Resources for Teaching Fellows, 2014-2015

The information on this site was compiled by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning and is intended to provide helpful information for teaching fellows (TFs) as they plan and teach courses.

Contents

1 General Information for Teaching Fellows

Since its inception in 1939, the Teaching Fellow Program has expanded from a few individuals to more than 1,200 per year. Teaching fellows (TFs) have become valued and important members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and play an important role in the education of Harvard College students. As TFs, graduate students teach part-time as an integral part of their training for the PhD or, in exceptional cases, for a master's degree.

TFs assist with courses under the supervision of course heads, who hold formal teaching appointments. **The teaching fellowship is not a formal teaching appointment: only those holding appointments as professor, lecturer, or preceptor are responsible for the structure and content of a course.** While duties may include teaching sections, conducting tutorials, recommending grades, and supervising independent study projects, each TF experience can vary. For example, some TFs may supervise a tutorial, while others work as a team with the course head and other TFs in larger classes, sharing responsibility for grading examinations, problem sets, and papers. Graduate student teaching is supervised and regularly evaluated by the faculty.

2 Appointments

Policy Regarding Appointments

TFs must:

- be proficient in English;
- be registered as full-time resident students in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS);
- demonstrate satisfactory progress toward their degrees;
- register for a total of four half-courses (or the equivalent) in each term and are charged the appropriate resident tuition rate (full tuition, reduced tuition, or facilities fee).

Rules Governing Eligibility, Workload, and Duration of Appointments

The rules below apply to the administration of teaching fellowships by GSAS and select departments. Petitions for exceptions to these policies should be addressed to the dean for admissions and financial aid in the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, suite 350.

1. All new international PhD students in GSAS are required to demonstrate a specific level of proficiency in the English language in order to participate successfully in the various activities that comprise a graduate education, including teaching. Specifically, GSAS requires that, prior to serving as TFs, all incoming PhD students who are non-native English speakers and who have received their undergraduate degrees from non-English speaking institutions demonstrate oral English language proficiency based on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) internet-based test (iBT) speaking score. View more information on language requirements on our website. Those students who have not met the language requirement must enroll in "Classroom Communication Skills for International TFs" at the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, under programs for graduate students. After completing a course, students must be rescreened at the Bok Center to determine if they have met GSAS standards. Students must meet the requirement within their first two years. However, they are encouraged to complete this requirement within the first year or, at least, two semesters before they expect to teach. For more information, please e-mail the GSAS Student Affairs Office or call 617-495-1814.

2. Graduate students shall normally be given the opportunity to teach at least 16 "term fifths" during their degree programs. (A "fifth" is a fraction of time that represents 20 percent of a full-time workload; ordinarily this is the equivalent of teaching one section in a lecture course.) As a general rule, TFs should expect to spend roughly 10 hours per week teaching, preparing, and correcting classwork and providing counseling for every "fifth'' assigned. Many departments require teaching as a part of the graduate degree program. Such requirements are stated clearly in each department's description in the GSAS Programs of Study and the GSAS Handbook.

3. Usually, no graduate student may hold a teaching fellowship for more than four academic years, regardless of whether the appointment is for one or two terms within the same year. Students who teach 3/5 each year for four years may accumulate as many as 24 "term fifths." Students who have taught fewer than 16 "term fifths" in four years will be permitted to teach a fifth and sixth year up to the total of 16 "term fifths."

4. In general, these time limits apply to any combination of teaching at Harvard and outside the University. Students are expected to use good judgment in accepting additional employment that might delay their academic progress.

5. Graduate students receiving PhD dissertation completion fellowships are prohibited from holding teaching fellowships and other forms of concurrent employment.

6. First-year graduate students are not ordinarily eligible for appointments as TFs. Exceptions may be granted to students who are certified as proficient in English

and registered in certain natural science departments that have traditionally used TFs in their first year of graduate study.

7. Preference for TF appointments will be given to students offered a guarantee of teaching at admission (see item 11 below); teaching preference is also given to students prior to the fifth year of residency.

8. After students expected to teach as part of their funding packages have been accommodated, departments and course heads are expected to consider and prioritize all other qualified applicants from within GSAS; special attention will be paid to qualified applicants in their third or fourth year of residency from related departments and disciplines.

9. PhD candidates in the humanities and social sciences receive stipend support in the first two years of study to facilitate the successful completion of course requirements for the degree and ordinarily do not teach in their second (G2) year. Second-year students in the humanities and social sciences interested in teaching should not commit to an appointment without first requesting approval from the dean for admissions and financial aid; requests must describe the academic basis for an exception and be accompanied by an advisor's endorsement. If approved, second year students will be limited to 1/5 teaching per term or 2/5 in one term with no teaching in the other term of the academic year. Second-year students in the natural sciences should refer to their program's teaching policy and consult their primary advisor to confirm if they are eligible to accept a teaching position.

10. After the second year, graduate students:

    (a) who have completed both their academic residence requirements and passed their departmental PhD qualifying examinations may hold up to a maximum of a 6/5 time teaching fellowship for the academic year. Students may not hold more than a 4/5 time appointment in any one term;

    (b) who have not completed their academic residence requirements (a minimum of two years of full-time study in residence) and who have not passed their departmental PhD qualifying examinations may hold up to a maximum of a 2/5 time teaching fellowship. Students who have not met these criteria may not average teaching fellowship fractions over the academic year. **Those awarded terminal degrees in November and March will normally become teaching assistants for the term in which the degree is awarded.**

11. At admission, PhD candidates in the humanities and social sciences are guaranteed assignment of two sections of teaching each term by their departments in their third and fourth years of residency as part of their funding packages. GSAS

regards the meeting of that guarantee as a cooperative endeavor between the student and the department. Students whose financial aid packages include teaching should consult their departments if assistance in securing a TF position is needed.

12. TFs cannot teach more than 6/5 during the academic year; students teaching more than 6/5 are considered teaching assistants and must register as on **Leave of Absence** rather than **In Residence**.

13. Certain awards from GSAS, the US government, and other outside sources impose more stringent limits on TFs' commitments. Students are responsible for observing the terms of such awards and should consult with their financial aid officer for more information.

14. Immigration regulations limit international student employment to 20 hours per week, or .57 time per term. International students with questions regarding this regulation should consult with their financial aid officer for further information.

15. Graduate TFs may not receive course credit for the time they devote to teaching. However, at the discretion of their department, students may have their teaching efforts recognized—and recorded—by signing up for "TIME-T" on their study cards. (See "Course Load of Teaching Fellows and Research Assistants" section below for more details). Graduate students receive credit for teaching in the sense that TIME-T activities appear on their GSAS transcripts; these entries, however, are not graded.

Course Load of Teaching Fellows and Research Assistants

Students holding teaching fellowships or research assistantships should consider their course load carefully in consultation with their advisors. The four-course registration requirement must be made up of formal courses and scholarly work, which is given the designation TIME. There are three categories of TIME:

- TIME-C—independent study
- TIME-R—research
- TIME-T—teaching

At the discretion of departments, students register for TIME-T while serving as TFs to indicate that appropriate independent work is replacing numbered courses. TIME or the appropriate dissertation-level course is undertaken with a faculty advisor who must sign a study card. One unit of TIME is the equivalent of one half-course and may serve to indicate that a student is engaged in full-time study even though the total of numbered courses enrolled for is fewer than four. Experience has shown that TFs whose course loads exceed these limits frequently encounter academic difficulties.

Teaching Fellows Appeals Procedure

If, as a TF, you believe that you are spending more of your professional time on teaching than you are being compensated for, that the work required is unrelated to the course, or that you feel victimized by the course administration in some fashion, you should discuss the matter with the head tutor, director of graduate studies, or other appropriate officer in the department where the appointment is held.

If the difficulty is not resolved after such conversations, you can contact the GSAS dean for student affairs at 617-495-1814. The dean can help advise you on further steps, which might include a written appeal to the Administrative Board of the Graduate School.

Appointment Procedures, Evaluation, and Benefits

When a TF is assigned to assist in a course, the department or committee chair recommends the appointment to the Harvard College Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), which, along with the GSAS Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, is responsible for reviewing and authorizing the appointment. The TF appointment form is reviewed by both OUE and GSAS to ensure that the request is in accordance with GSAS policies regarding teaching fellowships and that the appropriate payment has been specified; GSAS then completes the final appointment confirmation and processing. After the appointment is approved, a confirmation e-mail is sent to the TF with further details.

Course Evaluation (Q)

The Committee on Undergraduate Education and the Committee on Graduate Education oversee course evaluation each term. This online evaluation, known as the Q evaluation process, provides feedback regarding course structure, the quality of the presentation, and the nature of assignments (information about the questions asked can be found on the registrar's website). Participation in the Q evaluation process is mandatory for TFs and the survey data is integrated with the online course selection tool at my.harvard.edu, which allows students to access and compare course evaluations while deciding which courses to take.

Summary statistics and comments submitted by students are made available to the course heads of evaluated courses after final grades for the term have been submitted. All verbatim evaluation responses remain confidential. Department chairs can view evaluation results for all faculty and section leaders teaching in their departments. Individual course heads access only their own results, although they can view the results for section leaders teaching in their courses. Section leaders only see the responses that apply directly to their teaching. **TFs are encouraged to keep this information, as it will be useful in a professional dossier.**

The OUE reviews the forms for any member of the instructional support staff whose average overall rating raises concerns about the quality of instruction. If necessary, the dean of undergraduate education sends the TF a letter, copied to the course head, urging the student to seek advice on how to improve his or her teaching. Anyone receiving a second warning may be prohibited from further teaching in the FAS.

Teaching Consultants and Department Teaching Fellows

A select group of experienced TFs who have achieved distinction in their teaching are selected for affiliation with the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. Their work as teaching consultants includes helping with TF training programs, observing classes taught by other TFs, and providing feedback. A number of department TFs also do this work, nominated by and based in their home departments. For additional information, contact the Bok Center.

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning
Science Center 318, One Oxford Street
Phone: 617-495-4869
E-mail: bokcenter@fas.harvard.edu
Web: bokcenter.harvard.edu

Receiving Recognition for Your Teaching

The University recognizes excellence in teaching with Certificates of Distinction awarded each term by the deans of GSAS and of Harvard College. These certificates are presented by the Bok Center to TFs and teaching assistants who receive exceptionally high scores on the Q course evaluation. Other teaching awards administered through academic departments or by special committees include:

- Allen Young Prizes in Social Analysis 10 (economics)
- Jack M. Stein Prize (Germanic languages and literatures)
- Distinguished Teaching Award (government)
- Botein Prize (history and literature)
- Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Prizes
- White Award (physics)
- Travel Study Prize (Romance languages and literatures)
- Thomas Hoopes Prizes and the Levenson Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (special committees, awarded by the Undergraduate Council)

- Stanley Hoffmann Prize (social studies)
- Derek C. Bok Awards for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching of Undergraduates (selected from among Bok Center Certificate of Distinction awardees), made possible by a generous gift from Dr. and Mrs. David G. Nathan, AB '51, MD '55

Faculty Club Membership

TFs receive complimentary membership in the Harvard Faculty Club, which can be activated online. Located at 20 Quincy Street, the Club's facilities include restaurants open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Monday through Friday, and for Sunday brunch; private function rooms; and guest bedrooms. Reciprocal privileges exist with many faculty clubs within the US and throughout the world. For more information, call 617-495-5758.

3 Securing a Teaching Position

Assignment of Teaching

Each department or committee has its own procedure for assigning teaching fellowships. Assignment decisions are based on evaluations of each candidate's proficiency in English, preparation, teaching experience, and satisfactory academic standing. Departments and committees will know the number of guaranteed slots that they can offer in each course in the coming academic year by mid-April. Graduate students eligible for TF positions should contact the relevant departments or committees early in the spring regarding which courses will require sections or tutors for the next academic year.

Preference for TF appointments is given to students for whom a guarantee was offered at admission; teaching preference is also given to students prior to the fifth year of residency. Departments and course heads are expected to consider all qualified applicants from within GSAS before hiring non-GSAS candidates; special attention should be paid to qualified applicants from related departments and disciplines.

If you are guaranteed teaching as part of your funding package but are unable to obtain a teaching fellowship appointment, you have the right to discuss this situation with appropriate departmental representatives to determine what can be done to locate an appointment. Be persistent.

A TF's assignment to a course may change depending on undergraduate course enrollment. If the course attracts more students than anticipated, you may have the opportunity to teach an additional section. If the course enrolls fewer students than expected, you may need to find a teaching assignment in another course. Talk with

your department administrator or graduate coordinator, who may know of last-minute openings resulting from increased enrollments or staff changes. Whenever possible, TF appointments and provisional assignments are made before June 1. Applicants who are not chosen for a teaching fellowship will be informed by early June.

Assignment of Teaching Fellowships in General Education and Other Committees

In addition to department courses, teaching fellowships are available in the Program in General Education, the Harvard College Writing Program, the Committee on Degrees in History and Literature, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Harvard Summer School, and the Harvard Global Health Institute.

Program in General Education

The Program in General Education (Gen Ed) is the largest employer of TFs, appointing more than 200 graduate students from all three divisions (and SEAS) each term. Faculty from nearly all departments in the FAS teach Gen Ed courses. These courses are unique in comparison to department courses—and challenging to teach—because they enroll a broader range of undergraduates, many of whom are non-concentrators and may have little background in the topic. Furthermore, the pedagogical aims are different than those of department courses; Gen Ed courses are intended to help undergraduates connect classroom learning to the lives they lead outside of college, while most departmental courses are intended to introduce and train students in a discipline. Most TFs are assigned to teach Gen Ed courses through their departments, however, graduate students interested in teaching a particular course may contact the course head directly by e-mailing a current CV along with an outline of any relevant academic background and teaching experience.

The total number of TFs hired in Gen Ed courses each term depends on the number of undergraduates enrolled in each course. Since Harvard undergraduates do not finalize their course enrollments until the end of the first week of the term, some courses must enlarge their teaching staffs in mid-September for fall term courses or early February for spring term courses. Faculty and departments begin appointing TFs once they receive initial course enrollment estimates several months before the beginning of the term, and adjust appointments as enrollment data is confirmed. If you have not been appointed for a course you would like to teach, it is recommended that you attend the first meetings of the course and speak with the faculty member(s) to see whether more TFs are needed.

Hiring decisions are made by faculty and departments in accordance with the FAS guidelines. If you are selected to teach in a Gen Ed course, the faculty member or

department will inform the Gen Ed Office, who will contact you to complete teaching appointment forms. To guarantee payment in the first month of the term, these forms must be submitted by June 2 for the fall 2014 term and by October 31 for the spring 2015 term. Your first paycheck may be delayed if teaching appointments are processed after these deadlines.

Program in General Education
Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, Suite 470
1350 Massachusetts Avenue
Phone: 617-495-2563
Email: gened@fas.harvard.edu
Web: generaleducation.fas.harvard.edu

Stephanie Kenen, administrative director and associate dean of undergraduate education Laura Hess, associate director

Harvard Summer School

Support teaching staff appointments are made by the Summer School upon the recommendation of the course instructor and, in some cases, with the recommendation of the department chair under whose auspices a course is being given. A preview of courses appears on the Summer School website in January and is followed by the full online catalogue when registration opens in early March. Last summer, more than 200 support-teaching staff members were hired for summer courses. The Summer School hires teaching assistants, language drill instructors, graders, and course assistants. Appointments depend on enrollments and documented course needs.

Teaching Assistants and Language Drill Instructors: Most teaching assistant appointments are in computer, laboratory science, and foreign language courses (although larger courses in the humanities and social sciences may also need assistants). Specific duties will be assigned by the course instructor, but generally, teaching assistants are expected to attend lectures, lead their own labs or sections, grade assignments, and hold office hours. Language drill instructors hold daily drill sections in intensive language courses, grade assignments, and hold office hours. All instructional staff are expected to be present on campus for the entire summer session.

Graders: Courses with 30 or more students may have graders. Only undergraduate and non-credit students count toward the minimum enrollment requirement, since faculty are responsible for grading graduate student work. A normal workload for a grader includes two substantial written assignments (e.g., an hour exam and final exam, or a long paper and a final exam).

Course Assistants: Course assistants are sometimes hired in studio workshops that require extensive classroom work with small groups of students.

Student and faculty resources and support are different in the summer; the Harvard Summer School Faculty Handbook provides information about teaching in the summer

session. **Teaching in the Summer School does not count as part of the four-year TF limit for GSAS students.**

Harvard Summer School
51 Brattle Street
Phone: 617-495-0311
E-mail: elaskin@fas.harvard.edu
Web: www.summer.harvard.edu
Lisa Lauterbach Laskin, associate dean for academic affairs of the Harvard Summer School

Other Programs

For specific information about appointments in the Harvard College Writing Program, the Committee on Degrees in History and Literature, the Department of Literature and Comparative Literature, the Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, and the Committee on Degrees in the Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, please click here.

4 Financial Support

Payment Procedures

TF pay rates for 2014–2015 are based on an annual full-time senior rate of $51,300 base (2/5 for the year, $20,520) for those who have completed their academic residence requirements, and an annual full-time junior rate of $45,400 base (2/5 for the year, $18,160) for those in their first two years of graduate study. A TF will receive the senior rate of pay if:

l) The student has two years of Harvard resident academic credit or has credit for work done elsewhere which, when combined with Harvard academic credit, totals 16 half courses. This credit must be recorded with the FAS registrar and appear on the transcript.

or

2) The student has passed generals by October of the fall term or by February of the spring term of the year they will be a TF.

Some departments offer teaching as part of students' financial aid packages.

Appointments are for the fall term, spring term, or academic year. If your appointment is for one term, you receive five paychecks (e.g., an appointment beginning August 1 will be paid on August 15 for the first month). Summer School appointments are not included in an academic year commitment.

Payday is the 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a weekend, the Friday before is payday. To have your paycheck direct deposited, access the University's PeopleSoft employee self-service website through the Harvie intranet. You can also access instructions on how to download a direct deposit form on Harvard's Administrative Systems website.

Income Taxes

Income paid to students for their services as TFs is considered taxable income by both federal and state tax codes. Students are encouraged to consult a professional tax advisor for answers to questions concerning the interpretation and clarification of the tax law.

Financial Aid

GSAS offers a comprehensive program of financial support, including grants and fellowships from internal and external sources, traineeships, teaching fellowships, research assistantships, other academic employment opportunities, and several types of loans. Contact your financial aid officer at 617-495-1814 for more information.

Outside Fellowships and Grants

The GSAS Graduate Guide to Grants, an online publication listing outside fellowship possibilities, is compiled and reviewed annually by the GSAS director of fellowships.

Alternative Sources of Support

Dudley House Fellows: Dudley House fellows organize and implement intellectual, cultural, athletic, and social activities at Dudley House, the graduate student center. Fellows work closely with the house master, house administrator, GSAS administrators, and each other to enrich graduate student life at Harvard by engendering a sense of community.

Dudley fellows receive up to 10 meals per week in the Dudley House dining hall and a $3,000 stipend. Assistant fellows may receive a small stipend as compensation. Fellows are guaranteed housing in a GSAS residence hall if they wish to live in one. Applications for Dudley fellow positions are available in January for the following academic year. For additional information, contact Susan Zawalich, Dudley House administrator (617-495-2255, zawalich@fas.harvard.edu).

Research Assistants: Some departments, especially those engaged in government-funded research projects, employ students as research assistants. Graduate students interested in such employment should contact their departments.

Graders: Some courses use graders to help with the evaluation of student work. Often, graders are hired to evaluate a sequence of exams across the term. Graders are sometimes hired for courses with weekly problem sets. A grader is paid at an appropriate fraction of a TF salary. Graders may not be hired without the approval of the Office of Undergraduate Education in Harvard College.

Part-Time Teaching outside Harvard: Graduate students interested in locating part-time teaching opportunities outside Harvard should consult with their department chair, advisor, or staff at the Office of Career Services or the Student Employment Office.

Proctoring for Exams and at Fall Term Registration: Graduate students interested in proctoring should e-mail the Office of the Registrar or call 617-495-1542. Proctoring opportunities are also available at Harvard Law School; contact Michelle Pessinis at the Harvard Law School Registrar's Office for more information (617-495-1707).

Part-Time Work: Since most part-time University employment is handled through individual offices, students are advised to consult these offices directly. For example, positions are often available through the University library, undergraduate House libraries, or departmental libraries. Each does its own hiring. The Student Employment Office posts part-time jobs. Spouses of graduate students at Harvard who may be interested in non-teaching positions at the University on either a part-time or full-time basis should consult Aspire, Harvard's online database of open administrative positions.

College Work-Study Program: Eligibility is based on financial need. Students must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. On- and off-campus jobs are available; some teaching fellowships also are funded through this program. Students interested in college work-study should contact their GSAS financial aid officer at the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, Suite 350.

The Harvard Extension School: The Harvard Extension School hires a small number of graduate students as support teaching staff. For information on courses offered, consult their online catalog. Individual faculty members are responsible for recruiting and supervising support staff. For additional information regarding eligible courses, e-mail Mark Lax or call 617-495-4867.

Harvard Divinity School Summer Language Program: Positions for teaching assistants in Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, or Spanish translation may be available through the Harvard Divinity School's Summer Language Program. For information, contact Karin Grundler-Whitacre, Director of the HDS Summer Language Program, in the Office for Faculty and Academic Affairs (617-384-6598).

Resident Positions: Resident Advisors, Freshman Proctors, and House Tutors

Resident advisors (RAs) are graduate student members of the GSAS Office of Student Affairs team. There are 16 RAs, one for each floor of the four GSAS residence halls.

RAs help students adjust to the Harvard community, aid in emergency situations, and serve as liaisons with the GSAS administration. Applicants must be degree candidates in good academic standing and must have resided for at least one term in a GSAS residence hall. Compensation includes a free room and a weekday lunch and dinner meal contract at Dudley House.

Applications for RA positions are available in January for the upcoming academic year. For information, contact Ashley Skipwith, director of residential life at 617-495-5060 or askipwith@fas.harvard.edu.

Freshman proctors provide guidance for first-year students in all aspects of their exploration of Harvard. They reside in the freshman dormitories and are members of the College staff with whom first-year students have the most contact. The proctor application deadline is rolling, however priority is given to candidates who apply by early January.

Resident tutors are members of the 13 undergraduate Houses and play a vital role in the residential and educational life of undergraduates. Each House in the College forms a small academic and social community in which resident tutors and undergraduates eat, socialize, and study together within the context of the College and University. The priority deadline to apply to be a resident tutor is typically the last day in January. Houses also appoint several nonresident tutors, who usually receive some meals and an opportunity to participate in House life in exchange for various duties.

For more information and to apply, visit osl.fas.harvard.edu and see Housing and Residential Life. Application deadlines are also published in the December issue of the GSAS Bulletin, which is mailed to all graduate students. Additional copies are available in Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, room 350.

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid assumes earnings of $11,364 in-kind compensation for ten-month resident tutorships and an additional $850 for the summer.

5 Before You Teach

Preparing to Teach

Course Planning

Before you enter the classroom, do some research. The more you know about what to expect, the more confident you will feel. If possible, visit a lecture and section the term before you teach, talk to someone who has taught (or taken) the course before, talk to your course head and head teaching fellow, and read the Q Guide. Review the course syllabus to be sure it is within your range of interests and abilities.

In the process, find out the answers to the following questions:

• What is the central purpose of the course?

• Who takes the course? Why? What is the range of their abilities?

• What are the course requirements, materials, and policies concerning issues such as grading, deadlines, and attendance?

Afterwards, develop a plan for the first day of class. Decide what you'll need to tell your students and what impression you want to give them of you as a teacher and of the course itself. The more thoroughly you have planned what you hope to accomplish the first day, the more confident you will appear. Even though things may not go as planned, having notes or a plan to fall back on will help you navigate the first day.

It is useful to keep records of your preparation for each section throughout the semester. Being able to refer to previous course plans will allow you to benefit from your previous teaching experience.

The physical environment

Your course head or head teaching fellow will assign your classroom. Visit the room ahead of time and think about the space from the students' point of view. Will they be able to see you? Will they be able to see and talk to each other? If your room is not optimally laid out, you can move chairs, plan an activity for small groups, or teach from different parts of the room. You are also responsible for the safety of your students, especially those with disabilities. Each building has alarm systems, designated emergency routes, and exterior assembly areas for evacuees. Become familiar with building emergency procedures and convey them to your students. Contact the building manager if you need help with this.

A Quick Guide to the First Day of Class

For many teaching fellows, the first day of class can be a daunting prospect. The impression that their students form about them, as well as about the course, may last the entire term. There are many administrative details to cover, but you also want to set the stage for how the section will run for the rest of the semester, and what you and your students should expect from each other. Consider the following suggestions to help you get through the first day and establish a good working relationship with your class.

• First, introduce and say something about yourself, what you're studying at Harvard, what you find genuinely interesting about this course, and what your other interests are. Explaining why you find your field exciting will communicate your enthusiasm for the subject you're teaching.

• Decide what you want your students to call you. Help them learn your name by writing it on a corner of the blackboard for the first few sections.

• Tell your students how, when and where to contact you. Give them your office hours, phone number, and e-mail address. Specify your policy for replying to emails (i.e., same day until 8 p.m.), your policy for outside-office hours meetings (i.e., 24 hour notice) and any hours when you do not want to be contacted.

• Convey your expectations and the expectations of the course as a whole by addressing some or all of the following:

• What approach does the course take to the subject?

• What is the role of the section in relation to the course?

• What kind of preparation is expected?

• Is attendance required?

• In what ways will students be expected to participate? How can they best listen to and speak with each other (and not just you)?

• Will you be distributing study questions, doing in-class writing, working in small groups, etc.? Will there be individual or group presentations?

• How much time and effort will the course require?

• How will their work be graded? What are the policies on written work and deadlines?

• Learn students' names and use them as quickly as possible. You can begin by collecting information on a student information sheet. If seeing students' faces helps you learn their names, look at pictures of your students from the Harvard College Facebook or from your course website.

• Encourage students to use each other's names as soon as possible. One way to do this is to have students make name tents by writing their names on both the front and back sides of paper sheets folded horizontally that can sit in front of each student for the first few sessions. You can also urge students to address each other directly by name, and compile and distribute a class list with names and contact information.

• Start in on the work as soon as possible. Work through a specific problem or piece of material that illustrates what the course asks of students and what it has to offer them. Engaging students in actual work during the first class communicates seriousness of purpose and gives students (especially those who are still shopping around) an idea of what your class will be like.

6 In the Classroom

Teaching Strategies

Setting a Positive Climate

It is your responsibility to ensure that the classroom atmosphere encourages all students to participate. In general, this can be accomplished by keeping the following points in mind.

• Manage the discussion so that talkative students do not intimidate reticent ones.

• Treat your students' questions (and especially their mistakes) with respect and interest and give immediate and comprehensive feedback whenever possible. Wrong answers can be handled in a way that maintains a student's dignity, and often you can use them to extract an important point and clear up confusion. If a student were to mix up the terms "neurosis" and "psychosis," for example, you might say, "They are easy to confuse. Both may entail similar kinds of psychic disturbances, as you know, but to different degrees. The challenge is determining how severe these disturbances are. Coming up, we will look at several cases that illustrate both neurosis and psychosis." Such an intervention corrects the student without injuring any egos.

• We all appreciate compliments, especially when we put ourselves on the line in the scrutiny of a classroom. The approval of a teacher, whether a teaching fellow or professor, strengthens a student's feelings of self-worth. You can show your approval by simply saying "good" or "thank you" in response to excellent points or perceptive questions, or you can summarize points students have made and credit individual students by name. For example, "...as Trevor said earlier..." or "Let's pursue Susan's idea about the provenance of the plays while remembering Judith's caution concerning current scholarly disputes."

• Be aware of how someone's background may affect their success or confidence in the subject.

• Be sensitive to students with disabilities.

• Be aware of biases or classroom dynamics that dissuade certain students from participating.

Getting Your Students Involved

The sooner you create a general climate of participation and involvement in the material, the better. One way to foster this atmosphere is to create opening questions or exercises in which all students participate. One English teacher begins his section on "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by asking "What images remain with you after reading the

poem?" Another teacher begins her third-year German class with a quick vocabulary-building exercise. A third teacher begins his anthropology section by passing out a round of bones from which each student is asked to identify one.

These techniques allow students to participate in class easily and quickly. Occasionally there is a need to lecture briefly before opening the floor to discussion, but in a small group, lecturing at length can be stifling. The longer you put off student participation in your class, the more difficult it will be to create an engaging learning climate.

There are techniques that can help you draw out shy students as well. When one student asks or answers a question, there are often others who would have liked to ask or answer it. It is your responsibility to encourage everyone to participate or to feel included in the class by how you call on students, and the more you know about your students' backgrounds, the easier it is to call on them in an encouraging way. You can ask students to comment when you know they have some relevant knowledge or experience. For example, you might pose the following question to a psychology concentrator in an English course: "John, you're interested in psychology. How do you think Swift manipulates his audience through the creation of an ironic persona?" This tactic enlists John's expertise and invites him to apply himself more vigorously to your literature course. His contribution to the class is most likely to be characterized by deeper thought than before.

You can encourage quiet students by redirecting one student's question to the whole class while looking inquiringly in the direction of the quiet student. One professor in the government department uses quiet students' names as part of illustrations in class, such as: "Suppose Anna were the manager of a firm in the Soviet Union and Joseph were the manager of a firm in the United States. How would their roles differ?" Other students begin to answer the question, and within a few minutes Anna and Joseph will likely participate in the discussion too.

In any class you may notice several students (or yourself) begin to lose energy as time goes on, both intellectually and physically. At this point it may be useful to change the mood of the class entirely. Keep a very different task in reserve so that you can shift your students' attention enough to refresh their thinking. If you will be discussing two theoretical articles in your sociology course, bring a newspaper article that reflects the application of the theory. Especially in classes lasting more than an hour, a short break will refresh your students enough to get them to the end of class. If you bring food to class (as some TFs do), have it during a break in the middle of a long class, rather than at the beginning. You'll find that the last half of your class will be livelier.

Motivating Your Students

Teachers often assume that students are of two types. There are those who find the work too difficult and drop the course, and those who stick it out, work hard, and earn

good grades. Yet, many teachers underestimate their own influence on how much time and effort their students will put into their course.

To be too demanding may be intimidating and may cause your students to shut down. On the other hand, reminding them of the difficulty of exams and the necessity of keeping up with the course, as well as promptly grading daily or weekly assignments, may keep the level of performance high.

Inspiration is the best motivator, so be enthusiastic about your subject. Explain what you find intriguing about your discipline, and show it in every section. Do not let yourself become apathetic or cynical—your students will imitate you. If you do not value what your students are learning, they won't either. The most successful teachers inspire their students by their example.

Working with Students

Although you may think of yourself as a graduate student, from the point of view of your students, you are their teacher and mentor. For many students, the teaching fellow is the teacher with whom they have the most contact. While the professor's lectures may inspire them and stimulate their curiosity about a field, it is in your sections that students will test their understanding, raise questions, and explore their implications. You must motivate them to do the work, maintain realistic expectations for their performance, generate an intellectually stimulating atmosphere, and listen with interest as they explore ideas freely.

Since you meet with the students in small groups, you are in a better position than the professor to see how well they are doing. Since students may find you more approachable than the professor, you will be asked for help more often and will be in a better position to identify students' difficulties and successes.

Covering the Material

Some professors are very specific about what they want TFs to do, to the point of writing out the problems to be solved in section or specifying discussion questions. Others give their TFs a great deal of independence. In order to determine what to teach and how to teach it, discuss the purpose of section with the course head or head teaching fellow. Otherwise, you will feel at a loss, and students will complain that sections are a waste of time. Is the aim to present new material that complements lectures, to discuss readings, or to be sure that students have learned specific facts, concepts, and analytical methods? Successful sections have a clear purpose that is communicated to students so they know what they have accomplished at the end of each meeting.

It is also crucial that you know what is going on in the course outside your section. For that reason, it is essential that you attend course lectures along with your students (unless your course head explicitly excuses you).

Another good way for TFs (and course heads) to decide what must be covered in both lecture and section is to consider the final exam and determine what students will be asked to do. TFs who are unfamiliar with the course or the department's curriculum should look at past examinations and see what concepts, material, and methods students are going to be asked to master. (Past exams are available for many courses on their websites, in Lamont Library, and in House libraries.)

(Not) Knowing All the Answers

Many beginning TFs worry that they will be expected to know everything, which is, of course, impossible. Students will not expect you to answer every question, but you shouldn't brush off relevant questions just because you do not know the answer immediately. You can look up answers and discuss the question during the next class, or you can encourage students to find the answers on their own. Too often, students will arrive in your section with the impression that they must not display any ignorance or doubt about a subject, and one way to create a positive atmosphere is to let students know that you welcome not knowing as part of the learning process. If you are neither evasive nor defensive about not knowing an answer to a question, that will stimulate both students' curiosity and respect for you. If you are lucky, students will raise points that you have not considered. Nourish this by not limiting discussion to questions that only you can answer.

Using the Blackboard

In some classes, students' notes are an exact copy of what the instructor puts on the blackboard. These notes help students with homework assignments and to prepare for exams, so effective boardwork provides students with a model for solving problems on their own.

Here are several concrete suggestions for practicing and improving your boardwork:

• Start off with a clean slate. Writing that is left from a previous class may create confusion. When you shift topics during the class hour, erase the board completely to make the transition visual as well as verbal.

• Determine how much of the board is visible before beginning to write. Ask students in the back and on the sides what they can see. If the chalk squeaks, break it into smaller pieces and hold it at a small angle in relation to the board.

• Write with your arm fully extended to one side of your body so as not to cover what you have written. Talk while writing at the board and turn toward your students whenever

possible. This is especially important for math and science teachers to remember as they often write long equations and formulas on the board. For students trying to understand new or complex ideas, it is essential that they follow your train of thought. Do not discuss material at length with your back to the students; they will not be able to hear you, and you will not be able see their reactions in time to forestall confusion.

• Your handwriting must be legible to everyone in the room. Make sure the size of your letters and numbers is appropriate. In a large lecture hall you may have to use special large chalk to make your writing visible to students seated far from the board. Check this by walking to the back of the room before or after class to see if your writing is adequate.

• Carefully structure your boardwork. Hypotheses, key points, and conclusions should be highlighted, boxed, or otherwise emphasized. Use headings to mark each new idea. Write out a complete statement of the problem to be solved or the question to be addressed. Label theorems, graphs, and examples explicitly. Define each of the variables you use. This will prove invaluable to your students when they sit down to study from their notes.

• Do not simplify expressions by erasing, as it may confuse note-taking students. It is better to draw a single strike through expressions and formulae to simplify the problem and to write the new expressions above or below.

• Do not erase important information, especially new material, before you absolutely have to.

Using Powerpoint or similar programs can solve some problems associated with the blackboard. You can face the class while writing, and text and images can be greatly enlarged when projected. But these benefits are not without cost. If you darken the room, students are apt to become less alert, and you may go through the material too quickly without the pacing that blackboard writing brings. Such technology can be helpful, but its use must be carefully thought through.

Different Ways of Learning

Students vary greatly in the ways they learn and think. While some love to debate a point abstractly, others need to ground concepts in their own experience; some work best in groups, while others need to work alone; some need specific, concrete tasks, while others need the freedom to investigate on their own; some work best verbally, others visually.

Teaching fellows can enhance their teaching by learning about a variety of learning styles, by acknowledging that ways of learning other than their own are valid, and by introducing a variety of ways of engaging with the course material. Classroom and homework exercises can be devised to accommodate these differences. For more information on learning styles, see the Bok Center or the Bureau of Study Counsel.

Active Learning

Theory

When we first teach, many of us assume that the way to teach is to tell students what we know. We might do this by summarizing a chapter of history, explicating a poem, proving a theorem, or presenting a model of chemical interaction. We have many reasons for proceeding this way: as students, we've spent a lot of time listening to others tell us what they know, and teaching, at the very least, seems to mean transferring knowledge. Yet telling students what we know only partly defines the enterprise. For students to learn effectively, they must become more than consumers of our words; they must actively engage with the material.

Fortunately for teachers, students do not simply reproduce what we say like tape recorders. In fact, their minds are busily selecting, amending, and editing their own versions of what they hear. Even the apparently passive exercise of listening becomes an active process of creating one's own meaning and understanding. Teaching with that in mind suggests that we engage students in their own purposeful actions, ask them questions, have them solve problems, or master a creative process.

Practice

To make the most of active learning, we need to step back and allow our students to take over, putting them to work in ways that allow us to step back and observe them, to intervene when guidance is needed, and to offer feedback that reinforces and stimulates their efforts.

Take this example: In preparation for a field trip, a teaching fellow in geology invites his students to examine various rock samples and then draw pictures of these rocks on the chalkboard. He asks the students to make observations, to seek information by touch as well as sight, to find out what happens when they scratch the rocks with a knife, and to make inferences from their experiences.

The teaching fellow is engaging his students in active learning. He is, in effect, applying the dictum attributed to Wittgenstein: "You haven't seen something until you've drawn it." So, in a sense, is the history teacher who asks her students how they would lead the Russian Revolution to illustrate the Leninist "authoritarian state." Course material is just raw material; what students do with it in response to tasks set by the teacher is what results in their learning.

Classroom activities such as the following provide opportunities for active learning:

• Have students bring a short written summary of a reading assignment to the class in which they will discuss it.

• Take students into the field to encounter the operational realities of abstract ideas.

• Have your students in a government section consolidate their understanding of a textbook chapter on Federalism by setting up their own federal system.

• In an astronomy class, have the students grapple with the concept of relativity by pretending that Einstein is coming to visit and thinking up questions to ask him.

• In a psychology tutorial, set up a debate where each student or group of students takes the position of a different theorist.

• Ask students to wrestle briefly with a conceptual problem before giving them a lecture that addresses it.

7 Different Types of Classes

Discussion Sections

An ideal discussion section makes each student feel like a vital part of the intellectual fabric of the class. Participation should be expected and your guidance of the discussion should be subtle and responsive to students' ideas. Poor discussions are characterized by an inflexible agenda and heavy-handed control, domination by a few students, boredom by the rest, and a feeling that the class is sinking and can only be saved by the teacher's lecturing. They seldom reach a goal.

Discussions are not ideal for delivering information; this is the function of lectures. Discussions are, however, an extremely efficient means for students to learn skills, generate ideas, solve problems, consolidate knowledge, criticize arguments, develop insight, and gain confidence in handling new concepts. Good discussions also allow students to formulate the principles of the subject in their own words.

How do you prepare to lead a discussion? First think about the material in light of your students' knowledge and experience. Second, think of questions that will stimulate them to think about the topics at hand in new and significant ways. Third, set objectives and share them with your students. Do you want your students to apply new skills, explore the significance of scholars' different points of view, learn to analyze the arguments in secondary sources, or become motivated to do research?

A Taxonomy of Questions

There are many types of questions you can use to guide discussion. The following is one taxonomy that may help you. (For more on this topic, see C. Roland Christensen, Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership, available at the Bok Center, Science Center 318.)

• Open-ended (What are your reactions to the story? What aspects of this case were most interesting to you?)

• Information-seeking (What was the gross national product of France last year? In what year was photography invented?)

• Diagnostic (What is your analysis of the problem? What conclusions did you draw from this data?)

• Challenging and testing (Why do you believe that? What arguments might there be to counter that view?)

• Eliciting action (What would you do in order to implement the government's plan?)

• Interrogating priority and sequence (Which of the two things you've mentioned is more relevant to Faulkner's narrative form? Given the state's limited resources, what is the first step to be taken?)

• Asking for predictions (What will be the result of a heavy increase in lobbying against this proposed legislation?)

• Hypothetical (What might have happened if Elizabeth I had remained in power for ten more years? In what ways would this play be different if it was set in the American South?)

• Extrapolating (What implications might this observation about early childhood development have for how we see adolescents?)

• Inter-relational (How might your observations relate to what Jane said about Hindu belief structures?)

• Generalizing (Based on your study of the computer and telecommunications industries, what do you consider to be the major forces that enhance technological innovation?)

• Asking for summary (What two or three key lessons have we learned about how cognitive biases affect human judgment?)

Discussion Leading as Fishing with a Net

Discussion leading is often compared to fishing with a net. Cast out a broad question to see what you get and then pull in the net, sorting out what is valuable. This approach provides you with the opportunity to summarize the discussion and to pick up and emphasize the important points. Here are some suggestions to help you do so:

• Start with broad, open questions. Begin the class by asking which of the study questions students found most provocative or most difficult to answer, and generate an agenda based on their perceptions of, or difficulties with, the material.

• Once you have ideas to work with, you can follow up on as many leads as seem useful or relevant to the aims of the section.

• Take notes on what students say (listing the most important points on the board, if you wish) and use them to refer back to their contributions. Call students by name; they will be gratified to hear that you think their ideas are important.

Discussion as Polite Conversation

One professor who teaches in the Core stresses the important social functions of discussion sections. She describes them as "one of the last bastions of the art of polite conversation," noting that a teaching fellow's duty is not only to be a knowledgeable scholar but also to host a purposeful conversation.

How, then, does one interrupt politely? Praise a valuable contribution? Ensure that various points of view are heard? Encourage reticent students? Save the discussion from domination by a few overly talkative students? Here are some suggestions:

• Do not think that you have to fill every silence. Rather, look for someone who is obviously thinking, who might want to speak but seems hesitant, and ask if he or she has something to add.

• Leave sufficient time for students to consider a question before repeating it, rephrasing it, or adding further information. Take up to 15 seconds, which may seem long, but the silence will encourage students to jump in.

• Rephrase students' questions and partial answers and direct them back to the students. This can keep students talking to each other and salvage a discussion that is turning into a question-and-answer session with the teacher.

• Stimulate discussion with relevant examples such as poll results, historical documents, pictures, anthropological artifacts, etc.

• Science discussions may take a less discursive form than humanities classes. In science sections, monitor the pace of your students' learning by asking frequent questions and actively engaging them to assess their level of comprehension. Then adjust the pace of the discussion session to suit the level of the class. If the material has been covered previously in lecture, review concepts that may be making it difficult for students to follow the discussion.

• Divide a large section into smaller groups that will focus on a specific question or topic from a list. You can then visit each group. Leave some time for the class to reassemble so that the groups can report to each other and you can tie up loose ends.

• Take an occasional peek at your students' notes in order to assess whether the emphasis that you are trying to impart is being received in a reasonable form, but try to respect their privacy.

• Challenge students in introductory courses to separate the important issues from secondary ones. Choosing important ideas and discussing their implications is often the most effective use of the hour.

• Ending a discussion with "I'm sorry, but that's all the time we have today" is usually insufficient. As teachers, we should keep an eye on the clock and leave time at the end of section to provide a summary of the discussion that emphasizes important points, acknowledges the insightful comments students have made and provides a framework for the next week's discussion.

Preparing Students for Discussion Sections

Here are a few ways to encourage students to take some responsibility for the discussion:

• Clearly identify discussion questions in advance. Hand out or e-mail to students two or three discussion questions before class so they can prepare. Allow each student to become the "expert" on some aspect of the discussion.

• Ask students to write a short paragraph or two on a specific topic to prepare for discussion. Look at the responses ahead of time so that you know whom to call on. You can do this by having students e-mail their comments to you or by having them post to the course website ahead of time.

• Develop a joint agenda. Tell students that you will ask them to suggest topics for discussion before each class (you may want to begin the list with a few topics of your own). Have the group pick the ones they want to discuss or the ones they found most provocative or difficult.

• Ask students to take a position on a text or an argument. Students can also pair up or divide into small groups to present different sides in a debate.

• Encourage study groups. Explain the virtues of collaborative work and exchanges of information. In many courses, it is appropriate for students to study together, even as they pursue independent efforts.

• You may want to contact students who miss a class before the next meeting to encourage attendance and let them know what they missed. Or you may simply make it clear early in the term that students who miss a section should take responsibility for finding out what they missed and how to prepare for the next meeting.

Problem Set and Laboratory Sections

Problem Sets and Pre-Labs

As you begin teaching in a science or problem set based course, it is important to clarify with your course head what topics will be covered and the depth of understanding required of the students. It is essential that you attend course lectures. Professors typically approach material idiosyncratically, so it is important that you know know first-hand how the course topics are being handled. The following are general suggestions for running problem set and pre-lab sections:

• Early in each section, determine what problems students are having with the course material.

• Prepare examples that illustrate the problem-solving techniques they will need to employ on their homework and exams. Test your perceptions by asking students what

questions they have about problem sets, labs, or lectures. You might note these questions on the board and combine them with your own prepared agenda. This shared agenda-setting process will help target each class.

• Ask questions of your students to find out whether they are having difficulty with the material. If you lapse into lecturing for too long, you can lose touch with this.

• Encourage students to answer each others' questions, and be careful not to do all the talking.

• When teaching a section that is part of a large lecture course, you generally have about 45 minutes to review material that has been covered in two or three one-hour lectures. You will want to challenge students to think for themselves about the topics and issues raised by the course, but need to limit discussions accordingly. There will always be much to cover, so you should avoid unnecessary digressions. You might respond briefly to a divergent question and invite the student to pursue the topic further in office hours. You might explain that the topic is a good one but too complicated at the moment. If the question will be relevant at a later point in the course, say so and follow up on it at the appropriate time. Try not to cut off students without giving a brief explanation.

Teaching Labs

The following tips will help you make the most of the limited time for each section, run your lab smoothly, and maximize what your students learn.

• Point out interesting historical aspects of the experiments when possible. For example, you might note, "Galileo did this experiment using only his pulse for a time-piece and a cathedral lantern for a pendulum."

• Pre-test a lab yourself with the equipment your students will be using, as there is no guarantee that experiments will proceed as described in the manual. Identify problems and tricky procedures that might ruin the experiments or waste time.

• Try having your students prepare an outline or a flow chart of the lab's procedures before coming into lab. If they hand these in, you will be sure that they have done basic preparation for the day's work.

• Lab rules need to be clearly laid out and strictly enforced for safety reasons. Encourage students to be alert but relaxed. Remind them of relevant safety instructions and related safety equipment. Demonstrate procedures that require extra caution or involve special techniques.

• Plan ahead for emergencies. Know the location and use of fire extinguishers, emergency eye-washes, and spill cleanup equipment. Insist that students use gloves, goggles, and lab coats to protect themselves from chemical splashes or burns. Know the hazards of chemicals they will be using, and the required waste handling procedures.

• Be thoroughly familiar with the principles behind each experiment. Tell your students what they must learn from each lab, review the underlying significance of the laboratory

exercise, and be prepared to answer their questions. Labs provide an opportunity for students to make solid connections between abstract principles and physical reality.

• Ask strategic questions. For example, "Which vessel contains the afferent blood and which the efferent?" or "Once you plot these points on your graph, how are you going to find the best straight line through them?" or "Why do they tell you to make measurements with the current going both ways through the coil?"

• Team effort characterizes much of scientific work, so start teaching the ethics and responsibilities of teamwork to your students now. Encourage them to help each other.

• Be sure to circulate among the students and be aware of what they are doing. This is where some of the most interesting teaching takes place.

• If a student asks you a good question, you might resist the temptation to answer it yourself. Rather, turn it around by acknowledging that the question is a good one, and guide the student to the answer by breaking it down into steps that he or she can manage. Other students are often able to provide insightful answers to questions if they see your answer as being too technical or confusing.

• Begin and end your labs punctually. Be strict about this, especially at the beginning of the term. There is a lot to accomplish in each lab section, and students also need to leave on time to meet their other commitments.

• Indicate the techniques and procedures that are most likely to produce spurious data so that students can take extra care in those areas and not waste time with common mistakes. Similarly, remind them which techniques need not be executed with meticulous detail for a particular experiment.

• After completing an experiment, relate it to current research and ask students to think about how it relates to larger, more basic scientific questions.

• Try to reconvene as a class once or twice during the lab to go over important ideas. Have students tell you what they found. If their results are different from what you expected, encourage them to reflect on the plausibility of their findings. Get them to generalize from their data to see the concept or principle underlying the lab.

• Finally, be sure your students all have equal access (and sightlines) to lab equipment and experiments.

8 Student Work and Thorny Issues

Writing Papers

The most common active learning exercises are term papers and exams. These require students to work with course material in integrative ways that challenge them to conduct analysis, create synthesis, exercise judgment, and communicate effectively.

The development of effective writing assignments deserves careful thought. Even though TFs do not always have control over what course assignments will be, they can often play a significant role in shaping and explaining them. While the precise form of the assignment will vary according to field, student ability, and teaching style, it is important to consider several questions when designing or discussing writing tasks for your students: What is the purpose of the assignment, in relation to the overall goals of the course? What knowledge and skills do you want this assignment to develop? What types of secondary sources should be used? What logistical requirements (length, format, when and where to turn in the paper, etc.) do you want students to follow? Will there be opportunities for drafts and revisions? How will papers be evaluated? What is the course policy on extensions and late papers?

Take the time to explain course assignments carefully, especially the first one of the section. As a TF in the Department of Music explains: "Music is a very difficult thing for most people to write about intelligently. I learned after my first term teaching that I got far better papers when I took the time in class to go over the first assignment very carefully, illustrating what was necessary for success and generating a list of helpful questions for students to think about as they prepared to write the paper. Many more succeeded their first time around, and papers were far better and, of course, more enjoyable to read."

In addition, there are other strategies for developing student writing. For example, some teachers ask students to submit a proposal for their essay before they start writing. A proposal takes only moments to read, and brief comments early in the process may forestall a misguided or directionless essay. If the course head allows or even recommends revision, you may also work with students on their drafts. Peer editing is another possibility; students can serve as each other's editors and learn how to give constructive feedback.

The appendix features two useful forms, the Writing Self-Evaluation Form and the Peer Response Sheet, both of which can help students improve their own writing and offer feedback to others. Teaching fellows interested in further information and handouts on designing student assignments and proposals, or on instituting peer editing, should contact the Harvard Writing Project or the Bok Center.

Student Presentations

Some professors require students to make individual or group presentations in section. Even if this is not a course requirement, it may be a good way to involve your students. Some tips:

• If student presentations do take place in your section, be sure to discuss with the presenter(s) well before class the main points to be raised.

• Encourage a balance between the presentation of points from the readings and the students' commentary or critique.

• Remind students that the time limit on presentations will be strictly observed and help them plan accordingly. Suggest that they practice out loud before class and that they speak from notes rather than reading.

• Sample Guidelines for Oral Reports gives additional suggestions.

Evaluating Students

It is the course head's responsibility to guide and oversee the grading process. Before students undertake graded work in a course, the professor or the TFs should explain clearly the basis for evaluating the students' performance. (For example, does class participation count? What percentage of the final grade is each paper?) The TFs and course head must work together so that all TFs apply course standards fairly. Often in math and science, TFs do not grade their own students; instead, each teaching fellow will grade one or two questions on all the exams. In the humanities and social sciences, TFs may similarly share the grading of exam questions, but applying course wide standards fairly involves more individual judgment in these areas.

Often, to apply the same standards from one paper or exam question to another, it helps to read several papers or answers first to get a sense of the range of responses and establish a basis for comparison. To avoid prejudging student work, many TFs will hide the students' names from view.

Ensuring that equitable standards are maintained across sections is very difficult and takes care. In large courses with many teaching fellows, ways of approaching fairness in evaluation vary. Sometimes the course head and the TFs discuss what an ideal answer must look like. Sometimes the course head or head teaching fellow may suggest that the usual grade curve of the course be reflected in the grading of each section. Teaching fellows must rely on the course head or head teaching fellow to be very clear, so that if people mark consistently high or low, grades can be adjusted. Some course heads will ask to read all the examinations or papers with unsatisfactory or marginal grades to ensure that the judgment of unsatisfactory work and the distinction between, say, B-and C+ is the same for all TFs in the course.

Make comments on written work specific and concrete. Returning a paper without suggestions for its improvement can cause students to despair; targeted suggestions help students to improve next time. Also, clearly distinguish comments on students' work from comments on their character or their abilities. Students tend to identify strongly with their performance and attach self-worth to their grades and evaluations. To demonstrate your confidence that they can improve, give detailed feedback about how they can improve.

It is also the teaching fellow's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of student grades and of materials upon which evaluations are made. For this reason, TFs should not post grades by student name or identification number. Nor should TFs make a

student's submitted work generally accessible to anyone other than the student who has submitted it, unless specifically authorized to do so by the author.

Any time a student receives an unsatisfactory grade at midterm (D, E, or UNS), the course head may ask you to send an unsatisfactory grade report to the resident dean in the student's House or to the student's assistant dean. Unsatisfactory mid-term grades do not become a permanent part of the student's record, however, they do alert advisors to potential problems while there is still time to help.

Thorny Issues

Extensions and Excuses for Exams

Course heads can and should provide arrangements to students with medical or other personal problems; resident deans and assistant deans of freshman are always available for consultation on how such arrangements can be equitably offered. Any request for accommodations should be vetted through the Accessible Education Office (AEO). AEO is happy to confer with Course heads in regard to implementing any reasonable accommodations on the basis of a medical condition or disability. Course heads may give extensions of time on work up until the last day of exam period. They may also excuse students from hour-long exams or require substitute work to replace an hour-long exam as appropriate. (Faculty are not required to offer makeup examinations to students who are absent from hour-long or midterm examinations for reasons other than the observance of a religious holiday; see Information for Faculty Offering Instruction in Arts and Sciences.)

Administration of, and substitution for, final examinations is under the control of the Registrar and the Administrative Board (the "Ad Board"). If the instructor has chosen a registrar-administered final exam, the instructor may not offer an individual student an alternate form of evaluation to the final exam. Similarly, the Ad Board must approve any extension of work beyond the last day of exam period. There is no grade of "Incomplete" for undergraduates as there is for graduate students.

Handling Complaints About Grades

When students challenge a grade, it places TFs in a delicate position since it questions their competence and fairness. Since TFs do not have the final authority on giving grades, any complaints ultimately go to the course head. One experienced teaching fellow recommends answering a student's complaint simply by saying, "I'll ask the professor to read your paper/review your exam again."

Some students will argue insistently about one point here or there on graded problem sets. TFs who frequently face this situation cannot refer every question to the course

head. They must be prepared to explain that all TFs are grading problem sets according to an agreed upon policy for what each acceptable answer must demonstrate. If such complaints are a continual problem, the head teaching fellow should provide some guidance.

Confronting Plagiarism or Cheating

Harvard makes a concerted effort to inform students about the nature and consequences of plagiarism. Writing with Sources, a publication of Harvard's Expository Writing Program, covers the principles and practices of citing sources, and the nature and causes of plagiarism, including improper collaboration. Students then cover these topics freshman year in their required Expository Writing class.

Undergraduates also receive the Expository Writing Program publication Writing with Internet Sources, which explains how to use digital resources appropriately.

Rules concerning the abuse of computer systems are outlined in the FAS Handbook for Students, Chapter 4: General Regulations and Standards of Conduct. Other policies are published on the FAS Computing Services' Website as Computer Rules & Responsibilities.

Despite these efforts, the number of plagiarism cases referred to the College's Administrative Board each year suggests students continue to have difficulty applying citation rules to specific subject areas and to more advanced assignments that require them to integrate ideas rather than simply report on what others have said. In other words, do not assume that your students are capable of identifying plagiarism without some guidance from you.

You might, for example, present two ways to use the same secondary source, one an example of good practice, the other an example of plagiarism. Ask the students to identify which is which and to explain why. Correct any misapprehensions after the students have had their say. Section leaders can also offer positive suggestions on how to develop one's own ideas and writing "voice." Finding an "authentic" voice is a matter of great concern to students; your efforts to help will be appreciated and will give them an incentive to do original work.

Also, since students can best resist temptation if they do not encounter it in the first place, try to avoid situations that lend themselves to plagiarism. Give students guidance at the beginning of the term by clarifying assignments and assisting them in focusing on a topic. Check at various stages of progress to encourage their original efforts and help them avoid last minute work that can set the stage for plagiarism.

You are neither expected nor advised to try to deal with instances of suspected dishonesty (or other inappropriate behavior) yourself. You should instead refer the matter directly to the person responsible for the course. All cases of suspected or proven plagiarism or other academic dishonesty (such as suspected cheating on an examination)

should be discussed with the head teaching fellow or course head. If you believe that you have encountered an instance of plagiarism, the course head will ask you to substantiate your suspicions. The course head will call the student's resident dean (in the case of freshmen, the resident dean of freshmen), who will then contact the student and assemble the details of the case for presentation to the College Administrative Board. In keeping with faculty legislation, all cases of suspected academic dishonesty involving a College student must be referred to the Ad Board for investigation.

At Harvard, submission of the same or substantially similar work for more than one course is a form of academic dishonesty when the student has not obtained prior written approval from the course head of each course involved. Students sometimes report having received ambiguous advice from course heads on the submission of the same or similar work to more than one course. If the course head has agreed to accept work that is also being submitted to another course, it is important to be clear with students about the degree of similarity that is permitted.

Cheating on graded problem sets can also be a thorny problem since students are encouraged to work together in many courses in the belief that they will learn more that way. To draw an unambiguous clear line between cooperation and copying, professors should outline how students may collaborate on their work. Teaching fellows need to reiterate this position regularly.

9 Classroom Issues and Students in Trouble

Gender and Race in the Classroom

Highly verbal male students may still dominate class discussions at Harvard, and women and minority students are occasionally more reluctant to speak out in class. While these statements may not hold for every class, TFs should be aware that gender and ethnicity may be related to a student's degree of participation in discussion sections. To better ensure that your teaching provides equal opportunities for all students to participate in the discussion, we suggest some simple strategies:

• Get to know your students as individuals. When you know their personalities, interests, and backgrounds, you are less likely to stereotype them unconsciously. At the same time, students are more likely to participate in a class in which the teacher has shown genuine interest in them. When students know something about you and your interests, too, you become less of a stereotype to them, and they are more likely to be open to you.

• Become a careful observer of your class. During or after each section, note who participates and the length, depth, and frequency of contributions. Notice the responses students receive, especially when they are interrupted. Observe any differences in tone or approach that occur in your responses to students and their responses to each other.

One way to observe these classroom dynamics begins with having your class videotaped at the Bok Center. Once you actually see your class in action, you will have a better sense of the participation of individual students and can avoid inequalities that might otherwise go unacknowledged.

• Hold all students responsible for the conduct and content of discussions. Encourage each student to elicit information from other students, to collaborate with others, to ask good questions, and to make comments or argue a point. Let students know that being rude or overly competitive, or interrupting and ignoring other students in discussion will not be rewarded.

• Listen to all students with equal seriousness.

• Ask all students the same kinds of questions—don't reserve the abstract questions for one kind of student and the factual or experiential questions for another.

• Keep students from interrupting each other and intervene when comments occur too rapidly to permit a student to initiate or complete their contribution.

• Ask shy or non-participatory students outside of class how they can be helped to participate; you may suggest that they contribute in the next class on a topic in which they have insight or interest.

• Avoid making any student in your class belonging to a racial or ethnic minority a "token." Make room for individuals to comment on their personal experiences, but do not put students in the position of speaking for an entire demographic group.

• Model for your students the use of inclusive language in their writing and speaking, e.g., use "humanity" rather than "man."

• Don't be intimidated by students who display contemptuous attitudes toward you because of your gender or ethnicity. Don't refrain from adding gender analysis to your discussion just because someone is skeptical about its usefulness.

• Find ways to articulate that there is a place for women and minority students in your discipline, which may appear to be overwhelmingly white and male.

• Sexist or racist behaviors and remarks have no place in the classroom and should not be tolerated. Subtle discrimination goes unnoticed more easily and for that reason may be more dangerous. Remember, your students for the most part are young and may have little awareness of their own biases. They may have had little experience with people of different ethnic backgrounds, races, or classes. Sometimes, it may be your job to help them see and privately question their own assumptions. It is always your job to help every student become a full participant in class, both as a speaker and as a listener. This requires sensitivity to students as individuals and constant evaluations of your own assumptions.

What Can You Do If a Student Is Having Difficulty?

Your students are all very bright and competent, but many experience anxiety during their academic careers. Most students participate in time-consuming extracurricular activities, and some have several jobs. Many think they can procrastinate since every term ends with a two-week reading period. Students taking several large lecture courses can also become lost in the shuffle.

Harvard has many resources for advising on academic and personal problems. Yet, many students find it difficult to take advantage of them for a variety of reasons. Students may fear the appearance of failure and believe they should be self-sufficient. They may worry about confidentiality, particularly having their parents or peers find out that they have sought help. They may feel inadequate, noticing that they are surrounded by extraordinarily competent people. Cultural pressures can also make it difficult for some students to seek help. If a student approaches you with a personal or emotional problem that does not directly concern your course or section, you may want to be a supportive listener, but you can help most effectively by referring the student to the appropriate trained advisor or counselor.

If a student has serious academic problems or problems that you cannot resolve on your own, ask the course head or the head tutor in the department for support and advice. If they agree, you may then bring the problem to the attention of those responsible for academic advising at Harvard: the resident dean of the student's House or, in the case of a freshman, the resident dean of freshmen. He or she may already be aware of the problem, since students having difficulty in one course often have other problems. These advisors are key people for referring students to professional counselors or other sources of help.

You may also refer students directly to the Bureau of Study Counsel for academic support, study skills workshops, peer tutoring, and individual study counseling. If you would like consultation and support in your advising role as a teaching fellow, you may consult with the Bureau of Study Counsel or the Bok Center.

If a student has serious personal or emotional problems, the resident dean or assistant dean of freshmen should be alerted. In addition, you should be familiar with the resources available to your student and to you:

• Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) Mental Health Services and the Bureau of Study Counsel. Both the Mental Health Services and the Bureau of Study Counsel offer support for students and advise teaching fellows whenever there is concern over a student's behavior, the quality of their work, or apparent distress. Since both services provide counseling and support, it is important to distinguish them. If a student has a primarily academic concern (procrastination, poor time management, declining performance), the Bureau would be the most appropriate referral. If the concern involves physical or psychological symptoms (e.g., sleep problems, eating concerns, anxiety, headaches, depression), the Mental Health Service would likely be the best starting

point. Both offices cross-refer, so you can help a student by connecting with care in either service. In addition, if you yourself are unsure about how to approach or understand a psychological issue or how to respond to a student of concern, you are invited to have a confidential phone consultation or appointment with a Mental Health Services clinician or a Bureau of Study Counsel counselor. These services are here to provide support for you as well as for your students.

• The Accessible Education Office (AEO) serves as the central campus resource for Harvard College, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) students with documented medical, learning, psychiatric, and ADHD disabilities. AEO often consults with students who may simply want to discuss difficult situations confidentially and not request any services at all. Although students with temporary illness or injury are not considered disabled by the law, they are nonetheless often in need of services or accommodations similar to those provided to students with permanent disabilities in order to maintain their academic program with minimal interruption. These students are encouraged to consult with the AEO as soon as possible.

• Memorial Church and the Harvard Chaplains. Sometimes students encounter academic or personal difficulties arising from a sense of disorientation that may be caused by a conflict between the beliefs and values they have brought to Harvard and those they encounter here. On occasion, these reflect a tension between what students are learning and their beliefs. In such cases, the spiritual resources available at Harvard, particularly the clergy of the Memorial Church and the chaplains associated with the Harvard Chaplains (formerly United Ministry) can often help students to work through these conflicts in ways that are respectful of their own backgrounds and beliefs.

What If a Student Creates a Problem?

No matter how well prepared or skilled you may be, at some point in your teaching career you will encounter a student whose behavior threatens your authority and the functioning of your class. There is no simple way to deal with these difficult situations, but we offer the following suggestions from seasoned teaching fellows for addressing certain "types" of difficult students they have identified.

• The student who tries to "know" it all. This student challenges everything you say and quotes Hegel in every discussion, regardless of Hegel's relevance to the course. Of course, you should give the student the benefit of the doubt at first and try to see the validity of the point, but do not allow the situation to continue for long. First, try to deal with the matter privately and talk to the student outside of class. Tell the student you value his or her fine contributions, but explain the importance of hearing from others. Try to enlist the student in creating a better class. If a private, non-confrontational conversation fails, you may need to intervene in class, saying, for example, "What you said is interesting but really isn't what we're discussing." If the student has concerns

that range beyond the assigned material, you might suggest that these be presented to you during office hours. However, engaging the student only on course content and assigned material is probably the greatest service you can offer him or her, and to the class. Often these students are insecure about their abilities and have trouble focusing on one subject at a time. By offering the student the attention she or he needs while limiting it to course content, you can help improve the student's class performance and boost confidence, thus reducing his or her need to show off.

• The student who tries to intimidate you. This student attempts to get you to make a grade change by threat, intimidation, or badgering. Don't be intimidated. Be fair but set strict, clear standards. Sometimes just a simple but firm reminder that you are in charge does the trick. Invoking the authority of the course head (as seeking his or her input) may help if necessary. In the extreme case of a physical threat, tell the student that you take it seriously and inform the proper authorities.

• The student who tries to take advantage of your goodwill. This student may try to get his or her way by flattering, lying to, or exploiting their TF. Usually, this behavior is recognizable as an attempt at manipulation. The same suggestions for intimidation apply to this behavior. Although these students probably won't cause disturbances in the classroom, they can affect the climate and sense of fairness for all.

It is surprising and dismaying how many TFs have these kinds of experiences. You should attempt to talk with the student and their advisors early, before problems become unsolvable. Some TFs handle these sorts of situations by using strategies that strengthen other students' participation (see the section on preparing students for discussion sections). Ironically, a problem student may sometimes draw the class together and ally it with the teaching fellow. The problem student may thus become alienated and try even harder to get attention. Don't feel too badly if this occurs. If you have notified the student's advisor and tried to reason with him or her, you may have done all that you can. If you suspect that the problem behavior indicates emotional or psychological disturbance, be sure to let the advisor know. Again, as early as possible, your course head should also be made aware of the problem.

Critical Times: The First Term at Harvard and When the Senior Thesis is Due

Think back to your first term in college. Most of us experienced a mixture of excitement and fear. Home and high school no longer provide structure for daily activities. Many students at Harvard must adjust not only to college life, but also to living in a city. The expectations they place on themselves and on Harvard are often unrealistic and causes of stress. Because most first-term students enroll in large courses in which they have little contact with professors, TFs and other students in sections can be very important contacts for them.

Poor study habits carried over from high school and misunderstandings about course

heads' expectations may also lead to a rough start for freshmen. Be particularly open to your freshmen students' questions. Clearly spell out assignments and expectations, and be aware that the midterm exam will be a source of great anxiety. Offer encouragement and give basic tips on how to study, what to look for in a text, or how to organize an answer to an essay question. Have high expectations of students, but try not to pressure them. Reassure them that earning less than an A on their first midterm doesn't mean failure. Most of these students are used to getting As; be sure to tell them what they did well and what they can do to improve their work.

Science teachers should know that their disciplines can be especially difficult for first-term students. Levels of math and science preparation vary widely among entering students. Young women (we still find) may not have received encouragement in these disciplines during high school. Keep in mind that many students take only a few required courses in the sciences. They may feel inadequately prepared and incapable of succeeding in these disciplines. Overly critical or unsympathetic responses from a teaching fellow can turn them away from science forever.

Teachers in moral reasoning, philosophy, and religion courses should also be especially sensitive to freshmen. As one professor puts it, freshmen are "looking for people to become." Don't expect them to be as sophisticated as your other students. This may be the first time that they explore certain concepts and values for themselves.

Seniors are usually assets to sections because the discussions benefit from their experience and sophistication. Your class and assignments, however, may be lower priority for seniors as the prospects of graduation and life after college loom large. Seniors who are writing theses can be particularly distracted from other academic activities. These final projects are very important and do demand much of the seniors' time and energy; however, the thesis can also become an excuse to avoid other assignments and deadlines. It's a good idea to find out at the beginning of the term who is writing a thesis and when it is due. Invite seniors to work out deadline conflicts with you and/or the course head early in the term. Course heads have different policies in this regard and should always be consulted.

Do I Have to Teach Students How to Write?

Or, to put the question differently: Shouldn't students already know how to write? In fact, all freshmen are required to take a term of Expository Writing. This means that most of your students will have been taught certain fundamentals of argumentative writing: how to arrive at and arrange persuasive ideas by a process of drafting and revision, how to analyze textual evidence, and how to properly use sources of different kinds to reinforce their analysis. But to master these skills, and to do so in a broad range of disciplines while reading dense and copious course material, students need reinforcement, assistance, and guidance.

Teaching fellows can do much to improve the quality of students' written work in a

given term. You can help generate appropriate topics and approaches for them, clarify assignments, respond to outlines, and give students an opportunity to turn in drafts to be rewritten. By treating a written assignment as a process and not just a final product that is handed in on a certain date, you can help students to break down the work into manageable stages with a sequence of deadlines, and to master writing skills.

Perhaps the most important way you can assist students is by offering targeted comments on papers. Your comments help student writers to see their writing through a reader's eyes. A thoughtful final comment that discusses a paper's strengths and weaknesses in specific terms, cites examples of each, and makes concrete suggestions for improvement can transform a student's writing and give him or her the means to be academically successful at a writing intensive institution such as Harvard.

Students may receive additional help on paper writing through the Harvard College Libraries and the Writing Center. Reference librarians in the undergraduate libraries can design programs of bibliographic instruction for your classes tailored to their specific writing topics. You may refer students to the Writing Center for confidential individual consultations about their writing. There, students may try out a draft, talk about ideas for an essay, or discuss their writing in general.

As a teaching fellow, you might want to meet with Harvard Writing Project consultants and Bok Center consultants who offer workshops and provide specific advice about structuring writing assignments, reading papers, and commenting on written work.

The Graduate Writing Fellows Program at the Bok Center offers more extensive training for TFs on responding effectively to student writing and using writing as a learning tool.

10 Evaluating and Improving Your Teaching

Teaching is a learning process, and it is impossible to conduct a productive class without input from the students. Experience enables teachers to observe their students with accuracy and insight, and to incorporate their students' observations and feedback into their teaching.

Feedback

Mid-Term Feedback

The most common way to obtain feedback on teaching is to have students complete a questionnaire. Doing this at the middle of the term will allow you to take feedback into account most usefully. The easiest way to collect early feedback is through your course iSite. You can also design your own questionnaire to obtain mid-term feedback, use a form from the Bok Center website, or work with the Bok Center to design a

questionnaire that is tailored to your section. Questionnaires available on the Bok Center website can be administered in class or online and then sent directly to the Bok Center to preserve anonymity. It is recommended that you make an appointment to interpret your evaluations with a consultant (it is easy to give too much weight to that one negative comment!) who will also help to suggest changes on the basis of the responses.

Other In-Class Techniques

End the class five minutes early on occasion and ask your students to write the answers to a few questions about the class. To get feedback on specific content, you can ask the following:

- What were the main points of today's class?
- What points were confusing or unclear?
- What might help to clear up the confusion?

To get feedback on your teaching in this way, you might ask the following:

- What do you like most about section meetings in this course?
- What do you like least about section meetings in this course?
- What suggestions do you have for me as your teaching fellow?

Another way to obtain feedback is to ask students to work in pairs for a few minutes to recapitulate what you have been presenting. Their reports will give you some insight into making adjustments in your approach to presentation.

Responding to Feedback

Once you have collected your students' feedback, you can respond to it by making specific changes in your classroom practice. One useful response is to discuss the feedback with your students and let them know that you are acting on it. Some TFs compile a summary of students' responses and distribute it to the class; students then have a sense of what their peers think and can see that you take their feedback seriously. If students have reported that they are often confused, for example, you can encourage them to ask questions more often and even tell them effective ways to ask for your help. Discussing their feedback with them demonstrates that you actually want to improve the class and that you welcome their participation in doing so. Such a conversation can bring about constructive change and is usually much appreciated.

Timing and Design

The timing and design of written feedback instruments have a strong impact on their usefulness. Mid-term evaluations are much more likely to be useful than those collected

after the course ends. In the middle of the semester, it is apparent to students that you can still use their feedback to make improvements to the class, so they have more incentive to give you thorough and constructive responses.

Peer Feedback Through Observation

Teaching fellows often find it helpful to visit and observe other classes, including sections led by other TFs in the same course or classes in their department that they know are taught well. Discussing observations with these teachers after the class meeting is an important way to reflect on teaching techniques. In addition, you may ask others to observe classes you teach and to offer suggestions.

Course Evaluations and The Q

The Q

The Committee on Undergraduate Education, in partnership with the Office for Faculty Affairs, conducts a major course evaluation program at the end of every semester in which students provide feedback on their courses. The results are summarized in the Q Guide. Sections are evaluated as well as lectures, labs and tutorials. Section leaders can access copies of their own students' evaluations online. This end-of-term feedback will be most meaningful and constructive if you have taken earlier steps to communicate to your students that you welcome their feedback.

Reading the Q Guide is also one way to stay informed about the student perspective generally. Seeing what students appreciate (and complain) about in a variety of courses will suggest what to pay attention to in your own teaching and guide you toward more useful feedback.

Consequences of Unsuccessful Teaching

The Office of Undergraduate Education may contact teaching fellows who receive very low Q scores urging them to seek appropriate advice from their course heads and from the Bok Center about how to improve their teaching. Although it is understood that a single unsuccessful evaluation may not be significant, continued low ratings may be cause for excluding a TF from further teaching in FAS.

Documenting Your Teaching

Increasingly, search committees at colleges and universities consider teaching experience and expertise to be significant factors in a desirable faculty profile. There is evidence

that in a competitive market, when other things are equal, the candidate with a strong, documented teaching record will be offered jobs. The Bok Center and the Office of Career Services strongly advise TFs to start develop their own teaching portfolios early in their teaching careers at Harvard.

You can begin the process during a regular teaching consultation at the Bok Center. The Bok Center staff will be happy to talk with you about how you might design a teaching portfolio to document your ongoing teaching efforts, incorporating a template developed for the typical Harvard experience. You should consider taking some initial steps even before you begin formal work on a portfolio:

• Save all syllabi, handouts, and assignments from courses you teach.

• Develop a statement of your "teaching philosophy." Employers often request these, and the strongest are those that are well thought out and directly relate to your classroom experiences.

• Request letters from professors for whom you have taught, especially those who have observed your teaching. Do this while professors' memories of your work are still fresh.

• When a course is over, and there is no appearance of impropriety or favoritism, you might also request letters from students. The advisability of this varies by field, however, and it best to check with your course head.

• Consider having your sections videotaped as part of a consultation at the Bok Center. You may ask to keep a copy of the tape since videotaped segments of teaching are sometimes offered to supplement, or as substitute for, an onsite job talk.

• Keep all student evaluations of your teaching. The combination of midterm evaluations using forms you develop yourself or obtain from the Bok Center with final Q evaluations make a good package. If a course is too small for Q evaluations, create and administer your own evaluation form to ensure documentation of your teaching.

11 The TF Role: Expectations, Responsibilities, and Conduct

For the Course

Administering the Course

Teaching fellows' responsibilities vary from course to course and are seldom formally spelled out. They may range from shaping the intellectual content of section meetings to clerical and mundane problems associated with administering the course. Some course heads delegate tasks—for example, locating new rooms for sections when enrollments swell, arranging for audiovisual presentations, or photocopying course material. If you

find yourself asked to do such things but do not know where to start, first seek guidance from the course head or department administrator. Help may also be found outside the department: See Resource Directory for more information.

In courses with enrollments of a hundred or more students, the course head may appoint a head teaching fellow, an experienced teacher who gets extra compensation for handling administrative matters. An important resource for these teachers is the Head Teaching Fellows Network, an interdisciplinary group that meets at the Bok Center several times a year. Discussion topics include sectioning, assigning work to students, establishing a relationship with the course head, running teaching fellow meetings, sharing approaches to pedagogy with other TFs, and designing and grading assignments.

One potentially confusing administrative problem for TFs is how to assign students to sections (known as "sectioning"). You may be responsible for asking students to put their schedules on section cards at the second or third lecture, once they will know whether they plan to take the course. Experienced teachers tell students to specify only the times when they have unavoidable conflicts, so students do not indicate that they are busy to suit their whims. On the other hand, students on athletic teams may have real difficulty attending afternoon sections. With this information, the TF or course head can draw up a schedule and assign sections. Since course heads have different policies about making changes once the sections are set, find out the policy from yours. Some do not let students change because this can throw sections out of balance; others allow students to change sections if they switch with another student.

Class Attendance

Section attendance is required in some courses. It is in the teaching fellow's interest for section attendance to be required, but the decision belongs to the course head. If there is real work to be done in sections, such as preparing for examinations, students are more likely to attend. Because of the so-called "shopping period" at the beginning of each term, students need not decide on their courses until their study cards are due (after the first week of classes). Students may change courses as late as one month into the term, so you may not be sure who is in your class until the first assignment is actually due. It is worth noting the attendance, especially to spot problems early. While some students may miss section meetings because of a genuine conflict, others who regularly do not attend may be in trouble. When that is the case, you may contact the student's resident dean. If a student on an athletic team has difficulty attending classes or completing assignments because of the team's schedule, meet with the student and call the coach to work out a solution together.

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences rarely cancels classes. However, faculty and section leaders who commute to Cambridge are not be expected to put themselves in danger during serious storms and may choose to cancel their individual classes. It is important that course staff members inform students at the start of the term of the procedures

for notifying them if class meetings are to be canceled. Similarly, it is important that you provide students with instructions on how to inform you and the course head of their own planned absences.

Ensuring Safety in Labs

In lab sections, your responsibility is to promote and maintain a culture of compliance with the safety and environmental programs mandated by University and government requirements. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulate laboratory activities with respect to safety and environmental issues. Familiarize yourself with required laboratory procedures, safety precautions, and equipment and emergency procedures. Train your students to store and dispose of chemicals properly and use protective equipment to avoid injury. If a student is splashed by a chemical or otherwise injured in the lab, send him or her to Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) immediately. Make sure they know how to obtain information on chemical hazards and whom to call when questions arise. When teaching a lab, seek opportunities to train students on safety and environmental practices, as these skills are increasingly required in the working world.

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) provides additional training. If the head teaching fellow of a basic course does not arrange a safety training for all students, individual TFs may do so by contacting EH&S. See the EH&S website for schedules and curricula.

Working With Students

Students With Disabilities

The University does not discriminate against qualified individuals in admission or access to programs and activities. Federal law defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits or restricts the condition, manner, or duration under which a person can perform a major life activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, working, or taking care of oneself. An impairment or diagnosis in itself does not necessarily constitute a "disability;" it must "substantially limit" these activities. Disabilities do not necessarily impair the individual's performance but may require the individual to seek alternate methods of carrying out a given task.

The process of serving students with disabilities is a collaborative one in which students are expected to take the lead in disclosing their condition to the Accessible Education Office (AEO) after admission. They should provide the necessary documentation to AEO only, which oversees the effectiveness and quality of services. Once that occurs, providing Harvard students with appropriate accommodations for disabilities is

a collaborative effort on the part of teaching staff, AEO, administrators, and the students themselves. Students who request accommodations should present TFs with an introductory letter from AEO giving an overview of the accommodations deemed appropriate. Students making such requests without this letter should be referred to AEO.

It is important that all communication with students regarding disability issues be private and confidential. One way to educate students about the importance of timely requests for accommodations and begin the collaboration process is to announce it during the first section meeting and to include relevant language in the course syllabus. For example:

"Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability is requested to present his or her letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation."

Teaching staff should also consider the following strategies for improving course accessibility:

• Ensure that lectures, sections, review sessions, etc. are held in physically accessible space when required. The Registrar's Office classroom section (617-495-1541) can assist when relocation is indicated.

• Call for volunteers from the class as soon as the need for a note-taker has been communicated, taking care not to disclose the student's name or disability. Typically note-takers who take their notes in an electronic format are preferred since they are able to email the AEO student their notes immediately after the class.

• Provide visually impaired or blind students with handouts, tests, and PowerPoint slides in their approved format, such as Braille, enlarged print, or electronic text at the same time other students have access to the material, and honor adjustable lighting needs as appropriate. The Adaptive Technology Lab (ATL) is available to help with preparation of accessible materials as long as they are provided to them in advance.

• Cooperate in the provision of accommodations for deaf and hard-of-hearing students who may require the presence of sign-language interpreters in the front of the room or near the podium, or assistive listening technology and/or stenographic typists for lectures. Some students may use FM listening devices, which require that teaching staff use a wireless microphone; many students depend on open or closed-captioned films and videos. . Faculty should make advance arrangements to provide open-captioned films and videos by contacting the Coordinator of Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Services at 617-496-3720.

• Let the class know that they will find many helpful resources at the Bureau of Study Counsel.

It should be noted that advanced planning for many such accommodations, especially reformatting of material, is necessary for them to be timely and effective. When students make course changes after study card day and before the fifth Monday of the term, significant delays in the preparation of reformatted materials may result, affecting both students and instructional staff.

The course head is responsible for all arrangements needed for classroom, midterm, and hourly examination accommodations, including finding a room for separate exam administration and providing a scribe or similar service, if required. The Registrar's Office provides accommodations for all scheduled final examinations. For questions concerning the administration of final exams (e.g., dropping off/picking up exams, location of students) for students with disabilities, please contact the Examinations Office at 617-495-1542. For questions concerning accommodations, contact the Accessible Education Office (617-496-8707, aeo@fas.harvard.edu).

Your Availability to Students

It is part of your responsibility to be available to students. If you do not have an office, or have one but cannot receive phone calls, give students other numbers where they can reach you easily. E-mail is a good way to stay in touch with students who do not come to regular office hours. You may find that even when you list your office hours and phone numbers, nobody knocks at your door. One way to avoid the no-show problem is to schedule regular conferences. Another idea is to give a brief quiz early in the term and insist that students pick it up at a scheduled conference.

The amount of time you spend with individual students will depend on the course. It is time-consuming to meet regularly for an hour or two with everyone. However, you might arrange meetings at a point when their value to students is obvious—at the start of the term to learn more about their backgrounds and interests, or when papers are assigned. In the long run, this will save you time because students will think more clearly and write better papers that are easier to read and grade.

Some TFs meet with students in small groups to discuss paper proposals or drafts. If such meetings strike you as labor-intensive, remember that from the student's perspective, an accessible teacher is often the deciding factor in determining whether to put effort into a course.

Professional Conduct

In a college community, TFs may find themselves working with students with whom they have are previous associations and personal ties. Harvard encourages some of these connections by bringing faculty and teaching staff together regularly in the Houses or at departmental gatherings. Other connections may result from common membership in

College organizations. Most of these friendly contacts will enhance rather than interfere with a teaching fellow's ability to perform teaching duties with professional objectivity.

On rare occasions, however, you may encounter a student with whom your association causes a potential conflict of interest. The student, for example, may have involved you in a controversy over a grade in another course, may be a close personal friend from your hometown, or may be someone you have seen socially. Often, it is difficult to know if this association will affect your ability to judge the student's work impartially. If you find yourself in such a situation, discuss it frankly with the course head or head teaching fellow to determine the appropriate solution. The best answer is usually to transfer the student to another section or tutorial and to give grading responsibility to another teaching fellow.

Your conduct while teaching a section or tutorial should follow these same standards of professionalism. You should seek to maintain friendly, equitable relations with your students but should take special care to avoid any action that might compromise your independent judgment or favor one student over another. This means, of course, that you should never date a student in your class. But it goes much further. The trust necessary for good teaching can be undermined simply by showing that you like or dislike different students.

Moreover, the loss of trust can result from quite innocent actions that reveal personal feelings. Even the appearance of excessive friendliness or hostility may confuse a student about the grade you might give, or may be misinterpreted as harassment, including sexual harassment. It can also lead to antagonism from other members of your class. Care should be taken to be dispassionate and evenhanded in your praise or criticism of individual students, and never to single out a particular person in your section or tutorial for undue special attention in or out of class even as you do give them individual praise or criticism. You should achieve a reputation for objectivity and fairness in your dealings with every student. Please refer to the Resource Directory for procedures about sexual harassment complaints and on standards of professional conduct. Past professional conduct sessions are available for viewing at the Bok Center. Remember, it is the teaching fellow, not the student, who is held responsible in such cases, regardless of who seems to have been the initiator.

Supervising Independent Study Projects

If you are asked to supervise an independent study project, remember that your work is voluntary and unsalaried. The student will need the resident dean's signature, your signature, and—since you are not a faculty member—the approval of the head tutor or chair of your department in order to undertake the project and receive a grade from you. Your responsibility is advisory rather than instructional; you will recommend grades, not assign them.

Juggling Your Responsibilities and Time Management

One of the most frequent complaints among TFs is that no one warned them how much time their teaching would take. If you followed all the advice in this handbook to the letter, you would have no time left for your graduate work or for yourself. The amount of time suggested for doing the work associated with each course (or each "fifth") is ten hours a week. But this work is highly independent, and it is easy to over-commit yourself. If you are consistently spending more time than you think you should or find that your own work is suffering because of your teaching load, consider some of the following solutions.

• Take stock of how you are spending your time. Are you procrastinating on your dissertation? Or are you buried in it to the detriment of your other commitments? Are you spending too much time on less important aspects of your teaching? Establish priorities and do the most important things first. Find a mentor or source of good advice for yourself.

• Confine the work you must do for section teaching to the day before section. Prepare thoroughly but not for every contingency. Do not go into class with 15 pages of notes and plans. Keep it simple and doable.

• If you still feel overwhelmed, talk things over with your course head, experienced teaching fellows, or a Bok Center staff member.

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The Administrative Board of Harvard College (the "Ad Board") was established by the faculty to handle a variety of important matters pertaining to undergraduates. By faculty legislation, the Ad Board decides cases of College discipline, reviews unsatisfactory academic records, and considers student petitions for exceptions to College rules.

The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning provides services aimed at helping those who teach at Harvard to improve their teaching skills. Teaching fellows are invited to call or visit the Center at any time to discuss any aspect of their teaching experience.

The Bureau of Study Counsel is a resource center for students' academic and personal growth, encouraging the development of the "whole person" in the interrelated realms of intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal life.

The Accessible Education Office (AEO) is a resource center for students with documented disabilities and health conditions. Additionally AEO welcomes inquiries from teaching staff and opportunities to collaborate with instructors in providing reasonable accommodations for students with medical conditions or disabilities.

The Office of Career Services offers many services to help GSAS students and PhDs assess, explore, and pursue academic and nonacademic careers, including a dossier

service, individual counseling, career development workshops, and special programs such as the Becoming Faculty series.

Dudley House, the graduate student center, provides space for TFs to hold office hours and conduct small section meetings. The Bok Center schedules special TF workshops during the year in the Dudley House Graduate Student Lounge. Dudley House programming also offers various opportunities for interacting with fellow graduate students.

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) provides support and expertise to University faculty, staff, and students on all issues pertaining to federal and University regulations concerning exposure to or handling of hazardous materials. EH&S programs include biosafety, environmental compliance, industrial hygiene, pest control, radiation, and occupational safety. EH&S provides training, permitting, regulatory liaison, inspections, waste handling, technical assistance and evaluation, and other services.

The Harvard Chaplains provide the University community (students, faculty, and staff) with a wide variety of interfaith religious resources through the work of their associated chaplains, pastors, and religious workers.

The Harvard International Office serves students in the international community at Harvard by providing programs and services for international students, scholars, and their families.

Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) provides high-quality, comprehensive, confidential health care to students, staff, faculty, and their dependents, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Primary care and mental health services are available at the main health center located at the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center in Harvard Square, as well as at satellite clinics on the Business, Law, and Medical school campuses.

The Harvard College Writing Program administers the freshman writing requirement (Expos 20), an introductory writing course for students in need of a preparatory semester in academic writing (Expos 10), and a practicum course in public speaking (Expos 40). It is also home to the Writing Center (a peer tutor service for undergraduates seeking help on papers) and the Harvard Writing Project (a program supporting writing instruction in courses and departments).

In Common is the peer counseling hotline for Harvard's graduate and professional schools.

Volunteer graduate student staffers offer support and refer students to resources on issues such as loneliness and alienation, uncertainty about careers, academic or financial problems, or difficulties in relationships. No issue is too big or small. Calls are anonymous and confidential; there is no caller ID.

The Language Resource Center provides newly renovated learning spaces located in the penthouse of Lamont Library in Harvard Yard and offers individual and small-group facilities providing a broad spectrum of foreign-language related technologies.

The Harvard College Library provides a variety of programs and services designed to complement the teaching and research programs of FAS departments. Please see "Programs and Services for Instructors" on our website or click on the yellow "Instruction Resources" button on our homepage.

The Housing System and Freshman Dean's Office. Resident freshmen live in one of 17 dormitories in or near Harvard Yard and take their meals in Annenberg Hall. The dormitories are divided into four groups, each headed by a resident dean. The resident dean, supported by a group of resident proctors, oversees the academic progress and personal welfare of the students in his or her group. The dean of freshmen and his staff coordinate and monitor this system through the Freshman Dean's Office.

Media and Technology Services provides audio visual services such as computer/video projection, sound systems, and audio/visual recording. Equipment is installed in many of the classrooms on campus and also available for rental.

The Media Production Center (MPC) operates a sound studio for audio recording and videoconferencing, and post-production suites for audio and video editing and producing CDs, DVDs, and Web-based media. Disc and tape duplication, package design, and on-media printing are also provided. The MPC provides services for faculty and departments across the University; there is no charge for materials produced for use in FAS-registered classes.

Memorial Church is Harvard's nondenominational University church. In addition to regular services, a wide range of special services, lectures, and musical events occur throughout the term. Undergraduate and graduate student groups meet to discuss religious topics of interest on a regular basis.

Office of Student Affairs. Dean of Student Affairs Garth McCavana has general responsibility for the welfare of graduate students and monitors students' academic status, progress, and discipline. Graduate fellowship competitions and processes are administered through the Student Affairs Office as are leave and travel applications, intra-Faculty of Arts and Sciences transfer applications, and readmission applications. Dean McCavana also represents students in disciplinary cases before the Administrative Board and advises students on sexual harassment complaints.

The Office of Student Services is responsible for the resident advisor (RA) training program and for oversight of the RAs in the GSAS residence halls. The office also is responsible for various aspects of the orientation for incoming and international students. Ellen Fox is the primary resource for GSAS students about any academic or personal concerns, including policies regarding sexual harassment. She serves in an advisory role and provides support and information about counseling and other services for GSAS students.

The Registrar's Office is the steward of student records from the point of matriculation to the conferral of the degree. It offers a wide range of services to faculty, students, and members of the administration in the areas of academic records, student status,

registration, course enrollment, publications, classroom assignments, and scheduling of final examinations. Contact the Registrar's Office.

Additional Resources

Section Preparation: Some Suggestions for TF Meetings

Sample Guidelines for Oral Reports in Section

Writing Self Evaluation Form

Peer Response Sheet

Sample Student Information Sheet

A Guideline for Writing Letters of Recommendation

Procedures for Responding to Complaints about Sexual Harassment

Professional Conduct Policy