

# Teaching Assistants Enrolled in Graduate Programs and Supervised by Faculty at Minnesota State University, Mankato

## **I. Introduction**

In response to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Faculty Qualifications Guidelines published in March 2016, Minnesota State Mankato adopts the following process for screening, training, and assessing teaching assistants (TAs) who are instructors of record. The aim of this process is for "students [to] have access to faculty members who are experts in the subject matter they teach and who can communicate knowledge in that subject to their students" (HLC 2016). TA training and supervision is necessary to promote quality instruction and provide support for teaching.

## **II. Screening**

TAs are expected to have a bachelor's degree in the discipline in which they teach. If an exception to this rule needs to be made, departments as the hiring authority, must document the experiences, training, or education of the individual that warrants the exception. This documentation needs to be placed in the student's file.

## **III. Training**

1. Departments will designate one or more faculty member to provide TA mentoring, supervision, and assessment. Each semester, TA supervisors will provide some form of orientation or training prior to the beginning of classes to help TAs fulfill their assigned responsibilities.
2. Departments may also require TAs to take a special graduate course or participate in other teacher development activities (e.g. ongoing group meetings, one-one-one consultations with faculty). The form of instruction should fit the nature of the assigned duties. Topics of discussion may include preparation and delivery of class lectures, maintenance of class records, preparing examinations, grading papers, leading discussion groups, and tutoring students outside formal classes.
3. All TAs must complete an on-line university orientation program developed by the College of Graduate Studies and Research. Topics treated will include FERPA, University policies related to teaching, discrimination, and sexual harassment, dealing with disruptive student behavior, and University resources.
4. Departments who employ TAs must provide a training and supervision plan to the College of Graduate Studies and Research. Once a plan is on file, a new plan will only need to be submitted if the department alters the training and supervision process.

#### **IV. Assessment**

1. Departments will develop a procedure for providing feedback to TAs on their teaching-related responsibilities. Teaching supervisors are encouraged to conduct classroom observations and to follow up with TAs after their visit. Although this would be a great professional development activity, observation is not required.
2. TAs will utilize the institutional course evaluation system for gathering student feedback on the course. The results will be made available to the TAs' supervisor and the TAs. TAs will also complete a self-evaluation (see evaluation attachment). TA supervisors will then meet with the TA to discuss the student evaluations and self-evaluation. This feedback should inform future mentoring and professional development activities.
3. At the end of each academic year, TA supervisors will notify the office of Graduate Studies that evaluations have been completed. If Graduate Studies is not notified, the office will solicit this information from the department.

#### Related Policy

[http://www.mnsu.edu/policies/whatis/review/frgraduate\\_assistantship.pdf](http://www.mnsu.edu/policies/whatis/review/frgraduate_assistantship.pdf)