



CoAT for the Life Sciences

The **Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching (CoAT)** program is part of the Preparing Future Leaders initiative sponsored by the Graduate School. The CoAT program offers graduate students a chance to demonstrate their commitment to teaching excellence through training, evaluation, and recognition. Through critical reflection and application, participants learn the fundamental components of pedagogy, enriching their personal growth and professional development in teaching and learning.

The CoAT for the Life Sciences program is designed to provide support and recognition for all graduate students who teach life science courses at North Carolina State University. Participants may choose to complete the program in one year (2 semesters), a year and a half (3 semesters), or two years (4 semesters). Certificates are awarded at the end of each semester. An awards ceremony is usually held every April.

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The CoAT for Life Sciences program enables graduate students to:

- Receive a transcript notation for successful completion of the Accomplishment in Teaching program with a specialization in the life sciences
- Receive an official letter of recommendation to include in future job applications
- Prepare a professional teaching portfolio
- Obtain a Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching for the Life Sciences
- Receive personalized assistance with teaching strategies and professional development from the Biology Department

Fall 2010 program requirements—CoAT for the Life Sciences:

1. Enroll in the “Teaching College Life Sciences” seminar course (it will be ZO 624 002; please contact Dr. Ferzli to enroll). The seminar course is a one credit hour free elective course that meets every other week and is offered in the fall semesters.
2. Attend an orientation session during your first semester in the CoAT program. You will choose one orientation session when you register for the program.
3. Attend any three CoAT approved workshops and complete the required reflection assignment for each. Workshops are offered in person, online, and in hybrid formats. Note: All Fundamentals in Teaching (FIT) workshops count towards the teaching certificate unless otherwise noted.
4. Complete two semesters of teaching experience at NC State in a life science course (e.g., biology, zoology, plant biology). In your first teaching experience, you must provide at least 15 contact hours (clock hours) of instruction during a semester. In your second teaching experience, you must provide at least 30 contact hours (clock hours) of instruction during a semester. Contact Dr. Ferzli to determine if previous teaching experiences can count towards your certificate.
5. Participate in a practicum (arranged independently for each participant according to his/her schedule). The practicum will allow you to extend your experience in teaching and evaluation through a peer evaluation process. The practicum is taken after the seminar course is completed (see number 1).
6. Create a teaching portfolio according to guidelines provided by the CoAT program.

**Online applications are available on the Graduate School's web site:
<http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/preparing-future-leaders/coat.html>**

Workshop Topics*

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| Introduction to Teaching |
| Active Learning: Getting Started |
| Active Learning: More Strategies |
| Classroom Assessment Techniques |
| Active Lecturing |
| Evaluation and Grading |
| Learning Styles |
| Classroom Management: Getting Started |
| The Teaching Portfolio |
| Collaborative Learning and Group Work |
| Active Learning: Teaching with Games |
| Effective Questioning Strategies |
| Teaching in the Lab |
| Advising as Teaching |
| Teaching Large Classes |
| Using Online Writing Assignments Effectively |
| Self-Assessment and Peer Review |

**New workshops are added each semester.*

Quick Facts about the CoAT Program:

- Established in 2005
- 120-180 participants during any given semester
- Participants from every college at NCSU
- Participants represent than 50 departments
- Includes MS, Ed.D., Ph.D., and Postdocs
- Part of the Preparing Future Leaders initiative in the Graduate School



Comments from CoAT Graduates:

“Not only did the CoAT program help me improve as a TA during my time at NC State, it also helped me get a job as an assistant professor at Cal Poly when I graduated. During my interviews I was able to answer questions about my teaching style with ease. I would not have been able to do so without having spent time developing my teaching philosophy and reflecting on my teaching experiences with the help of CoAT instructors. In addition to the CoAT workshops, Dr. Barbi Honeycutt spent time with me one-on-one to work on my teaching portfolio and even wrote a letter of recommendation for me before I completed the program. I believe having Dr. Honeycutt as a reference and an online teaching portfolio helped my job application stand out from the rest. I would recommend the CoAT program to any graduate student with aspirations of becoming a college professor when they graduate.”

–Dr. Scott Sink, Forestry, 2009

“Many people think that anyone with knowledge of subject matter can teach well. In reality, this is not always the case. However, people can become very effective instructors when they realize that teaching is an art, and that there are many strategies that “good teachers” use that distinguish them from those who are mediocre. Participating in the CoAT program for the Life Sciences was a great experience for me as a biology TA. I took part in a seminar course with fellow TAs who were truly invested in becoming more effective at teaching their laboratory sections. In each class I was able to learn something new that informed how I would teach. CoAT is a great program to consider whether or not you have teaching in your future as it will make you a more effective TA by providing an environment where you will grow.” –Tracie Addy, Biology, 2008

“The CoAT program was a very good learning experience for me. It taught me many useful techniques that I later applied in the classroom. Because it was geared towards life sciences, I felt that it applied directly to what I was doing with my students and helped me solve the specific problems that come up in this type of teaching environment. The classes were perfectly organized with the busy time schedule of graduate students in mind, so I never felt that I was wasting precious studying or research time.” Biology, 2008