Guidelines Governing the Selection, Hiring, and Use of Student Teaching Assistants

1. Eligibility and Selection

While individual instructors may nominate appropriate candidates, the chair is responsible for coordinating the selection of TA’s – after a review of all eligible candidates.

In most cases, only sophomores, juniors and seniors are eligible. First-semester first year students and foreign visiting exchange students are not eligible to hold TA positions. Before recommending a first-year student for a second semester TA position, the department or program chair must provide the Dean of the College with its rationale for the recommendation and receive the Dean of the College’s concurrence.

Students from the Graduate Program in the History of Art are eligible to serve as TA’s for courses in the Art Department. Whether graduates or undergraduates, the same policies apply regarding appointment procedures and uses of TAs for undergraduate courses.

2. Hiring

The hiring of the TA’s will be done by the academic assistant via the new PeopleSoft Manager’s Self Service module only after recommendation by the chair of the department or program. Final TA appointments will be approved and monitored by the Dean of the Faculty office.

The TA hiring may begin on August 1, 2013 for the fall semester and must be completed by September 6. NO EXCEPTIONS.

3. TA Job Description

TA’s may appropriately be used to discharge a variety of functions and may include various combinations of the following:

- Research and/or prepare course materials
- Manage and lead review sessions
- Hold office hours for students to provide additional academic support
- Monitor and outfit classrooms, studios, performance spaces, and/or labs for safety, organization, and instructional presentation
- Assist and/or lead lab sections and field work
- Assist in the organization of course related events or projects, such as guest speakers, field trips, demonstrations, etc
- Some grading or scoring is appropriate, but TA’s should never be used to grade examinations or quizzes where the evaluation is subjective or even borders on the subjective. Even where the evaluation is objective (or could better be described as scoring) the use of TAs for grading should consciously be minimized. In no cases should that portion of the grading for which they are responsible constitute more than 15% of the final grade. In all cases, instructors should make a conscious effort to convey to the students in their courses that the TAs, whatever the duties assigned to them, are working under close faculty supervision and have been given very little room to exercise their own discretion. If those duties involve grading, instructors should prepare a very detailed key to the answers expected from the students, should go over several of the papers with the TAs, and should make it very clear to the students enrolled in their courses that they (the instructors) are supervising and periodically reviewing the whole grading process.
4. **Stipend and Hours**

TA’s are appointed to serve in individual courses for periods of one semester at a time. A full (1.0) TA is expected to spend no more than 10 hours per week in the discharge of his/her duties. The stipend is $1120.00 for undergraduates and $1330.00 for first year graduate students and $1710.00 for second year graduate students. Half (0.5), three-quarter (0.75), and one-quarter (0.25) TA appointments may be recommended, with the hour commitment and stipend prorated accordingly.

For reasons both of instructional quality and equity in job distribution students are not allowed to undertake TA responsibilities at more than a 1.0 TA level. TA’s are allowed to be hired in two courses as long as they don’t exceed 0.5 in either. The 10 hour per week time restriction also protects students from becoming distracted from their own academic responsibilities.

5. **Writing TA’s**

Our director of Writing Programs, Stephanie Dunson, is continuing a program of "Writing TAs", open to all faculty. We’ve included the original announcement of the program below. Writing TAs are paid through TA accounts in the Dean of Faculty’s office, not through Department or Program budgets. So – please do not hesitate to make use of the Writing TA program for budgetary reasons. The deadline for hiring TA’s is also Friday, September 6.

The Office of Writing Programs will offer supplemental training in writing support for TAs selected by faculty across the disciplines. This new option for TA training will be particularly significant to those who teach writing-intensive courses, but it is available to faculty teaching any course that requires significant writing content. The new initiative will improve on the Writing Pilot program by allowing faculty maximum flexibility in selecting and directing TAs who work to support the writing efforts of students in their classes.

Interested faculty should first request TAs following the standard procedure outlined on the Dean of Faculty's web page. (See [http://dean-faculty.williams.edu/teaching-advising/teaching-assistant-hiring-guidelines/](http://dean-faculty.williams.edu/teaching-advising/teaching-assistant-hiring-guidelines/) ) Then those TAs will be invited to attend training sessions offered by the Office of Writing Programs that will be scheduled throughout the Fall Semester. Subjects covered in these training sessions may include Conducting Student Conferences, Leading Peer-Review Sessions, Basic Grammar, Rules of Effective Writing Style, Effective Essay Structure, Argument, Standards of Research, and Elements of Revision. (Additional writing topics may be covered at each faculty member's request.) For more information, please contact Stephanie Dunson, Director of Writing Programs at sed2@williams.edu