From: Dean of Graduate Education Susan L. Ettner and Graduate Council Chair Brooke Scelza
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 12:31 PM
Subject: Reminder Regarding Policies and Procedures for Hiring Special Readers

Division of Graduate Education
Graduate Council

To: Administrative Officers, Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, Faculty, Vice Chancellors and Vice Provosts

What you need to know:

• Hiring departments must receive authorization for individual courses to employ Special Readers
• Authorization for the course(s) must be requested at least two weeks prior to offering the appointment
• In order to hold Special Reader positions, individuals must be advanced graduate students who have earned a B+ or higher in the course for which they are reading
• Departments are responsible for all negative outcomes of hiring unauthorized and/or ineligible individuals as Special Readers

Dear Colleagues:

Due to the increasing numbers of departmental requests to hire Special Readers in recent years, we wish to remind campus of the Graduate Council policies governing Special Reader employment.
As standard Readers are restricted to lower-division undergraduate courses, in 1976 UCLA approved the creation of the Special Reader position to enable advanced graduate students to assist faculty with the reading and grading of students’ assignments, exams and papers in upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses. With the creation of the title, the Graduate Council intended Special Reader employment for exceptional instances in which a faculty member teaches a large, required course necessitating a highly-qualified grader for complex, specialized and discipline-specific material.

In order to employ a Special Reader, hiring departments must complete two steps:

1. Receive authorization for individual courses to employ Special Readers. The course(s) in which Special Readers are to be used must be approved for this purpose by the Dean of Graduate Education before any individual can be hired as a Special Reader. Such courses should be upper-division undergraduate or graduate level, be required of all or a large number of majors and have large enrollments and complex homework assignments.

2. Verify employee eligibility to work as a Special Reader. In order to hold Special Reader positions, individuals must have earned a B+ or higher in the course for which they are reading.

When considering a Special Reader hire, departments should be aware of the following:

1. Requests to receive approval for courses to employ Special Reader(s) must be submitted via the official exceptions portal on Jasmine. Requests are to be submitted under the “Permission to Appoint a Special Reader for a Course” category. All requests to employ Special Readers must be submitted no later than three weeks before the employee’s intended start date.

2. Special Readers cannot be hired before receiving the required approval from the Division of Graduate Education. Hiring departments are responsible for all negative outcomes of hiring unapproved Special Readers. If a department hires a Special Reader for a course that has been or is ultimately denied permission for the hire, the position will need to be terminated. The hiring department will then be required to satisfy all applicable provisions of the Appointment Security Article of the ASE Collective Bargaining Agreement (PDF) for the individual hired into the unauthorized Special Reader position.
3. To ensure compliance with all Academic Apprentice Personnel policies, Special Readers may only be hired to perform the duties specific to the position. Special Readers are limited to assisting the faculty instructor of record with the reading and grading of students’ assignments, exams and papers. **Under no circumstances may Special Readers be hired to perform duties equivalent to a TA appointment.**

A full overview of all eligibility criteria for ASEs is available in the [Academic Apprentice Personnel Manual (PDF)](http://example.com/manual). Further questions regarding Special Reader hiring policies and procedures should be submitted through the [Graduate Education portal](http://example.com/portal) or directed to [AskGrad@grad.ucla.edu](mailto:AskGrad@grad.ucla.edu).

We hope this information will help departments comply with Special Reader policy.

With best wishes,

**Susan L. Ettner**  
Dean of Graduate Education

**Brooke Scelza**  
Chair, Graduate Council