



Establishing a Partnership with Faculty

What it is:

A shared understanding of course goals, policies, and expectations achieved through frequent communication between the TA and professor. An effective partnership is characterized by a clearly defined division of teaching roles and responsibilities.

Why It's Important:

- Helps TA anticipate and schedule his/her duties and responsibilities throughout the semester.
- Helps TA identify and target the most essential course content and skills for students to practice, and to better integrate discussion sections with course lectures, readings, and graded assignments.
- Reduces student anxiety about how they are being graded/assessed.
- Yields a higher quality experience for professor, TA, and students.

Getting started ...

On the page attached, you'll find a worksheet that guides you through the process of establishing a partnership with the instructor of your course.

1

Read the Syllabus

Before meeting with the instructor to detail expectations and design your semester, carefully read the course syllabus. Take special note of the course description and schedule. A thorough reading of the syllabus will often answer many of your initial questions. We've provided a list to get you started (see attached). Answer as many of the questions as you can from the course syllabus, and follow-up on any you can't in your meeting with the instructor.

2

Meet with your Professor & Align your Goals

After you've read and digested the syllabus, and preferably before the first week of class, arrange a time to meet with the course instructor individually. This is a time for you to ask questions specific to your role as a TA and to ensure that your understanding of course objectives, scheduling and assignments corresponds with that of the instructor. Use the worksheet to guide and record your meeting.

3

Follow-Up for a Successful Semester

- Stay in contact with the professor throughout the semester.
- Be open to any changes that the instructor might suggest—either to the individual planned activities or to your overall emphasis.
- Remember that your main goal is the same as the instructor's: to create a vibrant learning environment in which students can enhance both their knowledge and skills.

Worksheet attached ...



Answer as many of these questions as you can with the syllabus, and then follow-up on remaining questions in your meeting with the instructor.

GENERAL COURSE INFO		DONE
1. What is the stated purpose of the course? (And what would that look like if it were achieved?)		
2. Does the instructor list or describe any specific learning objectives (e.g., becoming a better writer, etc.)?		
3. What are the main sources of course content? (e.g. lectures, readings, films, etc.)		
4. What is the student workload like for this course? What are the assignments and when are they scheduled?		
5. Are there opportunities early in the semester for students to find out if they're "getting it?" (e.g., Non-graded quizzes, short in-class writing exercises -- see handout " <i>How to Assess Learning in the Classroom</i> ").		
6. Is the course supported by learning technologies like Blackboard. If so, how will students use those technologies, and what level of access will TAs have?		
7. How does the syllabus address plagiarism and other forms of cheating? How will you address in-class cheating or plagiarism on take-home assignments?		
GRADING		DONE
8. How will students be graded (e.g. homework, attendance, participation, exams, activities, etc.)?		
9. How will grading duties be delegated? Will you be given a grading rubric?		
10. How much time will you have to grade assignments? Will grades be posted online or elsewhere?		



OTHER DUTIES & EXPECTATIONS		DONE
11. What are the instructor's expectations for you regarding office hours? Where will your office be?		
12. What is the course policy on missed assignments and exams? Will you be expected to administer and/or grade make-up work?		
13. Will you be expected to create quizzes, exams, or homework assignments?		
14. Does the instructor want you to conduct review sessions before exams?		
15. Does the instructor have any expectations for what activities or material you should focus on in your sessions?		
16. Does the instructor want you to focus on specific areas of content or skills that students have struggled with in past courses?		
17. How will you update the instructor on your discussion sections during the semester? Will you (and possibly other TAs for the course) have regular meetings with the instructor?		
18. Are you required to attend every lecture? If so, what if you have to miss one?		
19. Will attendance be recorded in lecture? How and when?		
20. Will you be expected to lead field trips?		
INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES		DONE
21. Does the instructor have examples of previous assignments and exams that you can consult for planning purposes?		
22. Can you get a desk copy of the text or other reading materials for the course?		

Other notes:

