Teaching and Research Assistant Assessment Processes
Approved by
Graduate Studies Committee
School of Engineering
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Introduction

The performance evaluation of teaching (TA) and research (RA) assistants is important to provide feedback for mentoring, document and address cases of unsatisfactory performance and to resolve academic disputes. While TA and RA performance assessment procedures vary widely across the SoE, at a minimum they should include the components described in the following sections.

Teaching Assistants

1. The course instructor will set specific expectations at the beginning of each semester that are documented with a TA agreement form signed by both the instructor and the TA, and copied to the TA’s academic advisor. The TA agreement document should include items such as average hours/week, office hours, laboratory work, recitations, vacation time and other activities. Appendix A presents a sample TA agreement.

2. The course instructor will gather assessment data using methods such as student course evaluations, classroom observation, student focus groups, and direct measures such as examples of student work. TA evaluations should be conducted mid-term and at the end-of-semester. Appendix B presents examples of forms used to gather such assessment data.

3. The course instructor will provide written mid-term feedback to the TA in order to communicate performance and indicate possible improvements if necessary. Appendix C presents sample evaluation forms. The TA is encouraged to constructively discuss this mid-term feedback with the course instructor.

4. All TAs must register for the course XXX-405 for 0 course credits. At the end of the semester, the course instructor will assign a grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). The course instructor must provide the TA with written documentation of unsatisfactory performance at least three weeks before the U grade is assigned. The documentation should include space for an optional TA response. Copies shall be provided to the Department Chair. Clear expectations for performance improvement should be established.
5. The consequences of unsatisfactory performance (U) may include dismissal as a teaching assistant and loss of stipend and tuition waiver. These consequences will be determined by the Department Chair.

6. Throughout the assessment process, the TA and course instructor may bring any unresolved academic disputes to the Department Chair. If the dispute remains unresolved, then it shall be brought to the Dean of Engineering (or his/her designee) for resolution.

Research Assistants

1. The faculty research advisor will develop specific expectations annually and communicate these to the RA. Expectations such as vacation schedules, benchmarks and timelines should be defined.

2. If at any time RA performance issues arise, then the faculty research advisor must immediately provide the RA with written documentation. The document should identify corrective measures including deadlines for their implementation and include space for an optional TA response. Copies of the document shall be provided to the Department chair. The RA is encouraged to constructively discuss this document with the faculty research advisor.

3. All RAs must register for the course XXX-406 for 0 course credits. At the end of the semester, the faculty research advisor will assign a grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). The faculty research advisor must provide the RA with documentation of unsatisfactory performance (U) at least three weeks before the grade is assigned. Copies of the document shall be provided to the Department Chair.

4. The consequences of unsatisfactory performance (U) may include dismissal as a research assistant from the advisor’s research group and loss of stipend and tuition waiver. The specific consequences will be determined by the faculty research advisor in consultation with the Department Chair.

5. Throughout the assessment process, the RA and faculty research advisor may bring any unresolved academic disputes to the Department Chair. If the dispute remains unresolved, then it shall be brought to the Dean of Engineering (or his/her designee) for resolution.