

Approved Proposal re: TA Workload Guidelines from Faculty Meeting of 10/28/2011

Proposal:

1. In order to keep the total amount of work roughly the same as we transition from 50 students per TA to 75-80 students per TA, faculty members should consider reducing the total amount of assigned work. In other words, as a rule of thumb, consider reducing by 1/3 the amount of graded assignments in the course.
2. Midterm, final, and one paper of about 3 pages (1000 words) should be regarded as typical and standard.
3. TAs should probably not be asked to grade more than 1500 words of writing in a semester.
4. If you'd like to make your 1000-level course a more writing intensive course, then you should probably assign no more than 2 5-page papers, plus a final exam. Another option to consider is for the faculty member to grade 1/3 of the papers himself or herself.
5. Faculty members should consider the possibility of giving rigorous but easy-to-grade multiple-choice exams.
6. Quizzes, 1-page homework assignments, and exams take less time to grade than 3-5 page papers. If one wishes to assign more than one 3-5 page paper in a semester, the faculty member should consider grading a portion of the papers herself.

TA conflicts between grad work and grading

7. Faculty members teaching graduate students are urged to require their students to turn in all work, especially final term papers, for the semester by the day before final exam week begins. In order to make this possible, faculty should consider making the last two weeks of the semester a 'reading period' for graduate students with no new readings, no written assignments, and (in grad seminars at least) no class meetings. Faculty members should consider having just 13 seminar meetings, with the last two weeks devoted to working on final term papers. During the last two weeks of class, faculty can for example, have a 'mini-conference' in which students present drafts of their term papers, or can meet individually with students to talk about drafts.
8. Faculty members teaching classes with TAs should not assign any work that needs to be graded during the reading period, i.e., during the last two weeks of the term before finals week.
9. Faculty members teaching multi-section lecture courses should realize that the published deadlines for grades is a non-enforceable deadline; the 'real' deadline is the deadline for web grading—typically a week after the last day of finals. This should give TAs enough time to grade final exams and calculate final grades for the course.

Lee motioned and Jaggar seconded: 17 yes; 1 abstain.