Mechanical Engineering Department
Procedures and Guidelines for TA Assignments

Revised December 23, 2019

Procedures:

1) Students should submit TA applications to the Graduate Office. Online application forms are available on our Graduate Program website.

2) Each area should have a faculty who is responsible for assigning TA positions. This "TA coordinator" will determine the number of TA slots available to the area based on the final TA budget which will be available approximately three weeks before the Fall semester starts and late November before the Spring semester starts.

3) The TA coordinator should review TA applications and make <u>preliminary assignments</u> of TA's. It is generally good practice to consult with faculty who are responsible for lab courses when making decisions on TA assignments. For Fall semesters preliminary assignments should be done one week before the first day of classes. For Spring semesters this should be done before the holiday break. For summer this should be done by early May. The TA coordinator will take into account the Guidelines listed below and each student's preference for courses they would prefer to teach, which will be listed in their application.

4) The preliminary assignment should be emailed to all faculty in the area for review. Faculty should be given a couple of days to respond. Once all faculty concerns have been addressed, final TA assignments are made. For Fall this will be a few days before the first class day. For Spring, this should be by mid December. For summer, this should be about one week before the first day of classes.

5) The final TA assignments are forwarded to Graduate Office to contact students via email informing them of their TA assignments.

6) The Graduate Office will make the TA appointments and check that each area has remained within their budgeted number of TA slots.

TA positions are a valuable resource for the department to support our teaching and research missions. TA positions are not owned or held by the faculty member assigned to teach courses needing TAs.

Guidelines for selecting TA's listed in order of priority:

1) Letter of commitment (you should be sure that all students to whom we made financial offer are covered by a TA position if they do not have an GRA position).

2) At least one experienced TA (if there is only one experienced TA available, this criterion supersedes all the following criteria).

3) Students from your area, with the student being technically competent to be a TA for the course in which they are appointed. Priority should be given to students who are interested in teaching and/or going into academia.

4) Priority should be given to qualified students of junior faculty.

5) Experience (if they are known to be a good TA they have high priority, if they are known to be a poor TA they have very low priority).

6) Instructor's preference (limited to 1 or 2 students that the instructor specifically wants--this is generally due to the experience that the student has).

7) *How many semesters the student has been supported as a TA (low priority for students who have been a TA for 2 semesters).

8) How long the student has been in the graduate program (low priority for MS students beyond 2nd year, for PhD students beyond 4th year).

9) PhD's have higher priority than MS.

10) Who is the student's thesis advisor (low priority for students of an advisor who has more than one student supported by a TA).

11) Higher priority for students who have been supported by an GRA, and need a TA because funding has run out (i.e., bridge funding).

* There will be an absolute maximum of three semesters of TA appointments for all students (for extraordinary circumstances the area coordinator, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, may appoint a student beyond this maximum). If a student completes an M.S. in our department and continues on to the Ph.D. program, he/she will be eligible for an additional three semesters of TA appointments after advancing to candidacy.