

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

Student Teaching Assistants During Fall and Spring Semesters

The purpose of this memo is to summarize past practice regarding assignment of student teaching assistants to physics faculty and associate faculty. There is no intent to generate any new policy.

Where part-time wage funds and qualified and willing physics majors are sufficient, student teaching assistants may be assigned to assist faculty and associate faculty in laboratory and/or lecture courses. The faculty or associate faculty member is responsible for the outcome of the course or lab. In a laboratory, the normal procedure is for the faculty member to give the introduction to the experiment, observed by the assistant. The assistant supplements the instructor in providing additional timely help to students performing the experiment and may be used to grade lab reports. Even though the instructor may occasionally not be present in the lab room during the laboratory session, the instructor should be available in the departmental area during the entire session to handle any problems which may arise. In lecture courses, normal procedure is for the assistant to proctor and grade quizzes and tests. However, because of the increasing use of computer or machine scoring, such assignments are currently rare.

Because it is not usually known how many qualified and willing student assistants will be available or what enrollments will be until the end of final registration, assignments of student assistants cannot normally be made until the first week of classes of a semester. In considering the requests for student assistants, the Chair uses the following criteria as rough guidelines:

1. Evening associate faculty have first priority, because of the limited staff assistance available to them.
2. Assistance for laboratories is given preference over lectures, for reasons given above.
3. Special departmentally approved assignments such as developing a new course or heavy committee duties may justify teaching assistance in the absence of some other type of compensation.
4. Overall teaching load, including enrollments in the faculty member's laboratory and lecture sections is a factor.
5. Enrollment in the particular section(s) for which assistance has been requested is a factor.
6. Unusual difficulty of a particular lab section; for example, one involving mostly new experiments or extensive use of new equipment.