

ANNUAL CYCLE FOR EVALUATING GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTORS

Adopted by the Teacher Preparation Committee at its meeting of 13 January 2009

A. Considerations

1. *Policies and contracts.* Our process should comply with *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (in Spartan Life)* and with the Graduate Employees Union contract with MSU. The current, applicable GSRR sections 2.4.8. and 2.5.2. and the current, applicable GEU contract articles 15 and 16 are copied in Appendices A and B, respectively.

2. *The modal case.* Our process for instructor evaluation should provide first for the modal case: continuing doctoral students who are employed as instructors in both fall and spring semesters. Only if necessary should it be adapted for first-year doctoral students and doctoral students employed as instructors only one semester in a year.

3. *The annual cycle.* By March 31 of each year, the Department must inform doctoral students whether they will be employed as instructors in the following year. SIRS for the Spring semester will not yet have been collected, and faculty supervisors might not yet have made observations. So, in practical terms, the year for the purpose of evaluating doctoral students ends on March 31 and it includes both the fall semester of the current academic year and the spring semester of the preceding academic year.

4. *Timing.* Neither the GSRR nor the GEU contract sets a deadline for communicating an evaluation for a given semester to the instructor. Assume that, in general, the evaluation will be conveyed after the end of a semester, when SIRS results are available. Faculty contract beginning and ending dates also should be considered in setting deadlines.

5. *Bases for evaluation.* Both the GSRR and the GEU contract call or provide for the use of "instructional rating forms" and "observations" as part of the overall evaluation of a graduate student instructor. We assume that supervising faculty also will consider the instructor's course syllabus and related materials and the instructor's participation in the activities of a course instructor group.

6. *Availability of SIRS summaries.* Each semester, SIRS forms completed by students are due in the Department office by the end of Finals Week. The Scoring Office usually returns the SIRS summaries about two weeks later. The Department Chair reviews the summaries, and then they are conveyed to faculty supervisors for review and distribution to instructors. Thus, summaries for the Fall semester are available in time to complete evaluations needed for the March 31 Departmental notifications to graduate students.

7. *Faculty contract considerations.* However, the summaries for the Spring semester typically are not available to supervising faculty until after their academic year contracts end. The Department's routines should *not* call for supervising faculty to perform duties outside the contract year.

B. Procedure

As indicated above, the annual cycle for doctoral student evaluation will begin in the spring semester of the preceding academic year and end on March 31 of the current academic year.

Spring semester, preceding academic year

- During the semester, supervising faculty will collect information for evaluation by some combination of reviewing syllabi, observing instructors, examining complaints received (if any), and considering instructor participation in the instructor group.
- By May 15 (or last day of faculty AY contracts), supervising faculty will convey to the Department (currently, Sharon Schwille) and to doctoral student instructors *provisional* evaluations. The standard evaluation form will include a standard notice: "provided SIRS results for the semester are consistent with satisfactory teaching."
- By May 30 or so, the Department will have received SIRS results for spring semester. For supervising faculty, the Department will make copies of the "Student Instructional Rating Report" (two-page summary of results) and hold them for distribution at the beginning of the fall semester. The Department will convey SIRS results (the Report plus completed forms) to doctoral student instructors, so they have that information before the fall semester.

Fall semester, current year

- By September 1, supervising faculty will review Spring SIRS results and report to the Department and instructors any exceptions to the provisional evaluations for the preceding spring semester. Unsatisfactory SIRS results could trigger close supervision, including observations of instruction, during the fall semester, or in the extreme case, reassignment.
- During the semester, supervising faculty will collect information for evaluation by reviewing syllabi, observing instructors, examining complaints received (if any), and considering instructor participation in the instructor group. Evaluation data will be held pending receipt of SIRS results for the fall semester.

January-March, current year

- Early January. SIRS summaries will be received from the Scoring Office, then reviewed by the Department Chair, then conveyed to supervising faculty for review and distribution to graduate student instructors.
- January 31. Supervising faculty will convey Fall semester evaluations both to the Department (currently, Sharon Schwille) and to graduate student instructors.
- March 15. Supervising faculty will convey to the Department (currently, Sharon Schwille) their recommendations regarding the hiring (and not hiring) of doctoral student instructors for the coming year.

March 31, current year

- The TE Department will send the letters telling graduate students whether the Department will employ them as instructors in the coming year.

APPENDIX A. From Spartan Life, 2008, Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

2.4.8 Evaluation. Graduate students have a right to periodic evaluations to assess their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. Evaluation of graduate students shall be made only by persons who are qualified to make that evaluation. Written descriptions of unit/program methods of evaluation and the general rationale employed shall be provided to graduate students and the faculty. Written evaluations shall be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year, and a copy of such evaluations shall be placed in the graduate student's file. (See also Section 2.5.2.4)

2.4.8.1 When determination is made that a graduate student's progress or performance is unsatisfactory, the student shall be notified in writing in a timely manner, and a copy of the notice shall be placed in the graduate student's academic file.

2.4.8.2 When a graduate student's status in a program has been determined to be in jeopardy, the graduate student shall be informed in writing in a timely manner, and a copy of the notice shall be placed in the student's academic file.

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2.5 Educational Training of Graduate Students in Teaching Roles

2.5.1 Colleges and departments/schools are responsible for establishing orientation and in-service training programs for all graduate students in teaching roles. Such programs shall include an introduction to course goals, grading criteria and practice, and classroom procedures as well as periodic classroom visitation. The graduate student in a teaching role is held responsible for full and active participation in all such programs.

2.5.2 Graduate students who are involved in teaching roles are expected to fulfill effectively their assigned responsibilities at a high level of performance. To gain feedback for monitoring and increasing their teaching effectiveness, such graduate students shall use, where applicable, confidential instructional rating reports in each course that they teach. These reports shall be submitted to the unit in accordance with the stated policy of the Academic Council.

2.5.2.1 The coordinator of each course staffed by graduate students in teaching roles shall submit each semester to the unit administrator or to the appropriate unit committee a formal written evaluation of each of the graduate students in teaching roles. After notifying the graduate student, appropriate members of the department/school should visit and observe the student's teaching in the instructional setting, and information from these visits and observations should be used in the evaluation.

2.5.2.2 The graduate student instructional rating reports (or summaries thereof), formal written evaluations, and any supplementary information shall be placed in a confidential file for use by the student and by faculty members in accordance with 2.5.2.3. This material shall remain on active file until the graduate student's teaching role is terminated, after which a copy of the file becomes the graduate student's personal property upon request. If evaluations or summaries of them are kept beyond the student's tenure at the University, these records should be altered so as to be anonymous.

2.5.2.3 Evaluation material described in 2.5.2.2 may be used in overall evaluations and in determining such matters as renewal of assistantships, teaching assignments, recommendations, and the need for further training.

2.5.2.4 An evaluation of teaching shall be given to the graduate student who has a teaching role at least once each year. (See also 2.4.8)

APPENDIX B. GEU Contract - May 16, 2008 - May 15, 2011

ARTICLE 15 TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I. The Employer is responsible for establishing orientation and in-service training programs for all employees. Such programs shall, at a minimum, provide training in the teaching of subject matter, an introduction to course goals, grading criteria and practices, and classroom procedures, as well as periodic classroom visitations. Employees shall, as part of their regular duties, participate in such programs.

II. While such programs are important for all employees, attendance will not be required for any employee who is determined by the employing unit already to have the skills and experience equivalent to those provided in the program.

III. Employing units will provide training that is specific to the assigned course at the outset of the employment period, as well as throughout the semester as necessary. The Employing unit shall determine responsibility for this training. Employing units shall consider employee input and participation in developing training programs. Employing units will consider, when reasonable, employee requests for additional training.

IV. To gain feedback and increase employees' effectiveness, employing units will be encouraged to provide avenues for professional development. Such avenues may include mentorship in pedagogy and class observation by faculty and/or peers.

V. Required training during the defined work period of an employee's employment, will be included as part of the hourly total in the employee's workload. If required training occurs before the defined work period of an employee's employment, the employee will be compensated in salary at the hourly equivalent of the employee's rate. Given a timely request by the employee, the Employer will provide housing, if available, at the customary rates, to be paid by the employee for employees who attend training prior to the first day of class.

VI. Upon request, but not more than twice a semester, unless mutually agreed, the Employer agrees to meet with representatives of the Union to receive input, comment and suggestions relating to the need for specific training programs, the content of programs offered or programs to be considered for development. In such meetings the Employer agrees to arrange for participation of members of the University Community with appropriate expertise.

ARTICLE 16

TEACHING ASSISTANT EVALUATION

I. Where applicable, employees shall use instructional rating reports in each course that they teach. These reports shall be submitted to the employing unit. Wherever

possible, instructional rating reports shall not be the sole means for evaluating an employee's performance.

II. The faculty supervisor of each course staffed by an employee shall submit each semester to the unit administrator a formal written evaluation of each supervised employee. After notifying the employee, selected members of the employing unit may visit and observe the employee teaching in the instructional setting. Additionally, upon employee request in writing, the Employer may observe, when appropriate, the employee teaching in the instructional setting. Information from these visits and observations shall be used in the evaluation.

III. Student evaluation of employees (or summaries thereof), formal written evaluations, and any supplementary information shall be placed in the employee's personnel record for use by the employing unit and the employee in accordance with Section IV. This material shall remain on active file until the employee's teaching role ends after which a copy of the record shall be provided to the employee upon written request.

IV. Evaluation material described in Sections I, II and III may be used in overall evaluations.

V. The faculty supervisor shall consider employee requests to evaluate discussion sections separately from lecture sections.

VI. Employees shall have the opportunity to comment in writing upon the ratings received and such comments shall be placed in the employee's personnel record.

VII. Upon employee request, the evaluator shall meet with the teaching assistant to discuss the completed formal evaluation.

VIII. The Employer shall provide the employee with a copy of the formal written evaluation within thirty (30) days of the receipt of all relevant materials.