



INCREASE GRADUATE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES: ALLOWING GRADUATES TO WORK IN GENERAL EDUCATION

In 1998 the University of Arizona created a policy which disallows graduate students from serving as the instructor of record in general education classes during the Fall and Spring semesters. This policy affects graduate students interested in pursuing careers in academia, causing a limitation in the opportunities that will make University of Arizona graduates the top candidates in many faculty searches. The University of Arizona is the only university with such a policy among its peer institutions, other state institutions, and the PAC-12, where general education courses are often the first courses through which graduates receive teaching experience.

The enforcement of the policy has been uneven due to exceptions in certain areas (i.e. the writing program), the allowance to teach in summer and winter sessions, and a general lack of follow through in holding all programs to this policy. As a result, 30 percent of all general education courses at the University of Arizona still have graduate students as instructor of record.¹ Moreover, many of the general education courses prohibited to PhD students at the university are available to them to teach at Pima Community College and are accepted for transfer credits at the University of Arizona. This leads to the policy impacting International Students more negatively, as their visas do not allow them to work outside of the University of Arizona.²

Neither the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) nor the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require similar limitations on graduate student instruction. The ABOR's regulations refer directly to those dictated by the HLC regarding the qualifications of instructors. According to the guidelines, under B.2, HLC states: "Faculty teaching general education courses, or other non-occupational courses, hold a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield."³ For non-general education course, the HLC requires instructors with terminal degrees, with the explicit exception of graduate students under the supervision of faculty.⁴ It should be noted that the Graduate College already maintains and enforces policies that require all Graduate and Teaching Assistants to be assigned an appropriate faculty supervisor, meeting the HLC regulations.⁵

Of the 590 individuals teaching general education courses in 2017 (Spring, Summer, Fall), these classes were taught by:

37 Adjunct Instructors (6%)

274 Non-Adjunct Instructors (63%)

179 Graduate Assistants (30%)

GPSC RECOMMENDS:

- **An amendment to the General Education policy allowing graduate student instructor of records, aligning with current HLC/ABOR policies.**
- **Decisions regarding appropriate courses for graduate students to teach be determined by the departments based on need, experience, competency levels, and best instructors available.**





THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Graduate & Professional Student Council

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1. In the 2017-18 academic year, of the 590 distinct people listed as primary instructors for General Education classes: 37 Adjuncts, 179 GA, 374 Non-Adjuncts. These numbers came from the Office of Academic Affairs at the University of Arizona.
2. Arizona General Education Curriculum: <http://archive.catalog.arizona.edu/2011-12/policies/agec.htm>. AGECE-A for General Education Courses for Liberal Arts Majors: <https://www.aztransfer.com/agec/a.html>. Completion of the UA General Education Requirements with Transfer Courses: <http://archive.catalog.arizona.edu/2011-12/policies/outstate.htm>
3. http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_2016_OPB.pdf.
4. "Instructors (excluding for this requirement teaching assistants enrolled in a graduate program and supervised by faculty) possess an academic degree relevant to what they are teaching and at least one level above the level at which they teach, except in programs for terminal degrees or when equivalent experience is established." http://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_2016_OPB.pdf.
5. <https://grad.arizona.edu/funding/ga/appointment-process-and-responsibilities>.



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