

MFT Program Policy on Faculty Relationships with GAs and Non-GA Students

Policy Availability

The **Policy on Faculty Relationships with GAs and Non-GA Students** is available to the public via the [MFT Homepage](#) > [Accreditation](#) > [Policies and Handbook](#).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the distinction between faculty relationships with Graduate Assistants (GAs) in their role as program employees and faculty relationships with students who do not hold GA positions. This policy is intended to promote transparency, equity, and consistency in faculty–student interactions, and to reduce misunderstandings or perceptions of preferential treatment within the program.

Definitions

- **Graduate Assistant (GA):** A student who holds a paid or compensated position within the program or institution and performs specific employment-related duties under faculty or administrative supervision.
- **Non-GA Student:** A student enrolled in the program who does not hold a GA appointment.
- **Faculty–Student Relationship:** Interactions related to teaching, advising, mentoring, evaluation, and academic support.
- **Faculty–Employee Relationship:** Interactions related to job duties, supervision, scheduling, task completion, and operational needs.

Guiding Principles

1. All students are entitled to equitable academic access, evaluation, and support.
2. Graduate Assistant roles are employment positions and require additional faculty interaction unrelated to academic instruction or supervision.
3. Faculty must maintain clear boundaries between employment-related interactions and academic relationships.
4. Transparency and consistency are essential to maintaining trust and fairness within the student body.

Faculty Relationships with Graduate Assistants

Faculty interactions with Graduate Assistants may include additional contact beyond that of non-GA students only when related to GA employment responsibilities. These interactions may include:

- Task assignment and supervision
 - Training related to GA duties
 - Program operations and administrative coordination
 - Employment performance feedback
- Key expectations:
- Employment-related meetings with GAs should be limited to GA responsibilities and faculty/program needs.
 - Faculty should avoid combining GA employment discussions with academic advising, grading,

or course-related mentoring whenever possible.

- Academic evaluation of GAs (e.g., grading, assessment, feedback on coursework) must follow the same standards, timelines, and venues as for non-GA students.
- Faculty should be mindful of the visibility of GA interactions and avoid locations or timing that may reasonably create perceptions of preferential academic access.

Faculty Relationships with Non-GA Students

Faculty interactions with non-GA students are limited to academic and educational contexts, including:

- Instruction and classroom engagement
- Academic advising and mentoring
- Supervision related to coursework or clinical training
- Evaluation and feedback on academic performance

Non-GA students should have access to faculty through clearly communicated and consistently applied mechanisms such as office hours, scheduled meetings, and course-related communication.

Equity and Access

- Faculty must ensure that academic support, advising, and mentoring opportunities are available equitably to all students, regardless of GA status.
- Holding a GA position does not confer academic advantage, preferential treatment, or additional influence over faculty decision-making.
- Employment-related access to faculty does not substitute for, nor augment, academic access.

Graduate Assistant Responsibilities

- Graduate Assistants are expected to: Clearly distinguish their GA role from their student role in interactions with peers and faculty.
- Direct academic questions or concerns through standard academic channels rather than through GA employment interactions.
- Maintain professionalism and confidentiality related to their employment role.

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Addressing Concerns

Students who have concerns about equity, access, or faculty relationships are encouraged to raise these concerns through established program channels, rather than through informal peer discussion. The program commits to taking such concerns seriously and addressing them promptly and respectfully.

