

Approved by Faculty Senate on April 27, 1999

Assessment of Instructional Skills of Graduate Teaching Assistants

Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) provide very valuable contributions to the missions of the University by participating in the instruction of undergraduate courses and in research and scholarly activities. GTAs' tasks may range from grading assignments to the instruction of one or more sections of courses under departmental supervision. When GTAs are involved in classroom teaching, their skills in communicating and interacting with students are important in the effective transfer of information. In order to assure high quality instruction, it is necessary that GTAs teaching for the first time at Kansas State University be assessed as to their instructional skills. Feedback from students in class is a valuable source for this information, and can be used for both skills improvement, and for management purposes by the department.

Each academic department shall have or put into place procedures for obtaining student feedback on instructional skills of GTAs teaching for the first time at Kansas State University. Departments may use their own assessment and analysis procedures, or adopt the procedures available through the Office of Planning and Analysis (OPA). These assessments should be conducted during lecture, recitation or laboratory sessions about three weeks after the beginning of the semester. As a minimum, this process should include (1) assessment of basic communication skills such as enunciation, clarity, and loudness; (2) assessment of interactive skills in responding to student questions; (3) assessment as to whether the lecture presentations are organized; (4) provision for feedback to the GTA and implementation of corrective measures when needed; (5) collection of normative data; and (6) provision for a follow-up assessment if serious concerns arise. The results of the assessment should be provided to the GTA, the professor-in-charge, department/unit head, and provost. The results should also be transmitted to the dean of the appropriate college when serious concerns are raised about the GTAs communication skills. When GTAs are unable to meet a basic standard of communication performance as specified in the departmental/OPA procedures, corrective action should be taken to remedy the situation.