

## University-wide Standards for Teaching Assistants at Florida State University

These are University-wide standards that any student must meet prior to assuming one of the various instructional roles. These are meant to be university-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards. Graduate Programs which do not use graduate students in instructional roles would not be affected by these standards. They are meant to cover the formal use of teaching assistants in course instruction. Extra help sessions and voluntary tutorials in addition to regular class meetings would not normally fall under these requirements.

### **Certification of General Teaching Competence:**

Each semester in accordance with guidelines of the Commission on Colleges (SACS) and the standards outlined in the following sections, the Academic Dean of each College is required to certify in writing to the Dean of the Faculties and the Dean of The Graduate School that each student who serves as a Teaching Assistant is competent to teach and for International Teaching Assistants that they are also competent to teach in spoken English.

### **General:**

It is recommended that each program have a discipline-specific teaching manual for its teaching assistants to supplement the university teaching manual, *Instruction at FSU* which can be viewed on line

(<http://learningforlife.fsu.edu/ctl/explore/onlineresources/I@FSU.cfm>).

### **Minimum Requirements for Different Levels of Instruction:**

#### 1. *Grader*

- a program specific statement of standards for graders

#### 2. *Proctor for Computerized Exams and Laboratories*

- undergraduate majoring in the discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- supervision by the faculty member teaching the course

#### 3. *Lab section*

- undergraduate majoring in the discipline
- specific instruction in laboratory demonstration
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- direct supervision by senior lab assistant /or faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

#### 4. *Recitation/discussion section*

- undergraduate degree in discipline or related field
- some graduate work completed or enrolled for
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

***Course level types 5-8 presume the teaching assistant is providing the primary instruction in the course.***

*5. Lower-level course*

- 18 hours of graduate work in teaching discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

*6. Liberal studies course*

- 18 hours of graduate work in teaching discipline
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

*7. Upper-level non-major non-liberal studies course*

- Master's degree or equivalent
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

*8. Upper-level major course*

- Master's degree or equivalent
- enrolled in doctoral level course work and strongly encouraged to have completed two semesters of doctoral level course work
- PIE fall conference or departmental equivalent
- PIE workshop on Sexual Harassment or equivalent (see below)
- student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation

- direct supervision by faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

**Certification of Spoken English for Graduate Teaching Assistants:**

As noted above Academic Deans are required to certify to the Dean of the Faculties and the Dean of The Graduate School that the TAs in the college are competent to teach. This statement should also include certification that all graduate TAs whose native language is not English are competent to teach in spoken English.

All international graduate students who are not native speakers of English, and who are going to be TAs, should take the SPEAK test when they arrive on campus (as noted below, students who scored 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL may be exempted from taking the SPEAK test). The Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) administers and scores the SPEAK test, CIES also offers courses in spoken English (EAP courses). The SPEAK test is administered several times in the week(s) prior to the beginning of each semester, and the scores are available within three to four days of the date the test is administered. Departments are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive an initial estimate of speaking ability. In addition, the SPEAK is routinely administered as an end-of-term evaluation for students enrolled in EAP courses. TAs not enrolled in EAP courses may also take the test at that time. Course offerings, as well as test dates for SPEAK tests, are published in fliers distributed periodically to departments, as well as via email to TA coordinators. This information is also available on the CIES Web site ([www.cies.fsu.edu](http://www.cies.fsu.edu)).

The standards for certification of spoken English are as follows:

- A score of 50 or higher on the SPEAK test, or 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL, certifies a student to teach at any level.
- A score of 45 on SPEAK, or 23-24 on the Speaking section of TOEFL iBT, certifies a student to teach at levels 1 & 2; and to teach at levels 3 & 4 for up to two semesters if also concurrently enrolled in an appropriate CIES English language course. By no later than the end of these two semesters, if the student's skills have not improved sufficiently to achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK exam, the student will be eligible to only teach at levels 1 & 2. The student will only be allowed to teach at a higher level once they achieve a score of 50 on SPEAK.
- Student's scoring 40 or below on SPEAK should enroll in the appropriate CIES English language course(s) if the goal is to be a TA. Once a 45 on SPEAK is achieved such a student will be certified to teach at levels 1 & 2; and to teach at levels 3 & 4 for up to two semesters if also concurrently enrolled in an appropriate CIES English language course. By no later than the end of these two semesters, if the student's skills have not improved sufficiently to achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK exam, the student will be eligible to only teach at levels 1 & 2. The student will only be allowed to teach at a higher level once they achieve a score of 50 on SPEAK.

Approved by GPC on 3/28/11; Revised 09/23/11 to reflect procedural change

In unique instances a Department Chair or Dean may appeal the application of these standards by submitting a request to the Dean of The Graduate School. The Dean of The Graduate School will convene a committee to consider the request. The committee will consist of the Director of the FSU Center for Intensive English Studies; the Chair (or designee) of the Undergraduate Policy Committee; the person making the appeal; and the Dean of The Graduate School.

**Equivalent Previous Experience and Emergencies:**

With the exception of the 18-hours-in-the-discipline rule for primary instruction and in accordance with guidelines provided by the Commission on Colleges (SACS), the following options will be available to deal with special circumstances:

A student who through previous preparation or teaching experience has demonstrated knowledge and strong teaching skills, can be exempt from some of the requirements in 3-8, as appropriate, by certification of the program chair.

In an emergency a department may appoint a graduate teaching assistant who has not met all the University-wide requirements for that level of appointment if there is an assurance that the student will meet the requirements by the end of the term in which the student is teaching.

**PIE workshop on sexual harassment policies and equivalency:**

University policy on sexual harassment training is provided by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) within Human Resources (<http://diversity.fsu.edu/index.cfm?page=training>). The office provides training sessions at the PIE Fall Teaching Conference. In addition PIE sponsors a workshop in the spring usually during the second week of classes. Departments can also set up departmental training by contacting the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, and this office also offers training online.