

MEMO

TO: Deans, Chairs, and Program Heads  
FROM: Mark Riley, Dean, The Graduate School  
SUBJECT: Graduate TA Certification Evaluation

Each semester in accordance with guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the standards outlined in the “University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants” at Florida State University, the Academic Dean of each college is required to certify to the Vice President of Faculty Development and Advancement and the Dean of the Graduate School that each graduate student who serves as a graduate teaching assistant (TA) in the classroom or online is competent to teach at the level she or he is appointed and for international graduate teaching assistants (ITA) that they are also competent to teach in spoken English. The necessary qualifications for teaching are stated in the “University-wide Standards for Graduate Teaching Assistants” posted [here](#).

Colleges/units need to validate that each TA is serving their designated instructional assignment in the classroom before certifying to the Vice President of Faculty Development and Advancement and the Dean of The Graduate School that the TA certification process is complete. TAs serving as the instructor of record (IOR) for an undergraduate-level course need to be qualified to serve in this role prior to the start of the semester, appointed under the correct job code (M9184), and assigned to the course in Student Central. Students who do not meet the criteria for certification should not be appointed as a TA, serve as the instructor of record for any undergraduate-level course, or receive access to a Canvas site.

FSU defines the “instructor of record” as the individual designated by the academic unit as responsible for a course, including developing its design, delivery, assignments, and assessments. All instructors of record, regardless of rank or type, must meet the appropriate standards for credentials and appointment. (FSU Policy 3A-6)

Normal policy forbids graduate students from serving as an instructor of record and teaching a graduate course. This includes co-listed sections. Exceptions can be made by requesting approval from the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement through the Dean of the Graduate School. Please refer to [FSU’s Faculty Handbook \(Section 5, under Graduate Teaching Status\)](#) for more information on this.

An online portal was created within the Graduate Student Tracking (GST) system to facilitate and streamline the certification process. The TA certification submission process is outlined below.

314 Westcott Building, Florida State University, P.O. Box 3061410, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1410

### Steps for Submission of Documentation

1. Each department/unit should evaluate all of their current and/or new graduate students to determine at which levels each is qualified to teach and if the student meets the requirement for competency in spoken English. This evaluation can be done prior to the start of the semester by running the TA Student Level Evaluation report in GST. Programs should run this report **in advance** to determine the pool of students qualified and therefore eligible to serve as a TA. Please be aware that students eligible at Levels 1 & 2 may not be qualified to serve at Levels 3 & 4. The reports can be run to distinguish the levels. The reports provide essential information for making valid appointments.
2. **Note:** Students who do not meet the criteria for certification are denoted in GST (red “x” visible) and should not be appointed as a TA. A program should reassign such students to a non-TA position if they wish to continue funding them. If a program believes the data is not correct in GST or believes it has a justifiable reason for an exception, it should contact James Beck in The Graduate School. After the department/unit has confirmed the qualifications and eligibility of their graduate students, appropriate appointments should be made, after which a memo should be sent to the Academic Dean’s Office stating that their TAs are qualified to teach and the TA certification process is complete.
3. The Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative **should** evaluate the TA certification entries in GST and confirm that the college’s TAs are properly qualified. If “inappropriate appointments” are identified in GST for TAs then the academic college needs to coordinate with their departments at the beginning of the semester to clear this up with HR.
4. After the Academic Dean or Dean’s Office representative has confirmed that all of the college’s TAs are qualified, he/she should send an email to James Beck ([jbeck@fsu.edu](mailto:jbeck@fsu.edu)).
  - The email should simply state that the “college’s TA certification process is complete and that all TAs are competent in spoken English and qualified to teach at their level of appointment.”
  - Do not include the names or IDs of individual students in the email.
  - Please send the email after it has been confirmed that all TAs are certified in GST.
  - TAs need to be certified and emails need to be received by **Friday, August 21, 2020**