

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GANDHINAGAR

NORMS FOR ENGAGING PH.D. STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

**(as approved by the Senate on 25 September 2014 and amended by the
Senate in its 32nd meeting)**

The doctoral programme of the Institute places a large emphasis on holistic development of the students with leadership skills for their future endeavors. Besides the expectation of in-depth work in thesis work, the new PhD Curriculum expects the students to attend seminars, organize conferences, write research grant proposals and participate in Institute activities. It is expected that active participation of the students in teaching and coordination of activities with mentorship of faculty members of the Institute can be useful in developing their teaching and leadership skills. For example, teaching (lecturing and/or tutoring) a course as an independent instructor is a completely different experience than helping an instructor in a course as a teaching assistant or as a grader. Similarly, taking the responsibility of coordinating with visitors of the institute can be a significant learning experience. It can be a matter of pride for the student to independently carry out such a responsibility, which will help them build their confidence besides sharpening their people skills and learning about work ethics.

Currently, all Ph.D students receiving Institute Fellowship are expected to devote eight hours per week for assistance in teaching and other academic activities. Further, those receiving top-up fellowships are expected to devote four more hours for such activities. It may be worthwhile to leverage this time more effectively.

It is proposed to institutionalize a few of major activities of the Institute besides teaching opportunities which can be offered to the PhD students from time to time through a careful selection process. These positions will have well-defined scope of work and a fixed tenure. To begin with the following two positions are proposed to be created with immediate effect:

- a) ***Graduate Teaching Fellow (GTF)***: This position will have tenure of six months at a time. The student selected for this position will have the responsibility of teaching a course independently as an instructor or tutor of the course, like any other faculty member involved in such a course.
- b) ***Graduate Institute Fellow (GIF)***: This position will have tenure of one year or six months which can be renewed based on the performance. The

student selected for this position will have independent charge of coordinating a set of significant activities of the Institute. For example: to help for arranging industry trips of the UG and PG students, to help developing industry relations, to help coordinate for international internships of the students, help in organizing conferences, short courses, summer courses, editorial assistance, assistance in faculty recruitment work, help in coordinating with visiting professors, data centre activities, etc.

The following norms are applicable regarding these graduate positions:

- 1) Number of positions will be approved by the Director based on the recommendation from Dean of Academic Affairs. The proposal may come from various disciplines or administrative sections through proper channel.
- 2) A student who has spent at least one year into the programme can apply for such positions with consent from the supervisor. The Dean, Academic Affairs may devise suitable mechanism to select candidates for recommending the case to the Director for approval.
- 3) In case student is an instructor of a course and is delivering independent lectures, a one-time honorarium at the rate of Rs.5000/- per credit may be paid on satisfactory conduct of the course. The amount may be pro-rated in case the course is shared etc. A few occasional lectures by Ph.D students will not qualify for the honorarium.
- 4) Each student in such a position will have a mentor faculty member who will be also responsible for providing sufficient training to the student for efficiently performing the assigned work.
- 5) The appointment may be terminated at any time if the academic performance or work ethics are found to be below expectations.
- 6) An experience certificate will be issued to the student by the Dean (Academic Affairs).

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Fellow Award

Training in the doctoral programme at IIT Gandhinagar is geared towards holistic development of the Ph.D. students, with the expectation that these students will graduate to become exceptional scientists and teachers in the best institutes worldwide. The Graduate Teaching Fellowships (GTF) were created at the Institute with this broader goal in mind, and are meant to act as a vehicle to provide Ph.D. students an opportunity to develop and enhance their teaching skills by gaining the experience of teaching courses independently as instructors or tutors. This Fellowship has been extremely well received, and a number of Ph.D. students have been selected for the GTF via a careful and competitive selection process.

Exceptional performance of the Fellows are recognized via “Outstanding Graduate Teaching Fellow Award”. It is envisioned that such an award will boost the morale of the Ph.D. students, and encourage more students to avail the GTF. Typically, one such award is given each semester. The awardee gets a grant of up to Rs. 20,000 for travel and professional activities from the Excellence Fund in the Endowment Account.

The required information may be as follows:

- 1. Nomination Letter:** Any person can nominate the GTF for the award. Self-nominations may also be accepted. This nomination may be a 1 page letter (maximum) and may comment on the Fellow’s efforts and dedication towards teaching the course, preparation for the classes, clarity of the material presented, ability to engage with the students, etc.
- 2. Teaching Statement from Fellow:** The Fellow must submit a one page (maximum) letter outlining the teaching philosophy he/she adopted in the course, whether and how the prescribed goals were met, how he/she benefitted from the experience and what he/she would do differently should a similar opportunity be available in the future.
- 3. Student Feedback:** Brief statements from at least two students who studied under the Fellow in the course. The nominee should not have access to these letters.
- 4. Course Reaction Survey summary:** This may be provided by the Academic office.

Selection and Approval

A committee comprising of the Dean (Academics), Associate Dean (PG) and at least two other faculty members will screen the nominations received. If required, brief interviews with all or a few shortlisted nominees may be conducted. This committee will then select one Fellow for the award and recommend to the Director for approval.

