

Teaching Experience

Overview and Responsibilities

Teaching is a core aspect of the Experimental training program and is a fundamental component of preparing students for academic careers. Students begin teaching at the beginning of the second year and continue through the first semester of the fourth year. In year two, students will teach two sections of the Design & Analysis lab (PSYC 3051/3061, one credit-hour) each semester. In these courses, undergraduates learn to write documents in APA style, write literature reviews, and perform, interpret, and communicate statistical analysis using software such as SPSS, Excel, and R. In year three, students begin teaching 3-credit courses, typically Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1310). In year four, students may teach Intro or a topical course in their area of interest depending on preference and departmental need. In all cases, the student serves as instructor of record for the course and is responsible for delivering instruction, grading student work, and assigning course grades.

Graduate student instructors are supported by the faculty throughout the program. Before teaching, students must complete PSYC 5800 (Teaching in the Psychological Sciences). Any semester that a student is teaching, they must be concurrently enrolled a Teaching Practicum course (PSYC 5801 / 6801) where they are supported and supervised by an Experimental concentration faculty meeting. These courses meet weekly and provide a forum for discussing best practices, solving problems, sharing expertise, and learning ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching. Students enrolled in the Teaching Practicum course will be observed several times throughout the semester by the responsible faculty member, who will provide the student with written and oral feedback.

Graduate student instructors are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism in all interactions with undergraduates. This includes being adequately prepared to teach, providing prompt responses to student communication, and returning graded work in a reasonable timeframe.

Students entering the program with a Master's degree will begin teaching 3-credit courses (typically Intro) in their second semester.

Supervision and Evaluation

The overarching goal of supervision of student teaching by faculty is to offer an ongoing dialectic for students on issues related to teaching and the science of teaching. The specific goals of supervision include (1) providing a forum where students and faculty can communicate their teaching experiences; (2) providing information about literature on the teaching of psychology; (3) discussing ethical issues that arise during the practice of teaching; and (4) providing students opportunities to learn from their peers through peer supervision and discussions.

Supervision by faculty will take place within the context of the PSYC 5800, PSYC 5801, and PSYC 6801 courses. When the number of students is limited (e.g., below 6), it is possible that supervision will be conducted through a series of individual meetings with individual faculty. In addition, students may be expected to participate in group teaching sessions (e.g., brown bags) during which time they can interact with other students who are teaching, in order to share experiences and learn from each other. Students will be assigned a faculty teaching supervisor by the Experimental Training Committee. This supervisor, when possible, will be the student's primary academic advisor or another core faculty member in the Experimental program.

Professional Ethics

Teaching assistants are considered employees of the university and so are expected to adhere to the same ethical standards as ETSU University faculty and staff. Students should be clear, consistent, and objective in developing classroom policies and assigning grades to students, and must maintain strictly professional relationships with students at all times. Moreover, students in psychology are expected to adhere to the APA ethical code of conduct.