



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.3070

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Evaluation and Orientation of Student Teaching Assistants

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I. Purpose and Scope

Experience in classroom instruction is a valuable opportunity for both undergraduate and graduate students. Consistent with the university's mission, such opportunities should be encouraged and accessible; however, academic quality should not decline as a result.

This document outlines a procedure by which undergraduate and graduate students with roles involving classroom instruction will be evaluated in order to preserve academic quality and encourage pedagogical growth of those evaluated.

A. Definitions

1. Student Teaching Assistant

The term "student teaching assistant" in this document shall refer to both undergraduate and graduate students who are responsible for face-to-face classroom instruction at least once per week in at least one course section. This includes, but is not limited to: lab instructors, recitation instructors, and discussion leaders.

This policy shall not be interpreted to include undergraduate and graduate students who are solely responsible for grading, research, or clerical duties.

2. Supervising Instructor

The "supervising instructor" is an individual with significant pedagogical experience charged with mentoring the student teaching assistant. S/he will usually be the instructor of record for the course, but may also be an individual assigned by the department head.

II. Policy

1. All student teaching assistants must be evaluated, in accordance with the procedures below, each semester/term in which they are engaged in face-to-face instructional activities.

III. Procedure

A. Orientation

Student teaching assistants must attend, prior to the start of the pertinent semester/term, an orientation session developed by the department in which the course is offered. The purpose of this orientation session is to provide student teaching assistants with information regarding their classroom instruction responsibilities and on effective pedagogical tools and practices.

B. Evaluation

1. All teaching assistants shall participate in an evaluation process developed by their respective department.
2. This process shall include at least one mid-term observation of in-class performance, supplemented by an opportunity for the students in the class to provide comments. The student comments may, but need not, be solicited in conjunction with the in-class observation session.
3. For student teaching assistants engaged in their first term of teaching at WKU, the items in subparagraph 2 shall be supplemented by an additional observation, to be carried out within the first three weeks of the term.
4. The supervising instructor shall meet with the student teaching assistant within one week of completion of both the mid-term written evaluation and observation to constructively discuss pedagogical improvements.

C. Use of Evaluation Results

Each department head shall take into consideration the results of prior evaluations when assigning student teaching assistants to subsequent teaching duties.

D. Review of this Policy

Notwithstanding the ability of any and all parties to initiate review of this policy, as prescribed by the Policy on Policies (0.000x), this policy shall be reviewed at the point that the number of course sections instructed or partially instructed by teaching assistants in any college reaches 5% of all sections in that college.

E. Enforcement

Enforcement of this policy shall occur at the departmental level.

IV. Related Policies