

## **Statement of MTE Policy:**

Department of Philosophy, Program in Philosophy, Neuroscience and Psychology

Washington University in St. Louis

According to the new MTE policy, Ph.D. students are required to do four semesters MTE-ing in the department (or, with advance approval, the requirement may be met by students MTEing for the MBB program, and for the WGSS program). This is not paid work, but is part of their educational experience. In other words, students serving as “mentees” are expected not simply to grade papers or exams, but to attend class, and meet regularly with faculty to discuss syllabi, lectures, lesson plans, and grading rubrics. Moreover, they are expected to respond to and implement constructive feedback from faculty. For instance, if a faculty member specifies that comments on papers ought to have a certain form or content, they may request that a mentee meet with them to review completed work, and revise as necessary. In addition, and with permission and in cooperation with the instructor, mentees may expect to serve as a guest lecturer for one or more classes, lead discussion, or organize and direct specific lessons or activities. Ideally, after a mentee lectures or leads discussion, faculty are expected to meet with them and provide them with constructive feedback and provide the student with a teaching letter commenting on their effectiveness in and out of the classroom, which will be submitted to the administrators for their job applicant files.

Ordinarily, students will complete their MTE requirements in their second and third year of the Ph.D. Program. Thus, they should have expected to complete these requirements by the time that they advance to candidacy, and can spend their final years of fellowship focusing on the dissertation and research.

The MTE requirements for Ph.D. students on special fellowship (e.g. Olin and Chancellor’s) will be the same as all other Ph.D. students’ requirements: four semesters minimum.

In addition to the MTEs that are an essential part of graduate education, the program offers graduate students two other ways of expanding their teaching experience. One is to serve as a grader. Students who have served at least two semesters as an MTE and who wish to receive extra pay over and above their fellowship may apply to serve as a grader for classes. Serving as a grader is paid work, and does not satisfy the MTE requirements. Strong preference will be shown to those candidates who have already completed their coursework.

The other way for students to expand their teaching experience is to teach a course in

University College or the Summer School. Again, this is open only to students who have served at least two semesters as an MTE, and again, especially for the University College courses during the Fall and Spring semesters, we strongly prefer candidates who have already completed their coursework. Again, too, this teaching is paid work, over and above the fellowship, and does not count toward the MTE requirements.

We will not permit U College teaching (for no pay) to satisfy the MTE requirement. This is because the goal of MTE-ing is not simply to gain experience in the classroom, but to learn from an experienced teacher with years (if not decades) in the classroom. This kind of experience requires attending lectures and observing the faculty member in the classroom, engaging with students' questions, as well as one-on-one meetings with faculty to discuss the syllabus, lesson plans, and grading.

Existing policy has created a (tenure stream) faculty "entitlement" at 45 students to teaching support. (We have also tried to honor this for permanent lecturer faculty.) We will retain this default policy, and when possible, hope to extend this to any tenure-stream faculty with 35 students or more, with a slight favoring of pre-tenure faculty for support.

We will make use of undergraduate teaching assistants, under some circumstances. Undergraduates may be hired to grade for classes (such as logic, probability theory, scientific reasoning) that involve relatively straightforward grading (problem sets rather than grading essays, for instance). We will hire all and only undergraduate students who have taken the class (or similar) and passed with distinction.

Last, graduate students may not be hired as lecturers to teach their own courses in the Department. However, we will continue our practice of hiring recent Ph.D.s to teach undergraduate classes, provided of course that the recent Ph.D. has relevant expertise.

We leave how faculty and graduate students organize and plan how they work together largely to their discretion, but here are some suggested guidelines:

1. The faculty member and student should expect to meet at least three times during the semester to go over the syllabus and expectations of both parties, set deadlines, and touch base on student progress and grading.
2. If any issues with the class are brought to the attention of either party, they are expected to bring it to the attention of the other. If issues of discipline or inappropriateness come up, the faculty member and student should meet and discuss how best to address the issue.
3. Faculty may require mentee to attend lecture, meet with them on a regular basis, and complete grading and/or preparation of a lesson plan in a timely fashion, so the faculty member has time to review the material.

4. The student may expect feedback on their contributions to the class, whether in the form of verbal feedback, or in writing. At the discretion of faculty, a letter with constructive feedback on teaching may be provided to the student. Such letters might provide advice on presentation style, or suggestions for how to better organize or present lecture material, and lessons.
5. We recommend that the student give a guest lecture. The faculty member may require the student to provide a lesson plan or outline of the lecture in advance, and require that the student meet with them both before and after lecturing, to go over any concerns.
6. We recommend that the faculty member provide the mentee with clear guidelines for grading exams and written assignments, whether as a set of correct responses, or a rubric for grading.
7. If faculty have grading rubrics, lesson plans, or tips for teaching that may be particularly effective or useful, we urge them to provide examples to department administrators, to be shared with all.
8. If a mentee is not meeting expectations of faculty, the faculty should bring this to the attention of the graduate director and chair. In the worst case scenario, a faculty member may request a last minute grader for assistance.