

Working with TAs and AIs

Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Before the semester begins, the supervising faculty member should determine the nature of the instructional and instruction-related duties of the TA, and inform the TA of those duties in a specific conversation or email. These responsibilities might include grading, leading discussion sections or equipment labs, holding review sessions, being available for student questions during office hours, and/or teaching during class or lab times.

TAs are to be used as "assistants" in classes and should not be assigned sole responsibility for any large portion of class activities. For example, TAs should not be responsible for all grading in the class, nor should they be expected to develop the curriculum for lab and discussion sections without faculty review and input.

The hours the TA works per week should average, over the course of the semester, the number of hours for which s/he have been appointed per week.

Faculty are encouraged to allow experienced TA's to give lectures or make instructional presentations during organized class time; however, University rules prohibit TA's from giving more than 20% of the total course lectures. Nor should they be assigned a "bloc" of teaching concentrated in one period of the semester.

A TA's primary duties should be for the class(es) to which s/he is assigned, but additional duties in relation to other classes taught by the supervising faculty member may be requested, up to but not exceeding the percent time appointment noted above.

Should the supervising faculty member request that a TA perform duties outside these guidelines, the TAs are urged to should discuss the matter with the Graduate Adviser.

Assistant Instructors (AIs)

The Assistant Instructor should:

Discuss the course content and his/her teaching philosophy for the course with the supervising faculty member prior to the beginning of the semester.

Be cognizant throughout the semester of any developing problems in the course, whether they be difficulties with the course material, assignments, or with a particular student. It is then the AI's responsibility to seek the counsel and advice of the faculty supervisor.

While AIs have full responsibility for teaching their assigned course, the Department recognizes that AIs must simultaneously continue their work as advanced graduate students. Should problems develop in balancing these responsibilities or in receiving the necessary support from the supervising faculty member and/or the Department, the AI is urged to discuss the matter with the Graduate Adviser immediately.

The supervising faculty member should:

Review the syllabus for the course prior to the beginning of the semester.

Depending upon the experience level of the Assistant Instructor, the faculty member should also review the instructional materials, assignments, and examinations that are developed by the Assistant Instructor over the course of the semester.

Make at least two visits over the course of the semester to observe the Assistant Instructor in a classroom setting for the full duration of the class.

Complete a written mid-semester and an end-of-semester evaluation of the Assistant Instructor soon after the each of these visits. These evaluations should then be discussed face-to-face with the AI in a scheduled meeting.