ISE Department Teaching Assistant Allocation Guidance

This document outlines the process for allocation and assignment of teaching assistants (TAs) to graduate and undergraduate ISE courses on a semester basis.

The title *Teaching Assistant* refers to a <u>PhD student</u> who assists the instructor with various aspects of the course, including development and grading of assignments, proctoring exams, holding office hours and problem sessions. One TA slot is defined as 0.25 FTE (full-time equivalent or 10 hrs./week). Alternatively, a *grader* is an undergraduate (or master's) student in an OPS (hourly) position, whose primary responsibility is grading based on the rubric provided by the instructor.

When creating a TA assignment plan for a given semester, several factors are taken into account:

(1) Course Enrollment.
   Minimum enrollment thresholds have been established for TA slot allocation. The enrollment thresholds are 35 for an undergraduate course and 20 for a graduate course. A course with a significantly higher enrollment may qualify for an additional TA slot depending on TA availability.

(2) TA availability.
   Generally, the number of PhD students available for TAs is less than the number of TA slots determined based on semesterly course enrollment levels. Therefore, a course that qualifies for two TA slots may end-up receiving only one in order to ensure that all eligible courses are covered. In the case of a shortfall, employing one or more graders is an option available to faculty (see below for additional detail).

(3) Student Qualifications and Advisor Preference.
   In each semester, the faculty are surveyed regarding availability of current advisees (PhD students) as well as their qualifications for TA service. The survey is generally the starting point for the TA allocation process. The history of TA allocations to current Department PhD students is also considered when making assignments. Unless otherwise requested, every effort is made to ensure continuity of student assignments as TAs for courses for which they have previously served.

(4) Instructor Preference.
   Faculty are also surveyed for any preferences for specific TAs to support certain courses. An effort is made to address such requests, provided they are in-line with student qualifications and faculty advisor preferences for advisee TA assignments.

(5) Availability of Graders.
   As mentioned above, employing a grader is an alternative to a TA. Some instructors prefer to work with graders exclusively, while others use grader(s) in combination with a TA. The criterion used for grader assignment is one slot (10 hrs./week) for every 20 students exceeding the minimum enrollment thresholds identified above. For example, a course with an enrollment of 60 qualifies for one TA slot, which can be complemented by a grader.

To ensure timely completion of TA assignments, the following timeline are followed by the Department:

(1) Survey of faculty preferences available on-line: Oct 1 (Spring), Mar 1 (Summer), Jun 15 (Fall)

(2) On-line survey response deadline: Oct 15 (Spring), Mar 15 (Summer), July 1 (Fall)

(3) First Draft: Oct 22 (Spring), Apr 1 (Summer), July 8 (Fall)

(4) Final list of TA assignments sent to the HR: Nov 1 (Spring), Apr 15 (Summer), July 15 (Fall)