



HARVARD
DIVISION OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

PhD in Biological and
Biomedical Sciences

2024 TEACHING REQUIREMENT for BBS:

Effective teaching is a highly transferrable skill set that BBS believes to be central to the role of a scientist in society. Pedagogy (the strategies and techniques or “art” of teaching) allows the communication of scientific concepts, principles, methods and details for the training of others. Teaching is also a powerful vehicle to offer mentorship and encouragement to others. Like laboratory research, effective teaching requires experiential training and refinement of applied pedagogy.

The BBS program requires its students to fulfill one full semester as a non-paid teaching fellow (TF) in a formal course at Harvard Medical School or Harvard University. NOTE: TFs are registered graduate students who teach part-time under the supervision of course heads (who hold formal teaching appointments) as an integral part of their training for the PhD. BBS also requires a minimal pedagogy training to prepare each TF to function effectively in this role. To help ensure some consistency in the training value of this experience, BBS periodically reviews the training objectives for TFs in each BBS Core Course and the approximate parity of effort required by each course. Using these criteria, BBS assembles a list of approved options for BBS students to satisfy the requirement through service learning.

In most cases, students elect to serve as TFs in one of the BBS Core Courses because they have personal experience of the course material and format; however, there are other courses from which to choose. Some options will require program review and approval in advance on a case-by-case basis, such as teaching at Harvard College. BBS Core Courses include BBS230; Genetics201; BCMP200; and CB201. G2 students who wish to be a TF in the spring will require Program Director approval to ensure that they have planned sufficient time to prepare for their Preliminary Qualifying Exam. NOTE: If students TF in a quarter course, students will need to TF in a second quarter course or complete a Community Education Initiative (CEI).

General Process

Shortly after the beginning of the spring semester, BBS will host an Information Session to give BBS students an overview of the TF requirement and options available in the “TF Process Survey” along with some documentation on roles and estimated workload. Following the meeting, the survey will be sent to all G1s as well as any other BBS students who have not completed their TF requirement. This survey will collect information about which BBS options students are most interested in to fulfill the teaching requirement (in rank order) during the G2 year (or after). Once the student preference data are collected, the assembled information will be sent to the BBS Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee will work together to best match prospective Teaching Fellows to the courses in the following year.

In early spring, Course Directors will send Teaching Fellow invitations to matched students; each student is asked to respond to the invitation with a decision. In late spring, DMS will follow up with official appointment letters for each TF position based on accepted student responses. For students who match with CEI or non-BBS Core classes, the BBS office will work to help them complete their requirement. If a student wishes to discuss the outcome of the TF matching, they can request a meeting with BBS program staff to provide feedback to the Curriculum Committee.

Students who work as a TF for their teaching requirement can also sign up for the non-paid teaching experience on their Crimson Cart during the semester they teach to demonstrate their work as a TF: MED-SCI 350T, DMS TIME: Teaching Fellow Related. If you have any questions, please contact Deirdre Duckett deirdre_duckett@hms.harvard.edu in the BBS Program Office.

Training and Preparation

We believe that all student TFs benefit from basic pedagogy training prior to their first teaching experience. Training will be offered in late August by the Bok Center via Zoom for a total of 4.5 hours over 3 days. BBS TFs are required to complete the TF training workshop series prior to being a TF. Students who end up being allowed to teach in another course should also plan on taking the TF training workshop series offered by the Bok Center prior to the fall semester. Confirmation of Bok Center TF training attendance will be collected.

Administrative items to note:

- Students need to complete the non-paid teaching requirement prior to serving in any subsequent semesters as a paid Teaching Fellow. Paid teaching also requires the signed approval of the student's Dissertation Advisor.
- Students need advanced permission from Deirdre Duckett (deirdre_duckett@hms.harvard.edu) to be a Teaching Fellow in a non-BBS Core Course.
- All BBS students need to submit the BBS teaching form/CEI form promptly to satisfy the requirement so that we can record this credit in the student's file.