

Humanities & Western Civilization Program Policies:

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

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The following policies pertain to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) in the Humanities & Western Civilization Program (HWC). In consultation with the Director, the GTEX president will submit substantial revision proposals to the Program Committee for discussion and vote.

GTA-1. GTA Eligibility

The HWC program follows the Provost Office’s policies on the eligibility requirements of GTAs. A GTA is deemed eligible for work in the program if he/she meets the requirements (found here: http://documents.ku.edu/policies/Graduate_Studies/graduate_teaching_assistant_eligibility.htm).

GTA-2. GTA Hiring

GTA positions are advertised in early fall for the following fall semester. Graduate students interested in teaching HWC courses must submit an application, transcripts, and letters of recommendation.

The hiring process is managed by the Assistant Director, along with a GTA hiring committee whose members appointed by the Director. Because of the sensitive nature of the application materials, graduate students may not

serve on the GTA hiring committee. Committee members review GTA applications and invite the best qualified candidates to an interview.

After the interviews are concluded, the GTA hiring committee members rank-order the candidates. As many positions as are available are offered promptly by a letter from the Director to candidates at the top of the list. Those offered GTA positions are asked to respond in writing to accept or decline the appointment. Meanwhile, other qualified applicants are notified by a letter from the Director that they are “alternates” for appointments as these become available. Alternates who do not obtain an appointment are encouraged to reapply the following year.

GTA appointments become official at such time as instructor contracts and University personnel and payroll forms are completed and returned to the administrative support staff, usually in July for fall appointments.

All documents related to the hiring process will be archived or shredded by the Assistant Director at the conclusion of the interviews.

GTA-3. GTA Assignments

First- and second-year GTAs will normally be expected to teach discussion sections. GTAs who qualify will teach HWC 204 or HWC 205 (or other courses as needed) beginning in their third year with HWC. All teaching assignments will depend upon the program’s scheduling demands.

If there are insufficient first- and second-year GTAs to accommodate the lecture sections being offered in a given semester, third-year GTAs will be called on to teach one additional semester of discussion sections. Volunteers who would like to continue to teach discussion sections may do so. The Associate Director and Assistant Director, in consultation with the Director, will determine which of the remaining third-year GTAs will teach independent lecture sections based on progress to degree (outstanding incompletes, GPA, length of time spent in the degree program) and student survey data.

GTA-3.1. GTA Summer Appointments

A limited number of summer positions will be available. Calls and deadlines for applications for those positions will be announced by memo from the Assistant Director.

If the number of applications is greater than the number of summer positions, each of the applicants will be run through the following criteria in the order listed below. Applicants who do not meet these requirements will be removed from the pool of applicants unless there are more positions than applicants.

Applicants must meet minimum requirements:

- GPA of 3.5 (3.0 for Law Students)
- No more than 2 outstanding Incompletes on transcript
- Meet the course load requirement for the semester preceding the summer hiring process
- Have had no waivers for any of the above in the past academic year
- Must have taught in HWC at least two years.

The remaining applicants are then placed in this order:

1. those who have not taught any summer in HWC
2. those who have taught only one summer in HWC
3. those who have taught two summers in HWC

If this process still yields more applicants than positions, the Assistant Director will prepare for the Director the following information for ranking of eligible applicants:

1. Seniority in semester of appointment, excluding summers
2. GPA in regular semester previous to application
3. Student survey data of regular semester preceding application

This information will be forwarded to the Director, who will use his/her discretion to select GTAs for the summer teaching positions.

If after this there are still more positions than eligible GTAs, those GTAs who have taught at least two semesters will be considered by the same criteria.

If there are still too few applicants, the minimum requirements are waived and additional GTAs are encouraged to apply by a fair and public announcement. This group will be ranked as specified above and each applicant's comprehensive teaching experience and taken into consideration.

This procedure for summer hiring can be overturned in the following manner ONLY: A counter-proposal must be presented in its complete form and receive a majority vote by the GTAs at a business meeting. Following this, it must have Program Committee approval.

GTA-4. GTA Orientation

All HWC GTAs are required to attend a fall orientation program, usually scheduled in the days before the beginning of classes. A portion of the day-long program is generally reserved for new GTAs in the program. Attendance at the orientation is a contractual obligation; absences must be excused by the Assistant Director in advance.

GTA-5. GTA Weekly Training

All first-year HWC GTAs attend weekly 50-minute training sessions at a time designated by the Assistant Director each semester. The teaching of writing will be emphasized in at least four of these sessions. Attendance is a contractual obligation; GTAs who cannot attend a training session should contact the Assistant Director as far in advance as possible. Poor attendance could affect merit pay, consideration for program awards and appointments, and consideration for summer teaching positions. Chronic unexcused absences can result in non-reappointment in the year following those absences.

GTA-6. GTA Obligations During the Academic Year

GTA-6.1 General

As instructors in the HWC program, GTAs are expected to fulfill basic professional obligations expected of all instructors. These include:

- Attendance at all assigned class sessions (including lectures and discussions);
- Attendance at all required trainings and meetings;
- Attendance at posted office hours (3 office hours per week during regular sessions);
- Preparation for classes;
- Prompt grading of student work;
- Prompt recording of student grades (individual assignments and final grade);
- Prompt response to student inquiries about classwork;
- Prompt response to University colleagues who ask for (and have signed waivers to obtain) feedback on student progress;
- Reporting academic and other misconduct according to Program and University policy;
- Administration of student surveys;
- Scheduling course observations by faculty.

GTA-6.2 Syllabus

All GTAs are required to submit their syllabi electronically to the Assistant Director during the first week of classes. Syllabi must be constructed according to the guidelines in the Western Civilization I/II Instruction Manual. Discussion leaders must construct their syllabi in consultation with the lead instructor of the class. All syllabi are maintained electronically by the Assistant Director.

GTA-6.3 Absences

GTAs must report all absences to the Assistant Director as soon as possible. When possible, the Assistant Director will make a call for substitutes among other GTAs. GTAs who require the assistance of substitutes are likewise expected to volunteer to cover classes for colleagues. GTAs may arrange for their own substitutes if they wish, but the absence must still be reported to the Assistant Director. Any absence after two requires the approval of the Director.

GTA-7. GTA Committee Representation and Leadership

GTA-7.1. GTA Executive Committee (GTEX)

The GTA Executive Committee (GTEX) serves two functions (1) it is the primary means of communication between the HWC GTA corps as a whole and the HWC program administration; and (2) it is the main body that advocates for policies related to GTAs. The HWC Director and Assistant Director meet regularly with GTEX to ensure consistent communication and to work on policy development.

GTA 7.1.1. GTEX Membership

The GTEX consists of four members. The procedure for selecting GTEX members is determined by the GTAs and is encoded in the HWC GTA Constitution.

GTA 7.2. HWC Program Committee Members

With advice and counsel from GTEX, the new GTEX president will identify the appropriate number of GTEX members to serve as voting members of the HWC Program Committee. In accordance with the University Senate's "20% Rule," students (at least one undergraduate and at least one GTA) will comprise a minimum of 20% of total Program Committee membership.

GTA 7.3 *Ad hoc* Appointments

In the event that the Program Committee seeks greater GTA representation or further representation on standing or *ad hoc* committees, the GTEX president shall, with advice and counsel from GTEX, appoint members accordingly. In all cases, the GTEX president will work with the HWC Director to ensure that the University Senate's "20% Rule" is honored.

Revised 04/20/2012.

GTA-8. GTA Opportunities

GTA-8.1. Travel Funding

GTAs may apply for funding through the program for certain categories of professional travel. More information about travel funding is found in the Faculty Development section.

GTA-8.2. Teaching in the HWC Study-abroad Program

GTAs are recruited once a year to teach in the HWC semester broad program. Application is made to the Director, who selects candidates in consultation with the director(s) for the upcoming program year.

GTA-8.3. Teaching Outside the Western Civ. I/II Curriculum

When program curricular needs dictate, GTAs will be invited to teach courses outside the HWC 204/205 sequence. Selection for such opportunities will be based upon GTAs' academic preparation, teaching experience, and teaching effectiveness. The Assistant Director will notify GTAs of likely opportunities in her April call for fall scheduling preferences. *Revised 04/20/4012.*

GTA-8.4. Distinguished Graduate Instructorship

Every year at the May recognition ceremony two outstanding graduate instructors are appointed the Humanities & Western Civilization Program's Distinguished Graduate Instructors for the following academic year, typically the honorees' last year of teaching in the program. In addition to regular teaching responsibilities, the honorees each present a public lecture on a topic of general interest from their field of study during their year of appointment. Honorees are strongly encouraged to also work with their home departments in the development of the public lecture. All third-, fourth-, and fifth-year graduate instructors who intend to apply to the Program for the following year are invited to apply. Second-year instructors may apply through self-nomination if they believe that exceptional circumstances warrant their consideration. Applicants are evaluated on the cumulative basis of the following criteria: academic excellence in their degree program, including GPA, papers and publications, and good progress toward the degree; evidence of outstanding teaching in Western Civilization courses based on student, peer, and faculty evaluations; and service to the program beyond the fulfillment of teaching responsibilities. Applicants must submit a letter of application, a current cv, and a proposed title for their public lecture to be considered. The Assistant Director solicits applications each spring. Selection is made by an awards committee appointed by the Director. *Revised 03/06/12.*

GTA-9. GTA Evaluation

Article V, Section 8 of the GTA/University Memorandum of Agreement (5/6/10) reads "Each department or school shall evaluate its GTAs each semester using a method to be determined by the school or department." Faculty reviews in HWC are designed to build better working relationships between faculty and GTAs and to suggest ways that GTAs can improve their teaching. These reviews of teaching are based on a teaching portfolio that includes multiple sources of information (e.g. syllabi, sample assignments and examinations, samples of graded student work, and a classroom visit).

Beginning in academic year 2012-2013, HWC will use a modified version of the University's suggested GTA Evaluation Form (see appendix) for its annual evaluations of GTAs. This will be considered a pilot year, and feedback from GTAs and faculty will determine revisions and adaptations for the next year.

At all times, GTAs have the option of responding to an evaluation. Any concerns or criticisms may be addressed orally, or may be included in a written response that will be attached to the original evaluation letter and kept in the personnel file.

Peer Review is a way for GTAs to supplement their Student and Faculty Evaluations or to further explore questions about the effectiveness of their classroom presentation. Peer Review is voluntary and may be undertaken informally by mutual agreement with a GTA colleague. Instructors may have their Peer Review report included in their personnel file. Peer Review is also strongly recommended for tenure-track faculty during their pre-tenure probationary period. *Revised 04/20/2012.*

GTA-10. GTA Merit Raises

Article 6, Section 2 of the University/GTA Memorandum of Agreement (5/6/10) states: “A GTA whose appointment is renewed within the same department in which the GTA taught the previous semester (excluding summer sessions), will be deemed to have performed at a level sufficiently meritorious to entitle the GTA to two-thirds of the authorized average merit salary increase. Any additional merit salary increase will be left to the discretion of the department based upon its evaluation of the GTA’s performance. . . .”

The Director will rely on the information on the GTA Evaluation Forms to determine the percentage of raise (if any, as allowed by the University) for each GTA. GTAs will be informed of the percentage increase by letter.

Additional merit salary increases may be denied to graduate instructors who do not meet the responsibilities outlined in this manual. GTAs must teach courses for the HWC Program in both the fall and spring semesters before they can be considered for a merit pay increase. *Revised 04/20/2012.*

GTA-11. GTA Reappointment

GTA appointments are for one academic year, but a GTA apply for reappointment annually up to the semester limit established by the Provost. Program eligibility does not supersede University limits on funding which may apply. Summer appointments do not apply against a GTA’s semester limit.

In the weeks prior to the GTA hiring committee meeting(s), the committee will review reappointment packets compiled by the Assistant Director, along with each GTA’s personnel file. Each committee member will recommend (a) reappointment; (b) non-reappointment; or (c) further discussion needed. The reappointment status of GTAs flagged in this last category will be discussed at the committee meetings. The Director will make the final decision about reappointment based on the recommendations of the committee.

Two copies of the final reappointment packet are assembled by the Assistant Director: one copy is maintained in the applicant’s personnel file; the other is sent to Human Resources. The following items are required in a reappointment portfolio:

- Request for Reappointment email (sent by the Assistant Director in early January);
- ARTS form, updated through the time of application
- Satisfactory Progress and Out-of-Field Appointment verification (both obtained in April by the Assistant Director from the GTA’s advisor, graduate director, or chair);
- Observation Form (fall and spring semester for new GTAs, fall only for returning GTAs)
- Letter or email indicating reappointment decision from GTA Hiring Committee (pending satisfactory completion of all requirements)

In addition to satisfactory results on the above forms, GTAs seeking reappointment must:

- Demonstrate accountability in all areas of teaching responsibilities, including coverage of the required readings, adherence to the HWC writing assignment guidelines, maintenance of office hours, attendance at GTA training sessions and other meetings as determined by HWC faculty and administrators, and the administration of student surveys in each class. Repeated and/or undocumented absences from class will disqualify GTAs from reappointment.

- Maintain a G.P.A. of 3.4 in graduate course work (except for GTAs in the KU Law School, who must maintain a 3.0 G.P.A.); and the completion of at least 9 hours of graduate course work (including courses which satisfy the FLORS requirement) in the academic year previous to the application for reappointment (but not including summer course work). The GTA may not have more than two outstanding Incompletes in graduate courses.

Conditions for non-reappointment include failure to meet any of the requirements for reappointment stated above. In addition, proof of dishonesty or moral turpitude (e.g., sexual harassment), or failure to abide by Program policies may result in immediate dismissal of the GTA.

GTAs whose sole difficulty with meeting requirements for reappointment is the 3.4 G.P.A. standard may make a one-time request to the Director to permit reappointment for one academic year, during which the GTA must bring the G.P.A. up to the Program standard. No second request for reappointment on this basis will be considered, nor can the one-time request be considered if there are other requirements for reappointment which the GTA fails to meet.

GTAs whose sole difficulty with meeting requirements for reappointment is having more than two outstanding Incompletes may make a one-time, short-term request to the Director, describing unusual circumstances, such as illness, which caused the excessive number of Incompletes, and stating the date by which the GTA can again meet regular reappointment standards. No second request for reappointment on this basis will be considered, nor can the one-time request be considered if there are other requirements for reappointment which the GTA fails to meet.

Similarly, GTAs whose sole difficulty with meeting requirements for reappointment is the lack of a sufficient number of semester hours of graduate work may make a one-time request to the Director describing the circumstances under which fewer than six hours of graduate work were completed, or are being enrolled in, in any semester. No second request for reappointment on this basis will be considered, nor can the one-time request be considered if there are other requirements for reappointment which the GTA fails to meet.

Any employment contract issued by Humanities and Western Civilization to graduate teaching assistants will be contingent upon the GTA's continued satisfactory performance of the requirements listed above.

GTA-12. GTA Leave of Absence

Circumstances may arise in which an instructor will wish to take a leave of absence from the Humanities and Western Civilization Program: for example, GTAs who have received fellowships or research grants, or who wish to teach in another department for a limited period of time, or who are having difficulties meeting the Program's academic eligibility requirements and need time to "catch up" or for personal reasons. Requests for a leave of absence should be submitted in writing to the Director a minimum of two months before the beginning of the semester from which a leave is desired. The Director will decide whether circumstances warrant granting of the requested leave.

The maximum duration for leaves of absence may not total more than two years.

If a leave of absence is granted, a GTA may expect to return to the Program if the following conditions are met:

- The GTA meets all academic eligibility guidelines for reappointment as specified above.
- The GTA applies for reappointment prior to the application deadline for new GTA applicants (usually mid-February for the fall semester).

Since contracts are normally valid for a full academic year, if a GTA is applying for reappointment for a spring semester that GTA may only be reappointed in spring if a teaching slot has become available (i.e., because someone else has left the Program, or because additional funds have been received to create a new GTA position). For this reason a GTA on leave should not count on re-entering the Program in a spring semester.

Return from a leave of absence is entirely contingent on vacancies being available. If a GTA requests to return, and is unable to do so due to a lack of vacancies, his/her extended absence from the Program will not apply toward the two-year leave of absence limit.

GTA-13. GTA Termination

The HWC program follows the termination policies established in the Memorandum of Agreement signed between GTAs and the University (found here: http://www.hreo.ku.edu/files/documents/gta_moa.pdf).

GTA-Appendix

The GTA Evaluation form is on the following page.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Evaluation Form
Humanities & Western Civilization Program
University of Kansas**

PART I: General Information

Name of GTA:
Name of supervisor/reviewer:
Review period:
Course(s) taught in this review period:
Course observation date(s) and faculty member(s):

PART II: Performance Factors for Evaluation

The following performance factors, or core competencies, reflect University expectations, values and priorities for graduate teaching assistants. *Please rate the performance of the GTA in this review period only in each of the following five areas.*

1. Teaching and Presentation Ability: able to monitor and evaluate student progress and assignments; able to develop and organize relevant teaching materials; able to utilize approved texts or other instructional materials; capable of preparing and administering examinations; provides opportunities for student engagement; team-oriented attitude; regular attendance at other related lectures and course meetings as specified by supervisors; effective working relationships with diverse constituencies; knowledge of student perspectives.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Notes:

2. Quality of Work: Completes work thoroughly and accurately; pays attention to details; well-organized; completes work on time; provides prompt responses to supervisors, colleagues and students; consistent and high level of performance; accepting of constructive criticism by demonstration of the ability to listen and incorporate the critique of others; understands the importance of confidentiality and the academic and privacy rights of students (e.g., FERPA, University Rules and Regulations); able to provide clear assignment instructions; well-prepared to teach each class.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Notes:

3. Oral and Written Communication: able to communicate with a diverse range of people; provides accurate information and teaches course content with enthusiasm; deals effectively with stress; active listening skills; courteous and patient; able to understand and constructively respond to student needs; clarity in both oral and written skills with the ability to talk/write at the appropriate level; capable of providing clear and constructive feedback regarding colleagues upon supervisors' request.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Notes:

4. Accountability and Self-Management: Possesses organizational and time management skills; holds office hours at the specified time and location; maintains on-going communication regarding workload to supervisor; able to multitask, prioritize and respond promptly to requests of supervisors (e.g. the submission of grades, meetings to review work, updating of BlackBoard, etc.); takes responsibility for all aspects of their work; willing to ask for help and to help others; able to adhere to the course outline and schedule on the syllabus; able to meet the department and university criteria for holding a GTA position; punctual and reliable.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Notes:

5. Subject Knowledge and Learning Ability: demonstrates the ability to learn new content quickly especially new scholarship in the field as it relates to the course; interested in learning more than the basics of teaching pedagogy; capable of responding to student questions in a timely manner; open to new technology related to the implementation of the course (e.g., BlackBoard, PowerPoint, Excel, laboratory hardware and software, etc.); able to write clear examinations that are consistent with learning outcomes and course goals.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Notes:

PART III: Evaluation Summary

Specific information related to **the GTA's strengths:**

Specific feedback on **areas in which the GTA can improve:**

Other notes/commendations:

Signature of Graduate Teaching Assistant

Date

Signature of Reviewer

Date