

Graduate Assistantships within the Department

A variety of assistantships are currently available in the department: teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and administrative assistantships. Teaching assistants primarily work with the department's service courses in the undergraduate Teacher-Education Program (Ed Psych 210 and 401), undergraduate service courses offered through counselor education, and the departmental service courses in statistics (e.g., Ed Psych 550, 577, and 677); research assistants work with untenured faculty in implementing the latter's research agendas; and administrative assistants work with the department head and program coordinators in managing the administrative functions of the department and its programs.

Currently, the department head employs the procedures described in the following paragraphs in assigning departmental assistantships. These assistantships are awarded to full-time doctoral students, with every effort made to support first-year doctoral students across the department. In February, the department head meets with the administrative assistant and the associate department head to evaluate the number of available assistantship slots, the anticipated GA/GTA budget for salaries (which is never finalized until late spring), and any "new" requests for assistantships (i.e., requests for GA/GTA help beyond the current assignments). An elaborate matrix is created at this point showing current GAs/GTAs, assistantship assignments, and salaries. Based on perceived needs for the coming year, the department head in consultation with assistantship supervisors can make some decisions at that point about filling selected needs (e.g., staff some of the 210 and 401 GTA positions with advanced students). As new students are accepted into programs, their names are forwarded by program coordinators and tentatively added to the matrix in the coming weeks at subsequent meetings of the head, associate head, and administrative assistant. In most years, the process is not completed until early summer and remains somewhat fluid until late summer, because some students offered assistantships elect not to attend UTK or some students offered departmental assistantships get more attractive assistantship offers outside EPC.

The department head considers the following issues in making decisions about assistantship assignments: (a) need for particular teaching expertise for our service courses, such as EP 210, EP 401, CE 212, CE 480, and sometimes EP 550; (b) need for additional advanced expertise to perform certain departmental functions (e.g., supervising the testing library, serving as a GA for the EP 542 testing practicum course, and working in the IT TEC Lab); (c) need for assistantships offers to first-year doctoral students as a condition of their enrollment; (d) need for faculty research assistantship help, prioritizing tenure-seeking faculty and program area coordinators as much as possible; (e) some minimal level of need by each faculty member for assistantship support to help create scholarship that will benefit both the faculty member and the graduate assistant professionally; and (f) the need for parity in awarding each program its fair share of the "GA/GTA positions," which is somewhat related to program enrollment.