

University of Arizona

UNDERGRADUATE PRECEPTORSHIP POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Updated with policies & guidelines approved by Faculty Senate, 5/5/08; with link to Honors Guidelines, 5/19/09

GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose of the Preceptorship: Preceptors are highly motivated students who are either concurrently enrolled in the course, or who have previously taken the course (or a similar course). They serve a unique role because they provide support both in and out of the classroom. Since they are often concurrently enrolled in the class, they do not serve as content experts. They function instead as student mentors and guides and as instructional assistants.

Catalog Definition: A preceptorship (courses numbered 191, 291, 391, 491) involves specialized work on an individual basis, consisting of instruction and practice in actual service to a department, program, or discipline. Teaching formats may include seminars, in-depth studies, laboratory work, and patient study.

Policies for Preceptorships:

1. **Determination of credit:** The University and Board of Regents require a minimum of 45 hours of course work for each unit of credit awarded.
2. **The number of credits of Preceptorship** must lie within the approved credit range listed in the catalog course description.
3. **The grades available for Preceptorship courses** are limited to **S** (superior), **P** (passing), **F** (failure), **I** (incomplete), **W** (withdraw). While it is possible for a student intern to receive a failing grade for the course, **S**, **P**, **F** grades do not calculate into a student's grade-point-average.
4. **The content of a Preceptorship** must not significantly duplicate material offered in a regularly scheduled course in the department in the current semester; any exceptions must be approved by the college dean.
5. **Departments and programs must have Preceptorship application forms** modeled on the approved University templates (see Curriculum forms, <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/forms.htm>) that are to be completed when the student enrolls in the course or at the beginning of the term.
6. **The enrollment fee for Preceptorship credit** is calculated at the same rate as for other credit courses.
7. **For undergraduate Preceptorships**, the instructor or preceptorship coordinator must provide either a course syllabus or a project plan detailing: (1) learning outcomes, (2) expected reading, or lab or field work, (3) expected meetings, (4) expected work products, and (5) criteria to be used for evaluation and grading.
 - a. All proposal forms and project plans must be signed by the instructor and the student and filed in the department or program office within a week after the term commences.
 - b. At the end of the term, or whenever the student completes the project, the instructor or preceptorship coordinator must complete a record of the outcome that explains the grade submitted. The record of outcome form with the instructor's signature should be filed in the department or program office when the course grade is submitted.
8. **If students are paid in association with a Preceptorship**, academic credit can be awarded only for faculty-approved academic work as defined by department policy.
9. **If registration for a Preceptorship course occurs after the twenty-first day** of the regular semester, after the first two days of Winter Session or Pre-session, or after the first week of a Summer Session, the department head (or designee) must sign the Change of Schedule form, in addition to the instructor.

10. **If a grade of Incomplete is awarded for a Preceptorship** at the end of the term, a preceptorship coordinator must be identified who agrees to evaluate the student's work, should the instructor become unavailable.

Guidelines for Preceptorships:

Use of these Guidelines: *The information presented constitutes a compilation of best practices among a number of colleges and departments. The items stated below are not requirements but recommendations. The guidelines may serve as a template. Undergraduate Council strongly encourages preceptor coordinators and faculty to use the guidelines and related documents with students interested in becoming preceptors, and to customize the Application Form, Contract Form, etc. to fit the preceptorships that your department offers.*

*Faculty who agree to supervise **Honors Preceptorships** for University Honors students should consult the Guidelines for Honors Preceptorships, <http://www.honors.arizona.edu/HonorsAcademics/Policies/IndvStudies.htm>, as endorsed by the Undergraduate Council, 4/7/2009.*

STUDENT APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Find a Course with Preceptor Positions

The University-wide General Education courses available for preceptor credit are listed at: [Preceptored Course List](#). Others may be offered through your major or minor departments, so check the department course offerings each semester. Consider applying for a preceptorship in courses you are currently taking or have taken in the past. [Note: **University Honors students** requesting an Honors Preceptorship should consult the Guidelines for Honors Preceptorships, <http://www.honors.arizona.edu/HonorsAcademics/Policies/IndvStudies.htm>, and contact an Honors College advisor.]

2. Contact the Instructor

Notify the course instructor of your interest in becoming a preceptor. If preceptorships are offered in a course you will be taking in an upcoming semester, contact the instructor **at least two weeks prior to the first day of class**. Advance notice is desirable; however, some preceptorships may still be available when the semester begins. If so, the course instructor will make a short presentation at the first class session advertising preceptorships.

3. Apply for the Preceptor Position

Instructors may or may not ask interested students to fill out a **Preceptor Application Form**. From the pool of applicants, a few will be selected for interviews. Applicants should contact the course instructor with any questions or concerns about their eligibility.

4. Register for Preceptor Training/Orientation

If the preceptor coordinator or instructor selects you for a preceptorship, you should register for the required preceptor training and/or orientation courses (**191, 291, 391, or 491**), per their instructions.

5. Students should enroll within the first three weeks of the Fall and Spring Semesters or immediately after the beginning of Winter or Summer Sessions. Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work per credit unit before the last day of the term. The last day to register for Preceptorship credit in Fall and Spring Semesters without incurring a late charge is the same as for all other courses; see

<http://www.bursar.arizona.edu/students/fees/census> and
http://www.bursar.arizona.edu/students/fees/late_charge.asp.

Minimum Eligibility: Before applying for a preceptorship, students should meet the following requirements:

1. Be in good academic standing with the University of Arizona and have maintained at least a 2.00 grade point average at the University of Arizona prior to applying for a preceptorship. Some departments/colleges require a higher GPA; consult with the preceptor coordinator or course instructor.
2. To be a preceptor in a General Education course, follow the guidelines outlined by the Teaching Teams Program: <http://teachingteams.arizona.edu/index.htm> For participation in this program, preceptors receive 2-3

units of academic credit by enrolling in one of the preceptor training courses: UNVR 197a, UNVR 297a, and UNVR 397a.

3. For preceptorships in your major field, have sophomore status with completion of the following required courses listed in the department curriculum: _____.
4. Some departments require completion of the course for which you will serve as a preceptor with a minimum grade of 'B.'
5. No undergraduate should be a preceptor in more than one course per semester.
6. Undergraduates should be granted no more than two (2) semesters of preceptorship in their major field, with the possibility of an additional semester, contingent upon quality of classroom performance.

PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The preceptor works with the course instructor to ensure that students have adequate opportunities to develop, hone and demonstrate competence specific to _____ (*course*). The preceptor's interaction with other students should facilitate student development. In assuming some responsibility for student development, the preceptor should facilitate those tasks and/or activities identified by the instructor as relevant to the course. Both in and outside of the classroom, preceptors should serve as a role model for other students.

The preceptor should maintain frequent communication with the program coordinator or course instructor. As an instructional assistant, preceptors should participate in planning and coordinating class experiences to meet the course objectives, should comply with program policies and procedures (e.g., abiding by FERPA confidentiality regulations with respect to students and grades), and attend applicable preceptor training classes or workshops. Comments and/or recommendations from preceptors to improve or enhance the experience are encouraged.

Preceptors who are concurrently enrolled in the course should NOT participate in the grading process. In particular, this includes grading student papers, projects, or exams that affect students' course grades. The grades of students enrolled in the class should not be available to concurrently enrolled preceptors. Preceptors (those not concurrently enrolled in the course) who have access to student grades and records should complete FERPA training per University policy. [*Statement approved by Undergraduate Council, 10/17/06*]

In-Class Assistance:

Preceptors serve as additional classroom managers and mentors. Many instructors have preceptors sit throughout the lecture hall to model good classroom behavior and obtain feedback on what students do and do not understand.

With guidance from their supervising instructor, preceptors are also able to lead small group discussions and laboratory experiments within the courses. Some instructors find that preceptors offer an efficient means for administering these activities. Preceptors are encouraged to work with their instructors in delivering presentations or in-class activities on either course material or specific skills necessary for success in the class (i.e., writing, math, time management).

Out-of-Class Assistance:

Preceptors are able to increase the outlets for help with course material. They often hold office hours or one-on-one tutoring sessions with students in order to help them with course concepts or assignments. Since they are not the providers of knowledge, but merely guides, they can offer a type of assistance different from what the instructors offer. Preceptors do not necessarily know the answers, but their expertise as students allows them to offer personal strategies for learning the material and their own process for reaching the answer. In this respect, they also serve as mentors and help other students with skills applicable to future courses.

Preceptors also often hold exam review sessions outside of class. If they take the exam with the rest of the class, preceptors have an invested interest in the material and are unaware of the specific exam questions. This allows the review sessions to be held like a study group where students and preceptors answer their own questions, but with extra guidance from the instructor or graduate teaching assistants (GTAs).

Finally, preceptors can also hold workshops to help students who may be deficient in certain skills (math, reading, writing, time management, etc.), which in turn helps even out the skill levels in many first and second-year courses.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Recruitment of Preceptors:

During priority registration periods for continuing students, departments should post notices (online and on bulletin boards) listing courses for which preceptorships are available for the upcoming semester. Instructors should also announce these opportunities in their classes, both during registration periods and at the first class session of the semester during which the preceptorships are available. Instructors should be proactive in approaching students who have successfully completed the course, inviting them to apply for preceptor positions in the next term.

Department Preceptor Coordinators Agree to:

1. Select students who are in good academic standing.
2. Inform students of the necessity of complying with pertinent University, department, and classroom policies and procedures (e.g., FERPA regulations).
3. Make sure that the preceptor enrolls in and completes the appropriate training/orientation course or workshops (e.g., 191, 291, 391, or 491).

Course Instructors' Supervisory Responsibilities:

1. The instructor should ask the preceptor to complete the **Preceptor Contract**—either the University form included with these University Guidelines or the department contract. The instructor should retain the original and give the student a copy.
2. The instructor and preceptor should maintain frequent and regular communication about the preceptor's activities during the preceptorship. Any conflicts should be quickly resolved by communication between the student and instructor.
3. The instructor should closely oversee the student's preceptor experience and training, along with monitoring the hours and course work required for the preceptor course credit.
4. The instructor should require the preceptor to report on a regular basis throughout the preceptorship. These reports should include:
 - allocation of the preceptor's time during the period,
 - progress toward objectives, and
 - discussion of any significant difficulties with the preceptorship.
5. The instructor should ask the preceptor to complete an evaluation of the experience, fill out the instructor's final **Preceptor Evaluation Form** on the student, and provide feedback on his/her classroom and out-of-class work.

Course Work Related to the Preceptorship:

Preceptors should check with the department regarding the academic requirements of a preceptorship, such as a written report, oral presentation, portfolio, research project, documentation of laboratory experiments, etc. Academic assignments are determined on a case-by-case basis, dependent on the number of credits to be earned. Course work associated with the preceptorship is intended to give students an opportunity to reflect on their preceptorship experience and how it applies to their academic program.