



Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
**FAMU-FSU College of Engineering**

Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook  
(Guidelines and Regulations)  
**2013-2014**

# Table of Contents

## Contents

I. Overview .....	4
II. Policy .....	4
III. English Language Requirement.....	4
IV. Ethical and Professional Responsibility .....	4
A. Academic Integrity .....	5
B. Ethical Behavior/Conflicts of Interest .....	5
V. Professional Development.....	5
VI. Teaching Assignments and Grade reporting.....	5
VII. Job Classifications, Requirements, and Responsibilities .....	6
A. Grading Teaching Assistant .....	6
1. Requirements.....	6
2. Responsibilities .....	6
B. Laboratory Graduate Teaching Assistant.....	6
1. Requirements.....	6
2. Responsibilities .....	6
C. Graduate Teaching Assistant for Lower-level Course.....	7
1. Requirements.....	7
2. Responsibilities .....	7

## I. Overview

The purpose of this guide is to provide a **broad outline** of departmental policies and expectations for graduate teaching assistants within the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) at the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering. ***Each teaching assistant should consult his or her supervising faculty member for specific requirements pertaining to the course.*** Students should also consult the University's Teaching Assistant handbook, which is available online at the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) website (<http://pie.fsu.edu>). For other issues and questions please contact the ECE Graduate Coordinator.

## II. Policy

It is the policy of the ECE Department to employ graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in a variety of positions to assist the department in completing its academic mission. Every semester each teaching assistant is assigned to an ECE faculty member who provides direct supervision and evaluation of the student's performance in completing his or her duties.

## III. English Language Requirement

Students whose native language is not English must have, in addition to the ability to read and understand English, a reasonable proficiency in spoken English to pursue a graduate degree from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Such proficiency is necessary for a student to fully function in one of the research groups and to satisfy one of the requirements as a graduate teaching assistant.

Students who are not native speakers of English should take the speaking section of the TOELF test (and have a score of 26 points or higher) or the SPEAK test at FSU (and have a score of 45 points or higher) in order to be eligible to apply for teaching assistantships. However, if the graduate coordinator and/or supervising faculty member determines that a student needs further improvement in his/her spoken English ability they may direct the student, at the student's expense, to take additional English courses offered by the Center for Intensive English Studies (<http://cies.fsu.edu/>) or the Program for Instructional Excellence (<http://pie.fsu.edu/>).

## IV. Ethical and Professional Responsibility

As a graduate teaching assistant, you represent the ECE Department, FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, Florida A&M University and Florida State University. Therefore, it is imperative that you conduct yourself in an ethical and professional manner at all times. This includes maintaining a completely ethical and professional relationship with the students and the faculty. It is also your responsibility to perform the tasks related to your role as a teaching assistant in a timely and professional manner to the satisfaction of the supervising faculty. The supervising faculty member, in collaboration with the graduate coordinator, is responsible for assigning the specific tasks and monitoring the behavior of graduate teaching assistants. The ECE Department

will periodically evaluate graduate teaching assistants (GTAs). GTAs that do not perform satisfactory may be immediately dismissed and will not be considered for future employment in subsequent semesters.

### **A. Academic Integrity**

The academic honor system of both universities is based on the premise that each member of the academic community has a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, and to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity by any of its members. As a graduate teaching assistant, you are expected to uphold these standards. You must report all instances, or reported instances of cheating to your supervising faculty member or the department chair immediately.

### **B. Ethical Behavior/Conflicts of Interest**

Graduate teaching assistants must refrain from any activity or conduct, which creates either an appearance of, **or** an actual conflict of interest. Any questions concerning appropriate ethical behavior should be submitted to the supervising faculty member, graduate coordinator, or department chair.

## **V. Professional Development**

All graduate teaching assistants who are assigned an instructional course are required to attend the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) College Teaching Conference sponsored by Florida State University during the fall semester of their first year in the graduate program. This three-day conference covers a wide variety of topics designed to help teaching assistants teach more effectively and to acquaint teaching assistants with various university policies.

All course, laboratory, and grading graduate teaching assistants are required to attend an ECE "teaching in the discipline" workshop which is designed to address issues specifically relevant to the department and college. The overall goal of the workshop is to encourage and promote the overall professional development of teaching assistants by helping develop effective teaching and communication skills which will lead to better learning environment in the classroom. Additionally, all laboratory teaching assistants are required to attend an ECE Laboratory Safety Orientation that is usually held during the first week of classes each semester.

## **VI. Teaching Assignments and Grade reporting**

All graduate teaching assignments are made by the ECE Graduate Coordinator in consultation with the ECE Undergraduate Program Coordinator. At the end of the semester, laboratory and course teaching assistants must consult with their supervising faculty member before submitting final grade reports.

## VII. Job Classifications, Requirements, and Responsibilities

### A. Grading Teaching Assistant

#### 1. Requirements

- a. Grading teaching assistants must be an electrical or computer engineering major at the undergraduate or graduate level.
- b. Undergraduate grading assistants must have obtained a “B” or better in the course they have been assigned to grade. Individual students may be made exempt from this requirement upon approval of the department chair.
- c. Grading assistants must be in good academic standing. Graduate grading assistants may not be enrolled in the same course they have been assigned to grade.
- d. Grading assistants must have obtained satisfactory semester evaluations to remain eligible to grade in subsequent semesters.
- e. Students who are not native speakers of English should take the speaking section of the TOELF test (and have a score of 26 points or higher) or the SPEAK test at FSU (and have a score of 45 points or higher).

#### 2. Responsibilities

- a. Grade all assignments according to instructor and/or department grading policies.
- a. Ensure the academic integrity of all work submitted and report any violations to the course instructor immediately.
- b. Assist course instructor with the development and preparation of assignments.
- c. Return course assignments in a timely manner.

### B. Laboratory Graduate Teaching Assistant

#### 1. Requirements

- a. Laboratory teaching assistants must be an electrical engineering major enrolled into one of the department's graduate degree programs. Exceptions may be made by the department chair for undergraduate students who have a demonstrated knowledge and working experience in the assigned laboratory environment.
- b. Laboratory teaching assistants must attend a laboratory safety orientation and a specific laboratory demonstration at the beginning of each term.
- c. Laboratory teaching assistants must attend a departmental laboratory orientation on grading and teaching policies at the beginning of each term.
- d. All laboratory teaching assistants report to the ECE Senior Teaching Laboratory Specialist who provides direct supervision on all operational matters. One or more ECE faculty members are assigned the responsibility to provide oversight for all instructional activities in the laboratory.
- f. Students who are not native speakers of English should take the speaking section of the TOELF test (and have a score of 26 points or higher) or the SPEAK test at FSU (and have a score of 50 points or higher).

#### 2. Responsibilities

- a. All the responsibilities outlined above for the grader position

- b. Maintain reasonable office hours and respond to students in a timely manner.
- c. Adhere to all safety guidelines established by the university, college, department and course instructor.
- d. Provide a copy of your course grade book to the departmental academic coordinator.
- e. Perform all other duties as assigned by the course instructor or ECE laboratory technician.

## **C. Graduate Special Teaching Assistant**

### **1. Requirements**

- a. Twenty-four (24) hours of completed graduate work in electrical engineering or closely related area.
- b. Participation in a departmental "teaching in the discipline" workshop.
- c. Approval by the ECE department chair
- d. Current registration in EEL5940 Supervised Teaching.
- e. Satisfactory performance in any previous attempts of EEL-5940 Supervised Teaching.
- f. The Department Chair might require the graduate teaching assistant to attend one or more workshops in the FSU-PIE program ([www.pie.fsu.edu](http://www.pie.fsu.edu)).
- g. Students who are not native speakers of English should take the speaking section of the TOELF test (and have a score of 26 points or higher) or the SPEAK test at FSU (and have a score of 50 points or higher).

### **2. Responsibilities**

- a. All the responsibilities outlined for the Grader position.
- b. Maintain reasonable office hours and respond to students in a timely manner.
- c. Provide copies of course grade book to departmental academic coordinator.
- d. Perform all other duties as assigned by the supervising faculty members.