

## **Stan Richards School of Advertising & Public Relations Policies Regarding Student Employees**

### **HIRING:**

A decision to hire a graduate student as a teaching assistant or assistant instructor is complex, requiring consideration of many factors. The process by which decisions are made has not been and cannot be reduced to a simple formula or ranking of criteria. This document attempts to explain the procedures that are followed and the criteria that are used in making these hiring decisions.

Every year, the School determines how many funding offers can be made. In making offers, the Director seeks the input from a variety of sources. The primary factor used in making offers is to further the educational mission of the School. Graduate students who can teach or assist with courses that need to be taught receive the highest priority. The School is unlikely to extend an offer to even the strongest student who cannot meet our instructional needs.

**If a student finds that their planned course schedule involves a time conflict, that student is tasked with adjusting their schedule to be fully available to their instructor during the class meeting time. If the course is a core course that conflicts with the TA offer, please notify the Graduate Coordinator immediately for a potential assignment adjustment. If an assignment is not immediately available, the student will be added back to the applicant list and another student will be offered the TA position.**

*It is important to note that in assigning Assistant Instructor and Teaching Assistants, we experience funding constraints imposed by either the College or University on a yearly basis.*

In general, TAs are funded up to a maximum of four consecutive semesters as M.A. students and six consecutive semesters as Ph.D. students (summer session appointments are excluded). Fellowship appointments do not count as funded semesters.

### **RETENTION AND CONTINUATION:**

Future appointments as a TA or AI, while being contingent on funding sources, are also impacted by academic success as indicated by several measures such as grades, publications and convention presentations, high standards of

academic honesty and so forth. This includes being in good standing and making good progress toward a degree. The Graduate Advisor of both the M.A. program and the Ph.D. is a source of advice on this criterion.

The following are also important retention and continuation factors:

- Faculty preferences and requests for specific graduate students to teach or assist in courses based on specialized skills of the student;
- Compliance with submission of application by the published deadline for that semester;
- Excellence in previous teaching experience, including evaluation scores, grade inflation/deflation, and supervisor evaluations; and
- Good departmental citizenship, including volunteering for special projects, collegiality, attendance at department functions and colloquia, and so forth.

If a graduate student with a funding commitment chooses to teach outside of Advertising, however, the remaining years of commitment from Advertising are null and void unless they have a written agreement from the Director of the School to the contrary.

The Director of the School expects that departmental TA and AI assignments have priority over outside employment and social commitments. TA/AI appointments are valuable experiences for future members of the academy. The School makes an effort to give every qualified doctoral student some teaching experiences. Students who are admitted to the program without the funding commitment described above may be appointed on a semester-by-semester or annual basis as assignments become available.

#### **TERMINATION OF TA/AI APPOINTMENTS:**

It is the Stan Richards School of Advertising & PR policy that grounds for the immediate termination of employment of teaching assistants or graduate assistants may include the determination of academic dishonesty, lack of compliance to Title IX, violation of UT research protocols for research on human subjects, dereliction of assigned teaching and course-related duties, and conduct detrimental to the teaching, research, or service functions of the School. Unsatisfactory course instructor evaluations for more than one semester, and/or continuing and multiple individual complaints from students and/or faculty about a TA/AI's performance of his or her duties are grounds for termination of appointment.

#### **International Students:**

International students applying to a TA position must have passed the ITA Assessment test to prove proficiency in English by the beginning of the appointment period. New international students may be required to interview with the Stan Richards School graduate coordinator—a resume will be used as

a writing sample to ensure proficiency prior to be appointed.

International students will need to apply for a social security number and card. Please be aware that this can take up to 3 weeks process. Students must be responsible and active in obtaining the required documents for employment in the United States. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator, Ronda Barnett, ([ronda.barnett@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ronda.barnett@austin.utexas.edu)), immediately if you do not have a social security number.

All student employees must be enrolled full-time (at least nine hours). Student employees are encouraged and expected to take full advantage of University resources for instructor training and education (<https://learningsciences.utexas.edu/services/gsd>).