

# **Graduate Student Instructor Manual**

**June 2016**

This manual is intended to provide general information for the Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. A number of attachments are included with the printed version of this manual which contain additional important information:

Academic Year Calendar  
Privacy of Student Records

Your comments and suggestions for future revisions will be appreciated.

## **Teaching Assignments**

The load for a half-time instructor is 20 clock hours per week, of which up to eight are contact hours, in classroom, tutorial office hour, or help center (up to twelve hours in the help center). Assignments are made with consideration of the background and interests of the instructor. The Assistant to the Head of the Department will discuss interests and preparation with incoming instructors during the orientation period before teaching assignments are finalized. Experienced instructors have already had an opportunity to request particular assignments during the preceding semester.

It is departmental policy to limit the teaching assignments, whenever feasible, so that an instructor has no more than two separate preparations to make. The teaching hours are arranged so that they do not conflict with the courses in which the instructor is enrolled. Holding to these policies may require that preliminary plans for teaching assignments be altered in order to complete the teaching schedule of the Department. The instructor may teach a recitation class, a laboratory class, assist with the preparation of course materials, conduct help classes or grade papers.

Course descriptions may be found online at:  
[http://www.physics.purdue.edu/academic-programs/courses/all\\_courses.php](http://www.physics.purdue.edu/academic-programs/courses/all_courses.php)

## **International Students: Oral English Proficiency Project**

The University has instituted an Oral English Proficiency Project (OEPP) to ensure that language and cultural barriers do not diminish the effectiveness of instructors whose native language is not English and who have not had

experience in American undergraduate colleges. Non-native English speaking GTA's are required to take the OEPP screening upon entrance and either to pass it at the level of contact teaching or, in case of failure, to register for and pass the remedial oral English course in the first semester. The satisfaction of this requirement is an important part of job performance, on which the level of subsequent financial support will be based, including the teaching opportunity during the summer session. Students from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are also required to take this test. Immediately on arrival on campus, such students should make arrangements with Sandy Formica, Graduate Secretary (Room 152), to take the battery of tests that OEPP administers during the orientation period.

As a result of OEPP evaluations, registration may be required in a special course, English 62000 "Classroom Communication for International Teaching Graduate Students".

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants**

Teaching Assistants (TAs) may not cancel, be late at, or shorten their assigned classes, labs, Help Center hours or tutorial office hours without the explicit approval of their supervisor, i.e. the instructor in charge of the course or a designated aide. Help-Center and tutorial office hours continue through the Final-exam week. It is the TA's responsibility to find a competent replacement if she/he is unable to make it to class, etc. for any reason, and to immediately notify the supervisor and the undergraduate office. The replacement should be someone with teaching assignment for the same course currently or in recent past as much as possible, and should never be anyone without a current affiliation with the Physics Department or be paid for the service out of pocket by the TA requesting replacement. TAs assigned to Help Center must also observe the rules given in the Help Center TA Duties document (given to you with Help Center assignment).

TAs are expected to serve as proctors in course tests and exams, and to participate in all course meetings and grading sessions. No replacements are acceptable without the supervisor's explicit approval. This means that TAs should be on campus during the week before classes, and should not plan to leave town before the Tuesday after Final-Exam week.

A TA may not charge anything for any help to any student in any course to which the TA is assigned.

TAs are expected to follow their supervisors' instructions with respect to the manner of teaching, grading homework in a timely manner, etc.

TAs are expected to check both their Physics Department mailboxes and their e-mail at least once a day for instructions. TAs are expected to select at least one administrative office hour per week, during which students will be able to discuss matters (such as questions about how their quizzes and homework assignments were graded) unrelated to the concerns provided for in help centers or tutorial office hours.

University regulations forbid any exams or Recitation quizzes during the week preceding the Final-exam period (15th week of the semester) and any posting of grades by name or by any parts of the student identification number.

Unsatisfactory performance or non-performance of TA duties may lead to a reduction or loss of financial support by the Department of Physics. It may also lead to later less favorable letters of recommendation to potential future employers.

### **Required Course on Pedagogy**

The satisfactory completion of PHYS 60500 (Pedagogical Methods for Physics Graduate Students; Sem. 1, 2 credits) by the first semester for the instructional staff is required of ALL instructors.

### **Evaluation Procedures**

Each professor is asked to evaluate the work of the assistants assigned to his course at the close of the semester, on a scale with 5.0 as the maximum. Comments on initiative, the quality of work, and the suitability of the assignment are also invited. The ratings may be discussed in a private conference with either the professor giving the rating or the Assistant to the Head of the Department.

Students in each recitation or laboratory section evaluate the performance of their instructor during the twelfth or thirteenth week of both spring and fall semesters as well as during the summer session. The evaluation is based on their responses to the items, "My instructor seems well prepared and is organized in class, etc." and "I would rate the overall performance of my instructor as" (excellent ... poor). These sets of evaluations will go to the instructors, and are available to the professors in charge of the courses and the Department administrators in charge of instructional activities.

A "performance index" is calculated for each instructor shortly after the end of the academic year. This index is used in the selection of instructors for promotion to higher step positions. The computation of the performance index gives equal weight to two factors:

- (1) ratings by supervising professors,
- (2) ratings by students

### **Stipends for Graduate Student Instructional Staff**

The monthly stipend for the graduate student staff varies according to their step classification, which for 2016-17 academic year ranges from \$1,699 (for step 3), \$1,940 (for step 5), \$2,183 (for step 7B), \$2,220 (for step 8) to \$2,254 (for step 8B).

### **Tuition and Taxes (2016-17)**

Fees are remitted for all graduate appointees except for approximately \$303 per semester, which includes specified medical services at the Student Hospital. Without this remission, total tuition and fees for residents of Indiana is \$5,001 per semester, and \$14,402 per semester for nonresidents. Compensation for all instructors is subject to withholding for both Federal and Indiana income taxes and social security taxes as required by law.

### **Teaching Assistantship in Later Years**

Financial assistance in the form of Teaching Assistantship is primarily intended for the graduate students in the first couple of years before a student begins a Ph.D. thesis research under a major professor. Once a thesis research begins, the preferred form of financial support is the Research Assistantship normally paid out of the research grants held by the major professor since it is important for the student to be able to devote much of the time and effort to his/her research. So all Teaching Assistantships requested for those already engaged in thesis research will be reviewed by the Department Head for the circumstances that may require this form of support. Also, there are special rules governing the Teaching Assistantships requested for those whose major professors do not have regular appointments in the Physics Department as well as for those who have been in our graduate program for longer than 6 years.

## Vacations

Instructors are granted vacation during the periods of the academic year when classes are not in session. **The week prior to the first day of classes for spring and fall semesters and the period between the end of classes and the final date for submitting grade reports, which is the Tuesday following the end of examination week, are not vacation periods.** Instructors should check with the professor in charge of their assignment concerning attendance requirements during these periods. Since each semester (including examination period) is sixteen weeks long the total academic year assignment is at most 35 weeks. In addition, the Board of Trustees recently approved a new policy on parental leave that also applies to graduate student employees. The policy is described in the University Policy document:

<https://dev.www.purdue.edu/policies/human-resources/vie3.html>.

The implementation of this policy is being worked out by the Department.

## Summer Opportunities

There are limited openings for summer employment in the Department of Physics. The Department cannot guarantee summer employment, but applications for summer jobs can be made in the spring semester. All summer jobs are limited to two months.

## Tutoring Opportunities

There are students who seek private tutoring for Physics courses beyond the Help Center that we provide as a part of our normal instructional activities. To assist those students the Department normally maintains and publishes a list of those Physics graduate students who wish to offer these services for a fee. However, all arrangements are strictly between the students and private tutors and the Department does not sanction and is not responsible for any such arrangements. In addition, TAs cannot tutor students from the same course that they are assigned to teach. International students are not eligible to work in this way under their visa restrictions (unless in very rare cases, a special prior permission has been granted by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services).

## **Resources and Services for Graduate Student Instructional Staff**

The Undergraduate Office is in Room 144. The receptionist there has a stock of textbooks and office supplies you may need for your teaching assignment. Also, if you need typing and duplication services for your classes, the receptionist will arrange for them. Please submit such work at least 24 hours before the copies are needed.

The student-faculty shop is in Room 41. Access to the machines is limited to students who have been certified as proficient by the shop director, whose office is in Room 39. He can also arrange for instruction in use of the machines. These machines are to be used only for research-connected projects. Any problems with physical facilities in the building should be brought to the attention of the Building Deputy, Bruce Poer, in Room 1, Phone 7-491-1303.

## **Staff Benefits Available to Instructors**

There are a number of no-cost or reduced-cost benefits available to instructors. Some of these are listed below.

### **Purdue Recreational Sports Center:**

For more information, visit <http://www.purdue.edu/recsports/>. The RSC is located at 355 N. Martin Jischke Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907. The RSC serves as the playground for Purdue students, faculty, and staff, as well as spouses.

**Convocation Tickets:** Every year Purdue University is visited by many professional entertainers presenting programs of a cultural nature.

Examples from the 2016-17 series are Broadway shows like "Annie", "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, and concerts by Cecile Mclorin Salvant, Sfjazz Collective: The Michael Jackson Project and Harpeth Rising. Instructors can buy convocation "passes" from the box office that will allow the purchase of convocation tickets at the low student prices.

**Sports Tickets:** Season tickets to football and basketball games can be purchased at staff discount rates. Ticket purchase forms are circulated through campus mail at the beginning of each season, and at the end of the school year. A new instructor is required to present evidence of employment

by the University when making the initial purchase of a staff season ticket. The appropriate statement can be obtained from the Office of the Department Head.

**Medical Facilities and Health Insurance:** Graduate Instructors have unlimited use of the out-patient facilities at the Purdue University Student Hospital (PUSH). This includes treatment of colds, minor injuries, some psychiatric care, as well as any necessary physical therapy. However, lab work (e.g., X-rays, blood samples, etc.), surgery and major medical expenses are not included. Health insurance is available through the University which will provide coverage of major medical expenses up to certain limits. Spouse and dependents can also be covered under this plan. Brochures describing this program in more detail are circulated at the start of each semester.

**NOTE:** *International students are required to join the health insurance program.*

### **Disability Related Resources**

Purdue is committed to provide equal access and equal opportunity to all students, with or without disabilities, in all facets of University life. As a part of this commitment, the University strives to provide the professional expertise necessary to promote universal access. This applies to both you as a student and/or instructor and your students. These services include testing for the establishment of disabilities, Braille and tactile diagram translation, scribes, certifications for testing time accommodations, help with employment and dealing with the laws related to disability, referrals to other service providers, and many other aspects. Most of these services are provided through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) of the Office of the Dean of Students. Disability-related issues specific to your duties as a graduate instructor are mainly handled through the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), which offers many services such as mediation and providing grants for corrective devices. Both are located at Young Hall. In addition, the Advisory Council on Disability Issues is available to help students who need career advice or assistance working with instructors who have concerns about implementing academic accommodations. Prof. Ephraim Fischbach has served as the Departmental liaison to the Office of the Dean of Students for disability related issues.

### **Ombudspersons for Graduate Students**

Graduate students with problems related to interactions with other graduate students, faculty, or staff, or those related to their teaching duties, or

academic work which cannot be resolved through their academic advisor, have at their disposal a mechanism for addressing such issues. The Department of Physics has a faculty member who serves as an ombudsperson. It is his responsibility to help graduate students resolve these types of problems. If you have such a problem, please contact Professor Sherwin Love or Professor Erica Carlson. Another possibility is to consult the peer ombudspersons provided by the Graduate School. Please refer to the Graduate School for this option. If a problem cannot be resolved with the help of these persons, or if you are uncertain which Ombudsperson to contact, please bring the matter to the attention of the Physics Department Head, Professor John Finley.

### **Emergency Phone Numbers:**

- **Ambulance 911**
- **Fire 911**
- **Police 911**