

## DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

### Policies and Procedures Relating to Teaching Fellowships (2008-2009)

The process the Department follows in assigning Teaching Fellow positions is coordinated centrally with the Office for Academic Programs, which has general oversight of the assignment process and controls instructional support funds, and the GSAS Financial Aid Office, which reviews and gives final approval for all individual appointments.

#### Procedures

Once the curriculum for the coming academic year is finalized (usually sometime in April), the department sends a request for guaranteed Teaching Fellow positions to the Office of Academic Programs for their review and approval. The requests are based on past enrollment figures for specific courses, a standing agreement to have teaching fellows in History of Science 97 (the sophomore tutorial), and our best guess for enrollments in new courses. Once the OAP gives approval for guaranteed sections, the Department will publicize a list of all courses to be taught in the following year, together with the number of guaranteed sections (if any) assigned to each one, and it will make teaching assignments for the coming academic year based on students' and professors' preferences as stated in the Teaching Fellow Application, which will be distributed in early-mid April. This list of courses will be updated during the first two weeks of classes each semester to reflect sections that may become available as a result of higher-than-expected enrollments.

#### Teaching Fellow Application

Students begin teaching in their third year in the doctoral program (G3). Before they begin teaching, they are required to attend both the Department's daylong Teaching Retreat and the Bok Center's two-day Fall Teaching Conference, normally held the week before classes begin.

Students wishing to teach should fill out the Department's Teaching Fellow application, which will list all the courses projected for the following year that will, or may, require teaching fellows. Students must indicate at least four courses *in order of preference* for both the fall and the spring. While we cannot guarantee that students will get one of these choices, we will make every effort to accommodate their preferences. Students should also list on the application any other teaching they plan to do outside of the Department, as well as any other funding or support they will receive in the academic year. Thesis advising is considered teaching and counts toward the 4/5 support guaranteed to G3 and G4 students.

Applications must be turned in to Allie Belser, who administers the undergraduate program, by the deadline (around April 30), as guaranteed positions for both the fall and spring terms are determined at the same time. As part of the Harvard appointment process, these will need to be decided and confirmed by June 1.

#### Assigning Teaching Fellow Positions

Allie will collect the applications and prepare a list by course of all the students who have applied to teach. The Department will then match students to courses with guaranteed sections, making

an effort to maximize the number of students with Teaching Fellowships, and to ensure that faculty and student preferences are accommodated as much as possible; a list of alternates will also be drawn up for each course, in the event that more Teaching Fellows are needed than anticipated or that one or more Teaching Fellows originally assigned to the course choose not to teach. The matching will be done by a committee composed of all faculty members who will be teaching courses with guaranteed sections the following year (fall and spring). *The Department (not the individual faculty member) will inform the student about which course(s) s/he has been assigned.* Letters confirming the guaranteed positions will be prepared and sent to graduate students and faculty members. The goal is to finalize these appointments by June 1.

Allie will be in touch with students to get any additional forms needed—an I-9 form is needed if one is teaching for the first time—and will process the appointment forms. Note that once the appointment is entered into the system, it is sent first to the GSAS Financial Aid Office, which must review and approve it, keeping in mind any other funding that the student may have.

For the guaranteed positions, graduate students in their third and fourth years (G3 and G4) who are unfunded will be given first preference, and every effort will be made to give students their top choices. There are, however, certain positions for which it is necessary to hire an experienced Teaching Fellow (e.g., Head Teaching Fellows) or a student with particular qualifications. **Please note that the Department will not defer the G3/G4 guarantee for students who will be away one of these two years or who choose for some other reason not to teach in their third or fourth year; students in this situation may petition for priority status on their applications for teaching in subsequent years, and the Department will give special consideration to their requests.** Please note, too, that the Department has the option to deny teaching appointments to students who have not yet passed their General Examination.

For courses where we are unable to provide a guaranteed position or positions—typically because previous enrollments have not warranted a Teaching Fellow or because the course is new—tentative assignments will be made so that faculty and students can plan ahead. However, appointments cannot be processed until classes have met and enrollment is determined to be large enough to support the hiring of a Teaching Fellow: the target section size in a lecture course is 18 students. Please be aware that the first two weeks of classes are chaotic. Even after registration closes, it takes several days for the Department to request and receive authorization from the OAP for additional Teaching Fellow appointments. Allie and Katy will be in charge of coordinating this part of the process and of assigning these positions in accordance with the tentative assignments made the previous spring, adjusting them as necessary as students' needs and commitments change. This is inevitably a time of uncertainty and flux for students, faculty, and administrators; Allie and Katy will make every effort to keep people abreast of the changing situation—and inquiries are welcome—but patience is required on all sides.

Because there may not be enough positions in Department courses to support even G3 and G4 students, *all* students are strongly encouraged to look outside the Department to find suitable teaching (e.g., in the Core, in other departments, and in area schools such as MIT). We do anticipate, however, that teaching opportunities in the department during the 2008-2009 academic year will be plentiful.

### Frequently Asked Questions

*What should I do if I was unable to obtain as many guaranteed sections as I need?* Students will be tentatively assigned to courses for which we were not given guaranteed positions (or enough guaranteed positions), in hopes that the enrollment will be large enough to support additional sections. Wherever possible, preference will first be given to G3 and G4 students without funding, and then to other students in the Department. Additionally, however, you should try to secure a teaching position outside the Department; Allie Belser, the Manager of Student Programs, and Katy Park, the Director of Graduate Studies, are glad to consult on this matter.

*What if I have a guaranteed position in a course that ends up being significantly under-enrolled?*  
The arrangement will be honored and you will receive no cut in pay. However, the Department has the option of moving a Teaching Fellow from a course that is under-enrolled to one that is over-subscribed (keeping in mind the areas students are prepared to teach), or the student may be expected to do additional work for the course, the professor, or the Department to make up the shortfall. You should be prepared for this eventuality if you have been given a guaranteed section in what turns out to be an under-enrolled class.

*What if I have a non-guaranteed position in a course that ends up being significantly under-enrolled?*  
You should immediately contact Allie Belser, who will know of Departmental courses that were over-subscribed and may need a Teaching Fellow. You should also look for teaching possibilities outside the Department.

*What if the enrollment ends up being higher for a course where I have a guaranteed position and I already have 4/5 of guaranteed teaching for the year?*  
If there are other Departmental graduate students, especially G3s and G4s in need of funding who are not yet assigned, they will have preference for getting the additional section(s), if at all feasible. Otherwise these sections may be given to a History of Science graduate student in need of teaching, either for financial reasons or to fulfill their teaching requirement, or possibly even to another GSAS student in need. These students must be considered first before giving an additional section to students who already have 4/5 of guaranteed teaching for the year.

*What if I have two guaranteed sections of a course, and the instructor would like me to be Head Teaching Fellow (relevant for courses with 100+ students)?*  
It would be best if you taught one section and received one section of pay for your work as Head Teaching Fellow. This would free up a section for another fellow graduate student, allowing him or her to get the additional pay and/or teaching experience.

*What if I have not passed my general examination by the time classes begin in the fall of my third year?*  
This may impact your teaching, as you may not teach more than 2/5 per year before you have completed your examination. Specifically, if you have not passed your examination by the time classes begin in September, you may not teach more than 2/5 in the fall term. If you have not passed your examination by the time classes begin for the second semester, you may not teach more than 2/5 for the entire year; i.e., if you have taught 2/5 in the fall semester, you will forfeit your teaching eligibility for the spring semester. If you pass your examination in the course of the fall semester, your spring semester teaching eligibility will not be affected.

*What is the Department's responsibility?*

The Department has a contract with every graduate student to provide teaching fellowships, at the level of 4/5 FTE, in the G3 and G4 years if he or she has not otherwise secured sufficient funding. It must also provide a teaching position to students who have not fulfilled their teaching requirement.<sup>1</sup> If either of these proves to be wholly impossible within the limits of the curriculum and course enrollments, the Department and OAP will work together to solve the problem; the Department often has additional, non-teaching positions it needs to fill, e.g., research assistants, gallery monitors, and students may be offered one of these instead of one or more fifths of teaching. Additionally, the Department will also try to provide teaching to other graduate students beyond the fourth year who would like to teach. We have had good success in the past in supplying additional Teaching Fellowships to more advanced students, and we expect to be able to continue to do so.

*What is the student's responsibility?*

The student should complete the Teaching Fellow application and submit it by the deadline. S/he should also make efforts to find teaching outside the Department (e.g., in the Core, in other departments, and in other area institutions, notably MIT), especially if by the middle of January s/he has not received 4/5 in guaranteed teaching. Students should also keep in mind their fellow graduate students, who may also need teaching positions. Students with teaching fellowships are required to attend the Department's daylong Teaching Retreat and the Bok Center's two-day Fall Teaching Conference, usually held the week before classes begin, before they begin teaching in the Department for the first time.

### **Timeline for Teaching Fellow Application and Assignment Process**

- April:            1) Departmental curriculum plans finalized and department requests guaranteed TF positions from the Office for Academic Programs (OAP)  
                      2) TF application sent to all graduate students in the Department, due date around April 30
- May-June:        1) Departmental request for guaranteed TF positions reviewed, modified, and approved by OAP  
                      2) Assignments made for guaranteed and non-guaranteed positions for both fall and spring terms  
                      3) Department sends letters confirming guaranteed positions to students, faculty, OAP, and GSAS
- September:      1) Department teaching retreat—usually takes place the second week in September  
                      2) Bok Center Fall Teaching Conference—usually takes place the second week in September  
                      3) Appointments for non-guaranteed positions are made several days after enrollments are known, once the OAP has considered and approved the Department's request for additional positions.

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<sup>1</sup> The department normally requires each student to participate as a Teaching Fellow in at least one course offered by members of the Department.