

# Professional Development

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# Professional Development

Doctoral training is designed to prepare students to become independent thinkers and researchers who will serve as the next generation of professional, scholarly, and educational leaders in the global society. As noted in *Best Practices: Core Expectations for Graduate Education at Duke*, a successful graduate education encompasses at least four separate components: (1) development of an individual research agenda, (2) preparation for and experience in a variety of teaching roles, (3) opportunities for professional career development, and (4) active participation in a disciplinary or professional community. Faculty advisors provide critical academic training during the student's graduate career and introduce them to a professional society; however, students may or may not be interested in following in the footsteps of their advisors. Today's doctoral students have various employment opportunities, including faculty member at a college or university, industry researcher, administrator, writer, government adviser, filmmaker, entrepreneur, and high school teacher. While nearly half of Duke's Ph.D. alumni/ae pursue careers in academia, others choose career paths in government, industry, research, corporations, or non-profit institutions.

Professional development should be at the forefront of students' minds at every stage of the graduate career. Students must seek out professional development opportunities that complement their research training and augment their skill sets. Training is available to expand their communication, leadership, teaching, or presentation skills in ways relevant to any career path, and certain activities can help them identify careers in which they will thrive. Graduate students who develop a broad range of professional skills often have greater flexibility as they enter the job market.

Graduate School staff members will notify you about professional development events and resources throughout the year via e-mail notices and our Web site. The Graduate School offers a variety of courses, workshops, and services to help students achieve their career goals such as courses and workshops in teaching and technology, the English for International Students program, Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training (for Ph.D. students), and the Preparing Future Faculty program. The Graduate School also works closely with many other units within and beyond the University—such as Duke's Career Center, the Office of Research Support, and the Office of Postdoctoral Services—to provide the best professional development resources to its students. See the Career & Professional Development section of our Web site for current events or additional resources.

# Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Instructors

Duke University Graduate School is committed to the professional development of graduate students as effective college or university teachers. Graduate students may serve as teaching assistants (TAs), may teach their own courses while at Duke, and may pursue faculty positions in higher education. We offer relevant training that will prepare graduate students for the realities they will encounter as TAs and future faculty members—realities such as classroom management, student learning styles, active learning, new expectations of junior faculty, appropriate uses of instructional technology, peer evaluation of teaching, and attention to student learning outcomes in higher education. In addition, we provide resources to assist faculty and departments engaged in direct training and mentoring of graduate student TAs or instructors.

While the primary mentoring of TAs often is handled by individual faculty within a department or program of study, the Graduate School offers various courses (GS301, GS302, GS305), workshops (like the Teaching IDEAS series), and programs to supplement this training. In fact, the *Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)* program provides an opportunity for advanced Ph.D. students to learn about faculty roles and responsibilities across a range of academic institutions by interacting regularly with faculty mentors at our nearby partner institutions (Durham Technical Community College, Elon University, Guilford College, Meredith College, North Carolina Central University). Since the number of PFF Fellows is limited annually, we collaborate with the Career Center and other units to offer similar training and topics to a wider audience at Duke. Moreover, we collaborate with Duke's Center for Instructional Technology (CIT), the Link Teaching and Learning Center, the Thompson Writing Program, the Scholarly Communications Office, the Academic Resource Center, and the Office of Judicial Affairs (on academic integrity) to promote training on a wide range of topics related to effective teaching in higher education.

Because of the importance of any teaching responsibilities assigned to graduate students at Duke, serious consideration must be given to how we train, develop, and evaluate their teaching. The University expects that all graduate departments and programs—particularly those in Arts & Sciences disciplines—will develop their own training to prepare graduate students for their upcoming teaching roles in the discipline. Although these training programs are likely to have several elements in common, each program should be tailored to the signature pedagogies of the discipline and to the resources of the department. In addition, departmentally based programs are expected to contribute to the vitality of disciplinary and interdisciplinary units by fostering collegiality and intellectual exchange among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. A model program is the *Certificate in Teaching College Biology*, and we are working to develop similar certificate programs with other departments.

Ultimately, the overall pedagogical objectives of graduate programs can be separated into two distinct learning objectives. First, they must prepare graduate students for their specific roles in undergraduate instruction at Duke. Second, they must prepare them to enter subsequent employment as experienced teachers, researchers, or other professionals who are able to present their work more effectively than doctoral recipients from other competitive institutions.

Finally, in order to ensure fairness in financial remuneration, equal demands upon graduate students' time, open communication, adequacy of preparation for instructional roles, and ongoing professional development, the *Guidelines and Policies* that follow propose broad standards and a common foundation for these departmentally based programs. The *Guidelines and Policies* address the selection, assignment, training, payment, supervision, and evaluation of teaching assistants. They are intended, in most instances, to be suggestive rather than prescriptive and to raise issues that departmental and program faculty should consider and review annually.

# **Duke University Guidelines and Policies for the Professional Development of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Instructors**

## **TEACHING ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In numerous departments at Duke, graduate teaching assistants (TAs) perform a variety of roles related to teaching that represent different levels of independence and of direct contact with undergraduate students.

The designations of these TA assignments may differ among the various graduate programs, and can include serving as laboratory assistants, laboratory directors, graders of essays and examinations, course development assistants, leaders of discussion sections, course instructors, teaching apprentices, and head teaching assistants. Often a single TA assignment will include more than one of these roles. With accompanying training, these roles might properly be understood as constituting an apprenticeship in teaching.

During the course of their graduate education, TAs should, where possible and appropriate, progress from TA assignments closely supervised by faculty to less closely supervised assignments. We strongly encourage departments to provide graduate students with rationalized and incremental experiences in teaching as they progress through their graduate programs. To the extent possible, departments should make assignments that contribute to the intellectual and professional development of graduate students, not ones that represent menial or highly repetitive tasks. Advanced students may assume full responsibility for their own courses or, in some programs, for coordinating the activities of beginning TAs.

Each department and faculty member should develop and publicize any specialized responsibilities assumed by TAs in their various instructional roles within the departmental curriculum or their individual courses. Where practical, these responsibilities should be communicated either in the annual contract letters provided to graduate TAs or in a separate letter prior to the semester in which they are to be employed.

Whether graduate TAs serve primarily as assistants to a faculty instructor, instructors of their own classes, graders, tutorial leaders, laboratory instructors, or as occasional lecturers or discussion group facilitators, all TAs at Duke University are expected to maintain the highest levels of professional and ethical standards. These standards include, among others, a respect for honest and responsible exchange of intellectual ideas, fair and equal treatment of all students, respect for individual differences, and avoidance of any interactions that could jeopardize the objective assessment of student efforts.

## **SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT OF TAs**

In order to ensure that graduate students are qualified for their roles as TAs, the following *minimum* guidelines are provided:

1. Only enrolled graduate students who are in good academic standing are eligible for teaching assistantships;

2. Only enrolled graduate students who demonstrate oral proficiency in English are eligible for appointment as a graduate teaching assistant. This proficiency is determined by the Graduate School, as currently the policy, in consultation with individual directors of graduate study, and may vary depending upon the requirements of the TA assignment;
3. Only graduate students who have completed one year of academic study in their discipline at Duke and who have completed or are currently taking either a departmentally based or Graduate School training course or program should be given complete instructional responsibility for a free-standing course;
4. First-year graduate TAs are normally expected to work under the supervision of individual faculty, who mentor them in carrying out duties in specific laboratory or lecture courses.

A limited number of exceptions to the second of these guidelines may be required in departments where all first-year students serve as laboratory or other instructional assistants. In such cases, exceptions will be granted on condition that students are enrolled in the appropriate classes of the English for International Students program. Exceptions to the third guideline may also be made in individual cases, particularly where students have entered their graduate programs with outstanding professional experience or commensurate work experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. In all cases, departments and programs must document all exceptions granted.

Clear procedures for the selection and assignment of graduate students as TAs are essential to prevent misunderstandings about, and inequities in, the allocation of departmental resources to graduate students. Departments should make written guidelines available to their graduate students. To ensure a common understanding of TA responsibilities, departments should offer each TA a contract at the time of assignment that clearly specifies both the expectations of the position the graduate student will fill and the financial remuneration the student will receive. Departments are strongly encouraged to prepare brief descriptions of TA duties for each of their courses in which TAs serve and to make these descriptions available to all graduate students.

## **TA TRAINING**

Because teaching expertise represents a set of skills and attitudes acquired through training, experience, and critical reflection, preparation for—and practice in—teaching are at the core of an effective professional development program for graduate TAs. Departments in which students routinely pursue academic careers should provide ongoing training to ensure that their graduate students are adequately prepared for their responsibilities as both TAs at Duke and faculty members elsewhere. This training, ideally, should include a discipline-specific introduction to issues of course design and planning, instructional methods, effective assignment sequencing, and issues of evaluation and grading that is offered either prior to or concurrent with their appointment. Departments that do not already have training programs are encouraged to work with the Graduate School in developing them. Graduate TAs also should be encouraged to avail themselves of both the extensive pedagogical resources available in and the pedagogical workshops offered by the Graduate School (i.e., GS301 “Instructional Uses of Technology” and GS302 “Introduction to College Teaching”). Additional resources are available through the Preparing Future Faculty program, the Teaching IDEAS discussion series, and the Teaching Mini-grant program coordinated by the

Graduate School. Graduate students in programs that do not typically lead to careers in the academy also benefit from TA training and instructional experiences. Such activities hone professional abilities to marshal, summarize, and present research and other material in clear and effective form and are therefore highly desirable for students planning careers in business or industry. Departments in this category are thus encouraged to develop training programs and other instructional activities that will provide students with opportunities to sharpen and refine their presentational skills.

## **PAYMENT OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

The Graduate School is committed to providing financial support to all doctoral students in years one through five that is competitive with comparable programs elsewhere. In support of this goal, the Graduate School regularly establishes minimal stipend expectations for departments in the four basic academic divisions of humanities, social sciences, biological sciences, and physical sciences. Graduate students in these divisions who are involved in undergraduate education are paid a fixed per course rate, set by Trinity College, for their instructional services. This amount is supplemented with a graduate fellowship in order for the total stipend to remain consistent across the initial years of graduate study.

Duke University also is committed to ensuring that the professional development of graduate students as teachers is considered as part of their doctoral training, not simply as paid service to the institution. For this reason, strict guidelines have been placed on how much teaching any graduate students may do and still retain sufficient time for other equally important components of their doctoral education. The Graduate School has consequently stipulated that no graduate student can be required to perform instructional duties that would take more than 19.9 hours per week averaged over the course of an academic year.

## **SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION**

To enhance the training and teaching experience of graduate students, the departments should—whenever possible—assign graduate TAs a faculty mentor who can provide ongoing guidance during their appointment. In smaller programs, departments might wish a single faculty member to serve as the “teaching mentor” to all graduate students; in others, mentors could either be singly assigned or a subset of the faculty could agree to assume this responsibility. In either case, departments should also develop a procedure for providing feedback to TAs on their teaching. This procedure should include a formal written evaluation by the faculty member responsible for the course, section, or laboratory taught by the TA; direct observation of the TA in the classroom or lab; and follow-up consultations with the TA. A teacher course evaluation instrument—whether the one currently used by the undergraduate college or one devised by the department—should be completed by undergraduate students to evaluate their TA’s performance in lecture, laboratory, or discussion sections. As an institutional resource, the Center for Instructional Technology assists departments in developing assessment instruments and, to the extent possible or necessary, in providing training for faculty members supervising TAs.

## **RECOGNITION**

Duke University has a number of teaching awards that recognize graduate TAs for their performance in the classroom. Each year, the Graduate School selects up to three recipients for the *Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching*. Departments are encouraged to develop additional ways of rewarding TAs for their outstanding teaching contributions. Some departments, for example, have developed formal Teaching Certificates as one mechanism to recognize teaching competence and to add a significant pedagogical credential to their graduate students' *curricula vitae*.

## **MONITORING DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS**

Each department or program will provide the dean of the Graduate School with a copy of its current procedures for the professional development of graduate TAs. In addition, as part of their annual "budget requests," departments are expected to report not only on the anticipated levels of instructional and financial need for the budget year, but also on any changes in how TAs are trained, assigned, and assessed. The dean of the Graduate School will be responsible for soliciting from the deans of the individual schools any additional information that might be necessary to assess the overall activity of the various professional development programs for TAs and for forwarding this material annually to the Office of the Provost to ensure compliance with the institutional *Guidelines and Policies* by all units in the University.

# Courses in Teaching and Instructional Technology

## GS301: Instructional Uses of Technology

**Contact:** Hugh Crumley, Instructional Technology Specialist  
**Address:** 026 Bostock Library, Box 90198  
**Phone:** 660-5975  
**E-mail:** [crumley@duke.edu](mailto:crumley@duke.edu)  
**Web site:** <http://cit.duke.edu/services/grad/courses.html>

This course is designed for graduate students who plan to teach. Although this course explores a wide range of technology, ultimately it is a course to help you become a better instructor and to help your current or future students learn better. To this end, GS301 will give you opportunities to develop confidence and competence with current, pedagogically effective uses of technology in a college classroom. Completion of this course includes development of an electronic teaching portfolio; numerous students from previous semesters have found this to be extremely helpful in their job searches.

## GS302: Introduction to College Teaching

**Contact:** Doug James, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs  
**Address:** Duke University Graduate School, Box 90068  
**Phone:** 681-3251  
**E-mail:** [douglas.james@duke.edu](mailto:douglas.james@duke.edu)  
**Web site:** [http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof\\_dev/teachingtech/g302/](http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof_dev/teachingtech/g302/)

This course is designed for Ph.D. students (except first-year Ph.D.s) in any department or program at Duke who want to improve their teaching skills or who intend to pursue tenure-track faculty positions in higher education. Participants will learn research-based principles and practical strategies for effective teaching that promotes student learning. Topics will include: models of course design, how to write learning objectives and the syllabus, college student development and how adults learn, perspectives on critical thinking, classroom/lab management, teaching strategies, grading rubrics, classroom assessment techniques, and current issues in faculty life and higher education. Participants will draft a syllabus and/or teaching statement and engage in peer review to evaluate and enhance their drafts. Open to junior faculty or postdocs as space permits. The course is offered each semester. Check the current schedule in ACES or on the Graduate School Web site.

## GS305: The College Teaching Practicum

**Contact:** Hugh Crumley, Instructional Technology Specialist  
**Address:** 026 Bostock Library, Box 90198  
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**Web site:** <http://cit.duke.edu/services/grad/courses.html>

Peer review of teaching has become standard practice among faculty in higher education and in tenure decisions. In this hands-on course, students will learn about this process while improving their own classroom teaching skills. Over the semester, each student will give four progressively interactive teaching demonstrations that will be video recorded and observed by classmates, instructors, and undergraduate volunteers. Between teaching demonstrations, we will discuss practical concerns about college teaching such as classroom management, using groups in class, facilitating discussion, active learning, and effective visual aids.

# Preparing Future Faculty Program

**Contact:** Doug James, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs  
**Address:** Duke University Graduate School, Box 90068  
**Phone:** 681-3251  
**E-mail:** *douglas.james@duke.edu*  
**Web site:** [http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof\\_dev/pff/](http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof_dev/pff/)

The **Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)** program began as a national project of the Council of Graduate Schools and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Duke University participated in this national initiative and maintains an active program led by the Graduate School. The purpose of PFF is to better prepare Ph.D. students for the multiple roles and responsibilities they will have as future faculty members and to educate them about the wide range of academic institutions in which faculty work. The program brings together faculty members from nearby partner institutions with Duke graduate students in order to provide mentoring relationships and conversations about all aspects of faculty life. Our partner institutions include Durham Technical Community College, Elon University, Guilford College, Meredith College, and North Carolina Central University. Nearly 30 doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows participate annually, and there are several requirements and benefits outlined below.

## Requirements for PFF Fellows

- **Faculty Mentoring:** PFF Fellows select a faculty mentor from one of the partner institutions and develop a set of professional activities to complete over the course of the year. These can include attending departmental or faculty senate meetings, teaching classes, advising, and learning first-hand the roles and responsibilities of faculty members at partner schools.
- **Site Visits to Partner Campuses:** PFF Fellows attend field trips to all five partner campuses throughout the academic year. These trips provide an opportunity for conversation with faculty, administrators, and students on their campus. Site visits include classroom observations, campus tours, departmental visits, faculty meetings, and a dinner or seminar with faculty members to discuss such issues as the job market, tenure, effective teaching, funding research, publishing, and the academic community.
- **Teaching IDEAS Workshop Series:** PFF Fellows must participate in a majority of the Teaching IDEAS workshops offered during the academic year. Members of the Duke faculty or guest speakers will share practical tips and strategies for effective undergraduate teaching.
- **Assignments:** Fellows will have a small number of reading assignments and must submit mid-year and final self-evaluation reports of their experiences.

## **Benefits for PFF Fellows**

- **Broader Knowledge of Academia:** Past fellows have identified numerous benefits such as a clearer sense of the type of position they will seek, how to ask interview questions, hiring criteria and negotiations, and how institutional governance impacts faculty life.
- **Access to Job Listings:** The national PFF office maintains a job listing open only to PFF participants and graduates. Many colleges and universities seek faculty candidates who have completed PFF programs.
- **Transcript Recognition:** Graduate students who complete the program will receive a special notation on their transcripts recognizing their participation as a Preparing Future Faculty fellow, as well as credit for GS300: Colloquium on the Academic Profession.

## **How to Apply to PFF**

To apply for the PFF program, we recommend that you attend the information session offered each spring. Application information and more details are provided on the Graduate School Web site.

## Teaching IDEAS Workshop Series

**Contact:** Doug James, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs  
**Address:** Duke University Graduate School, Box 90068  
**Phone:** 681-3251  
**E-mail:** [douglas.james@duke.edu](mailto:douglas.james@duke.edu)  
**Web site:** [http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof\\_dev/t\\_ideas2/](http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof_dev/t_ideas2/)

The Teaching IDEAS program stands for “Instructional Development for Excellence And Success.” All graduate students are welcome to attend this annual workshop series on topics related to effective undergraduate teaching. Speakers include faculty at Duke and nationally respected leaders in higher education. Topics will address teaching large and small classes, leading effective lectures or discussions, advising students, developing a teaching portfolio, diversity issues in the classroom, service learning, and more. The schedule is posted in the Career and Professional Development section of our Web site.

## Graduate School Teaching Mini-grants

**Contact:** Doug James, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs  
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**Phone:** 681-3251  
**E-mail:** [douglas.james@duke.edu](mailto:douglas.james@duke.edu)  
**Web site:** [http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof\\_dev/minigrant\\_teach/](http://gradschool.duke.edu/prof_dev/minigrant_teach/)

The **Graduate School Teaching Mini-grants** program offers graduate students an opportunity to create resources for the professional and pedagogical development of fellow graduate students and faculty in their department. Each project should focus on specific departmental concerns and interests in preparing graduate students as teachers and should address issues of relevance to teaching in the discipline.

Fellows must write a brief report on their project for the Graduate School Web site. Up to three Teaching Mini-grant projects will be awarded each academic year. Each project is awarded a \$1,500 stipend for professional development plus up to \$500 for related expenses. Joint proposals are welcome from up to three students with the stipend amount to be shared.

To apply for the Graduate School Teaching Mini-grants program, we recommend that you attend the information session offered each spring. An annual call for proposals will be posted on our Web site.