

Instructional Support Agreement 2022-2023

Teaching Assistants (TAs) are graduate students who help faculty with the conduct and delivery of courses to meet departmental needs. Learning Assistants (LAs) and undergraduate students who help support graduate student TAs with the grading of assignments and support for laboratory experiments in a specific BME course for one semester.

Eligibility

- Currently enrolled at UT Austin as graduate student in Biomedical Engineering or a related major
- Good academic standing at the time of application and semester employed and minimum 3.0 GPA
- Maintain acceptable course-instructor survey ratings
- Proficiency in specific engineering skills as identified by the instructor for the course assigned
- Proficiency in the English language as demonstrated by a passing score on the International Teaching Assistant Exam (international TAs only)
- Consent of faculty advisor

Selection

Candidates must complete the application by the stated deadline to be hired as a TA each semester, regardless of past TA positions held. Although Instructor preferences are weighted in the hiring and selection process, Instructors do not select and hire TAs directly for a BME course. This centralized application and selection process ensures equitable access for all BME graduate students to be hired into TA positions each semester. Instructors should communicate to the Graduate Office any specialized knowledge or skills required to be a successful TA for the course (e.g., specialized software experience).

Typically, lecture courses rate 10 hours of TA support per week per 50 students enrolled. Courses with labs and recitation sections typically rate 10 hours of TA support per week per 3-hour lab or recitation section, such that no one TA is covering more than six hours of lab or recitation section per week. This may vary dependent on a number of factors. The Graduate Advisor makes final decisions on all TA assignments.

The department assigns TAs based on many factors including course schedules, course preferences, background and expertise, and past TA experience. While we do our best to match TAs with preferred coursework, it is expected that most TAs will need to learn or re-learn course content to fulfill their duties. This is a natural part of the teaching process.

Responsibilities

TAs may perform specific job duties to support the course to which they are assigned, which may include some or all of the following:

- grade or otherwise evaluate student work
- monitor and lead lab sections, student discussion sessions, recitation sessions and similar activities
- hold office hours for student assistance
- perform clerical tasks associated with course instruction
- provide feedback to the instructor about class performance

TAs may NOT be assigned regular classroom instruction duties and may NOT hold unsupervised lectures. Instructors are responsible for exam creation and all associated grading keys. TAs may assist in the creation of homework and exam questions. Only Instructors and TAs may solely run discussion and lab sections, and conduct examination reviews (LAs may not). TAs may NOT be asked to perform personal tasks for the Instructor.

Performance Expectations

A regular weekly schedule and expectations for a grading schedule should be communicated to the TA by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. TAs may work up to 10 or 20 hours per week and weekly hours assigned are documented in each TA's specific offer letter. TAs may NOT be assigned by the Instructor to work more than their weekly hours allocation for a course, on average. TAs do not complete weekly timesheets; therefore, it is imperative to set clear expectations regarding time management prior to the start of the semester.

In addition, TAs are expected to:

- Follow instructions, meet deadlines, and complete designated work
- Cooperate with supervisors and treat students respectfully
- Be punctual (report to class, lab, discussion sections, and meetings on time)
- Provide prior notification and alternate plans before delays or inability to meet duties
- Coordinate absences with the Instructor before making travel plans
- Follow lab safety protocols and other established procedures
- Respect university property, including records and confidential information, and manage resources and documents properly and honestly
- Follow the university's [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [Information Resources Use and Security Policy](#)
- Follow the rules of the university, including the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities, [Chapter 11 \(Student Discipline and Conduct\)](#)
- Comply with the university's [Title IX policy](#)
- Comply with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

Performance Assessment

TAs are evaluated by students via electronic [course-instructor surveys](#) each semester. Performance issues should be documented in writing and brought to the attention of the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible.

Grievance Procedures

TAs and Instructors should attempt to resolve any grievances together as a first step. Issues that cannot be resolved should be escalated first to the Graduate Advisor. Should additional mediation be warranted, TAs should consult the Graduate School's [grievance procedures](#) for graduate students or the [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#) if the grievance is specifically related to employment.

Guidelines for Instructors in Assigning TA & LA Responsibilities

Faculty Instructors of a course in the Cockrell School of Engineering are solely responsible for instruction in lectures and the creation of examination questions, homework assignments, and associated grading keys. Only Instructors and TAs may run examination reviews, and discussion and lab sections. **TAs may NOT** lead instruction in lecture without faculty instructor supervision.

LAs may NOT assist in the creation of any student work including examination questions and homework assignments. **LAs may NOT** run a laboratory or discussion section without supervision of the Instructor or TA. **LAs may NOT** solely run examination reviews without the TA. Instructors should be mindful to not assign more work to LAs than they can complete in their specified weekly allocated hours.

Responsibilities

Graduate TAs:	Undergraduate LAs:
10 - 20 hours/week per TA (see offer letter)	See allocated weekly hours in email LA assignment each semester (typically 3-10 hrs/week maximum)
In-class support under Instructor supervision	Prepare supplies in the lab ahead of experiments
Discussion or lab section instruction, with instructor direction	Under Instructor or TA supervision, help students on homework or activities in discussion or lab sections
Grades exams & homework using Instructor's key	May grade student homework using Instructor's key
Provide feedback to the instructor about class climate & performance	Provide feedback to the instructor about class climate & performance
Directs examination reviews, with instructor direction	May assist TA with examination review

Proctors examinations	May assist with examination proctoring under supervision of Instructor or TA
Official Office Hours expected and posted in the syllabus	No Official Office Hours posted in syllabus; may attend tutoring tables in evenings to help answer questions; may arrange weekly study groups; available to answer questions by email

Meets the terms in HOP 9-2040 and HOP 9-2020, UT's policy on academic assistants' and teaching assistants' duties and expectations, respectively.

I understand and agree to the terms presented in this document.

Instructor Name

Instructor Signature

Date

I understand and agree to the terms presented in this document. I understand that, at any time, I may discuss any concerns I have about TA duties with the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Coordinator.

Teaching Assistant Name

Teaching Assistant Signature

Date