

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING GSAS TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

This document outlines types of GSAS fellowships students will hold during their studies in the department and details the process by which the department administers Teaching Fellowships. The Department of Political Science adheres to all GSAS fellowship policies. Students are expected to make themselves aware of terms and conditions of their fellowships, which range from the expectation of satisfactory academic progress to the requirement of service to the department, to the taxability of stipends.

This memo should therefore be read in conjunction with GSAS fellowship policies, which are available here: <http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/fellowship-information-doctoral-students>

TYPES OF GSAS FELLOWSHIPS

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program with multi-year funding receive one of three types of fellowship in each semester, depending upon their stage in the program and their activity in a given semester. Students may hold a Dean's Fellowship, a Teaching Fellowship or a Dissertation Fellowship.

Dean's Fellowships

Dean's Fellowships are awarded to entering students for their first year in the Ph.D. program and entail no service obligation beyond satisfactory progress in study and research. Dean's Fellows are not permitted to hold instructional appointments. However, students who enter with advanced standing may be expected to teach in their first year.

The cash component of Dean's Fellowships is disbursed entirely as stipend, either directly deposited into a personal bank account or available by check at the cashiering window in Student Financial Services.

Teaching Fellowships

Teaching Fellowships are awarded to students who, as part of their academic requirement and training, are appointed as Teaching Assistants and perform duties ranging from reading and grading assignments to running discussion sections or labs. The expected time commitment for these duties is 10 to 15 hours per week on average. Students are not permitted to work more than 20 hours in any given week.

Most students who are awarded multi-year GSAS fellowships are required to serve as Teaching Assistants for six of the eight semesters in the second through fifth years of study. (Others may

be selected to serve as Preceptors in the Core Curriculum, Cordier Fellows in the School of International and Public Affairs, or Research Fellows for select faculty members in the department.)

Each student, whether funded by Columbia or not, must obtain at least one year of teaching experience in order to receive the M.Phil. degree.

Students in the sixth and seventh years of residence are eligible to receive Teaching Fellowships should enrollment in the department's courses be large enough to require the appointment of TA's in addition to those in their guaranteed years of GSAS funding. The Office of the Dean of GSAS approves Teaching Fellowships for students in the sixth and seventh years of residence upon request by the department and based upon enrollment in the courses in which the Teaching Fellows will assist.

Teaching Fellowships serve two purposes. They provide training in teaching for future Ph.D.'s, and students' service as Teaching Assistants is part of the department's budgetary bargain with GSAS, which provides nearly full funding for the graduate program. Hence, the department takes very seriously its obligation to provide Teaching Assistant support for its courses.

A portion of the cash component of Teaching Fellowships is disbursed as stipend, either directly deposited into a personal bank account or available by check at the cashiering window in Student Financial Services. The remainder of the cash component of Teaching Fellowships is disbursed as salary, either directly deposited into a personal bank account or available by check in the department office.

Dissertation Fellowships

Dissertation Fellowships are awarded to students who are engaged in researching or writing their dissertations. The expectation is that students will have completed all M.Phil. requirements and successfully defended the dissertation proposal before receiving a Dissertation Fellowship. GSAS multi-year fellowships normally include two semesters of Dissertation Fellowship. Dissertation Fellows are not permitted to hold teaching appointments, and they receive the entire cash component of their fellowship in the form of stipend disbursed at the beginning of the semester.

Students should inform the Director of Academic Administration in advance of any semester in which they plan to take one or two semesters of Dissertation Fellowship.

EXTERNAL FELLOWSHIPS

External funding may alter the normal pattern of service to the department. Students who receive an external award should review the GSAS external fellowship policy here:

<http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/external-fellowship-policy>

Students who receive a competitively awarded external fellowship during a year in which they would have otherwise received a year of GSAS fellowship may choose to receive a supplement to the external fellowship or defer a year of GSAS fellowship. Those students should register their preference between these options on the “Statement of Understanding” form available on the GSAS web site at the link provided above.

Students who receive external fellowships or for any other reason decline Columbia fellowship should consult with the Director of Academic Administration to determine how external funding will affect their teaching obligations and multi-year funding status.

THE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS FOR TEACHING ASSISTANT APPOINTMENTS

In assigning Teaching Fellows to specific courses, the department makes its best effort to match students to fields and courses in which they would like to teach, taking into account as well the expressed preferences of instructors. However, it is sometimes necessary to assign students to assist in courses on subjects in which they have not taken coursework. The expectation is that Ph.D. students will be able to obtain mastery of a subject sufficient to assist in teaching at the undergraduate level.

Assignment of Teaching Fellows to courses begins in the summer of the preceding academic year. Each summer, a list of courses in which enrollments are expected to reach numbers large enough to require the support of Teaching Assistants is distributed to every prospective Teaching Fellow. Teaching Fellows are asked to submit to the Director of Academic Administration a form provided for registering their preferences for assignment to specific courses.

The assignment request form asks each student to submit two lists of three to four courses to which they would like to be assigned, one list for the fall and one for the spring (six to eight courses altogether). **To make the process fair, students should not submit a list with fewer than three choices per semester.**

Teaching Assistant assignments must be approved by the Deputy Chair and the Office of the Dean of GSAS.

Using student preferences as a starting point, students are assigned to courses according to four criteria:

- **Faculty preferences.** At the same time that it solicits student preferences, the department asks faculty members to register their preference for Teaching Assistants who have particular skills, academic interests, or completed coursework or exams. Faculty members may also request specific students to serve as Teaching Assistants in their courses.
- **Seniority.** Preferences of students in their later years of teaching will be considered before the preferences of students in their early years of teaching are considered. However, every attempt will be made to match each student with at least one of his or her first or second choices each year.

- **Field of study.** A student's academic interests will be considered when assignments are made. However, every student will be expected to teach in at least one course outside his or her field during the three years of Teaching Fellowship. Each semester, several students will be assigned to courses that do not appear on their assignment request forms, particularly if no student names those courses as one of their preferences. Special consideration is given to the preferences of students whose preferences could not be accommodated in prior semesters.
- **The needs of the department.** Some courses require more Teaching Assistants than others, and the teaching schedule can shift from year to year depending upon faculty leaves and other staffing issues. Though the department makes every effort to minimize disruptions, students should be prepared to shift their assignments should unexpected schedule or enrollment changes occur. Unfortunately, such changes often occur when enrollments shift during the student program change period once courses are underway. Such last-minute changes are unavoidable, but the department makes every attempt to settle assignments as soon as possible.

Once all Teaching Assistant assignments have been made, the Director of Academic Administration notifies and confirms assignments with each faculty member and student.