

Program for MA Teaching Fellows

The BC English Department offers unique teaching opportunities for select MA students during their second year: to receive a Teaching Fellowship (TF) to design and teach a section of First-Year Writing (FWS) in the fall and spring, or to serve as a Teaching Assistant (TA) to support a faculty member in a class. At most, 18 Teaching Fellowships and four Teaching Assistant positions are available annually. The selection process is competitive.

MA students interested in being selected as Teaching Fellows are strongly encouraged to apply to work as Boston College Writing Fellows during their first year as an MA student, as this is excellent preparation for the college classroom.

Teaching Fellows are paid a per-course stipend of \$6,000. Teaching Assistants will earn \$4,000 per semester. Interested MA students should apply for the TF or TA positions in the fall of their first year.

TF/TA Application and Interview Process

A first-year MA student applies for a TF or TA position in middle of the fall semester, with a deadline given by the Director of the First-Year Writing Program, Dr. Paula Mathieu. To apply, provide a one-page application letter, stating which position you are applying for and briefly describing any experiences or skills that you might draw upon in the classroom. Especially relevant is any tutoring or teaching experiences you have had.

TA/TF Selection Process

During the fall semester, the FWS Staff Director and staff will interview all interested applicants. They, along with the Director of the MA program and the English Department Faculty, will determine which applicants will be designated as Provisional Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants. The decision is based on the letter, interview, coursework, and the perception by the faculty of one's readiness to assume the responsibilities of a writing instructor or teaching assistant. All candidates will be notified of the decision near the end of the fall semester.

TA Guidelines and Training

The guidelines for a TA position will be defined individually by the faculty member with whom one works, and that commitment will begin in the summer before the fall of the second year.

TEACHING FELLOW GUIDELINES AND TRAINING

Spring Graduate Seminar

The newly selected class of Teaching Fellows will take ENGL8825, Seminar in Composition Theory and the Teaching of Writing, during the spring semester of their first year. This is a course that will prepare students in the theory of composition pedagogy and offer concrete guidance in preparing to teach writing. Selected teaching fellows learn some background of composition theory and work to design assignments and class activities that fit within the Writing Program's shared outcomes ([link](#)). During this spring and summer, the status of all Teaching Fellows is provisional—dependent on one's satisfactory completion of the graduate seminar and the approval of the syllabus and assignments designed for the FWS class. During this time, TFs will receive support and feedback from the course instructor and be paired with a mentor, who will give feedback and support over the summer and throughout the teaching year. TFs will also visit current FWS classes as often as possible, to get a real sense of the teaching and learning atmosphere of the program.

Summer Meetings and Revisions

The Provisional TFs submit a final portfolio (with a syllabus and assignments for an FWS course and a teaching rationale) at the end of the spring semester and be paired with a teaching mentor, with whom he or she will be expected to work over the summer, revising the syllabus and assignments to be ready to teach in the fall. If a student receives a grade in EN825 of below A- or if the FWS Director decides that the proposed course does not yet meet all the FWS guidelines, the Teaching Fellow's status will remain on provisional until he or she satisfactorily revises his or her course materials, under the supervision of a mentor and the Program Director. If the revisions are not made satisfactorily during that time period, the Teaching Fellowship may become forfeit. We don't anticipate that this situation will occur, but we feel it's important to make the procedure and expectations clear.

TFs are expected to work on syllabus revisions over the summer and attend a one-day Comp Camp meeting that is planned for the first Thursday in August. This summer work is critical, as it helps TFs understand and practice individual course and lesson planning, and allows them to learn about the many campus resources and services available to support their teaching and students.

Second Year Fall and Spring Teaching

All Teaching Fellows teach one section of FWS each semester and attend all FWS required meetings, which will include regular meetings with an assigned mentor and a weekly 50-minute practicum. Mentors visit all TFs classes several times during the school year, and TFs are encouraged to sit in on mentors' classes as well.

Each section of FWS meets for 150 minutes of class time per week; additionally, instructors must conference individually with their 15 students at least four weeks of the semester. This makes teaching FWS a time-consuming experience, but a rewarding one that allows TFs to work intensively with a small group of students on their writing and learn how to plan and execute a course within stated guidelines.