate students in the Department of Comparative Literature

- 1) Prior To Course Assignments For The Following Semesters, the Department Chair shall notify all graduate students in the department of the courses which are expected to be staffed with graduate student employees the following semester by posting the courses in a space easily accessible to graduate students, and by putting notices in students' departmental mailboxes.
- 2) After Course Assignment For The Semester, the Department Chair shall notify all graduate students in the department of any course(s) that become available for staffing by graduate student employees after TA's and TO's have been assigned for the semester by posting the course(s) in a space easily accessible to graduate students, if timing allows.
- 3) Posting for Jobs Available to Graduate Students Outside the Employing Department--Because the demand from currently enrolled M.A. and Ph.D. Students in Comparative Literature for teaching assistantships in Comparative Literature normally exceeds the supply of teaching assistantships, no Assistantships are available to graduate students outside the Department. If teaching assistantships in Comparative Literature do, in exceptional circumstances, become available to students from outside the department, the Department will follow the terms of Article 22, 4.c Posting for Jobs Available to Graduate Students Outside the Employing Department.

C.Notice

- a. If by May 15 and December 15 of each year the department chair cannot definitively notify currently enrolled graduate students in Comparative Literature who have applied for Teaching Assistantships or Associateships of whether or not they will be funded the following semester, the Department Chair will advise, in writing, each currently enrolled graduate student who has applied for funding of the department's expectations about that student's appointment or reappointment for the following semester.
- b. Such notification will indicate the Department Chair's best judgement about whether the graduate student is likely to be funded, may be funded, or is not likely to be funded. An update indication of the Department Chair's expectations about which of these three categories a graduate student is in will be sent to each graduate student fourteen days prior to the first day of classes. These notices will be issued in good faith.