

Overview of the Purdue Graduate Teacher Certificate Program

This document describes two main points about the Purdue Graduate Teacher Certificate program:

1. The three tiers of certificates that represent progressive teaching experience and competency.
2. How you can easily enroll in the program to begin working on a certificate and eventually submit your application for approval.

The Graduate Teacher Certificate program was established in the 1990s through the efforts of a special committee of the Purdue Teaching Academy. The goal then, as now, was to provide a framework for the development, coordination, evaluation, and recognition of graduate students to enhance their teaching capabilities at Purdue. The program has been revised several times, most recently in November 2013.

The current program includes three tiers that respond to the various levels of graduate teaching and instructional development opportunities at Purdue's West Lafayette campus. Each tier represents a level of professional development, experience, and expertise appropriate for most graduate teaching assistants at Purdue. You can complete one or all of the certificates. You do not have to start at Tier 1; however, criteria met for Tier 1 apply to Tier 2, and criteria met for Tier 2 apply to Tier 3. Begin the program at the level most appropriate for your situation.

Tier 1: Graduate Instructional Development Certificate (GIDC)

By completing criteria for the GIDC, graduate assistants can learn foundational pedagogic knowledge, even before they have direct responsibility for a classroom. Graduate students do not have to wait until they are given teaching duties before they earn recognition for professional development efforts.

As novices to teaching, graduate assistants working toward the Tier 1 GIDC learn terms, policies, procedures, and contexts through which they can observe and assist more senior instructors. The criteria include at least two individual undergraduate classroom teaching experiences (for example, serving as a guest lecturer during two class periods).

The GIDC also requires you complete two teaching observations – one of a faculty member teaching a class, and one of an experienced teaching assistant teaching a class. A third observation is of you teaching, which can be done during one of the individual teaching experiences.

The other criteria for the GIDC are to participate in a micro-teaching and playback session, and in Teaching Assistant Orientation. Both of these activities are sponsored by CIE every academic year, although some departments also host them. Micro-teaching consists of a 7-minute teaching demonstration, after which participants receive group and consultative feedback. CIE offers Micro-teaching at least once a semester. Teaching Orientation is a full day of sessions on effective classroom instruction offered Week 0 every fall semester.

Lastly, graduate students are required to complete at least 6 hours of instructional development beyond TA orientation. These can be met through sessions such as the College Teaching Workshop Series I held every semester by CIE or with other workshops or speakers focused on enhancing teaching knowledge and skills.

As part of best practices, GIDC applicants are required to write reflective essays on the teaching observations and micro-teaching.

Depending on the department, the Tier 1 GIDC may be the only certificate available to some graduate assistants, but its criteria serve as the foundation upon which all the certificates are built.

Tier 2: Graduate Teacher Certificate (GTC)

The GTC is the most frequently completed certificate by Purdue graduate students. In many departments, graduate assistants eventually have weekly teaching responsibilities, and the GTC is appropriate to guide their professional development. In addition to building foundational pedagogic knowledge like that of the GIDC, graduate assistants advance their skills and understanding by receiving feedback and reflecting on their teaching experiences. As they make strategic decisions about course and content management, these graduate assistants become more competent instructors.

Criteria of the GTC include two semester-long undergraduate teaching experiences as instructor-of-record with weekly teaching responsibilities. Grading responsibilities alone are not enough. You must make strategic decisions in course and content management. You must be listed as an instructor in Banner and on the end-of-semester CourseEval.

Some criteria of the GTC are the same as for the GIDC, including conducting two teaching observations and being observed teaching. If you meet these criteria for the GIDC, that completion carries over to the GTC. The same is true for micro-teaching and Teaching Assistant Orientation.

Additional criteria for the GTC include a total of 9 hours of instructional development. If you complete the GIDC, you only need 3 additional hours of instructional development for the GTC.

Lastly, completing the GTC requires that you get feedback from students on your teaching. This includes Early Feedback in at least one class. Early Feedback is done in the first half of the semester to get your students' input on your teaching and the course. It is formative, allowing you to make adjustments as the course progresses. CIE provides several examples

of Early Feedback on its website. These can be administered with paper surveys or electronically, using software such as Qualtrics.

Both of your classes need to use CourseEval to provide end-of-semester feedback to you as instructor-of-record. The criteria also include a written reflective essay on the feedback, as well as on the observations and micro-teaching.

Tier 3: Advanced Graduate Teacher Certificate (AGTC)

The AGTC is the highest level of instructional proficiency recognized by the Graduate Teacher Certificate program. It requires thinking and experience at competent and proficient levels of teaching.

Using the established professional development strategy of a teaching portfolio, this certificate helps developing instructors document their growth as a continuous improvement process.

It builds upon criteria of the GIDC and GTC, but adds criteria for mentoring, scholarship of teaching and learning, and service.

AGTC criteria include serving as instructor-of-record for four semesters, or three courses if one of them is as primary instructor. Student feedback on these courses is required.

Observations of classes also include a course that has gone through the Purdue IMPACT re-design process.

Instructional Development criteria require completing an approved campus course on college teaching.

The roles of mentor and mentee are required for the AGTC. This means you meet with a faculty mentor regularly for at least a semester, and you, in turn, serve as a mentor for at least one teaching assistant for a semester.

How to Enroll

The first step in participating in the Purdue Graduate Teacher Certificate program is to enroll. This can be done whenever you want more information. You do not have to wait until you are ready to begin completing criteria.

Go to purdue.edu/cie and click on the Graduate Teacher Certificate tab. Here, you will see links to each tier, with additional details on the criteria. There is also a button to pull up answers to Frequently Asked Questions and one to download a PDF of the certificate brochure. Click on the Enroll button to open a form in which you enter a few details about yourself. We use this information to enroll you in the Blackboard site for the certificate in which you are interested. In Blackboard, you will find the application form with complete details on criteria.