

First TA Meeting - Discussion Topics

Teaching Assistants' Roles & Responsibilities

- How do TAs fit into the course as a whole? How does their work help build towards course objectives?
- For which portion(s) of the course are TAs directly responsible?
- What are your obligations towards the TAs?
 - Hold team meeting in first 2 weeks of term.
 - Have regular team meetings, frequency determined by instructor.
- Will the TAs be responsible for leading tutorials or labs?
- For what elements of student support or student skills development are TAs responsible? (i.e. writing skills? research skills? should they refer students who are in difficulty or crisis, and if so, how and where?)
- Ensure that roles and responsibilities are properly documented on the contract.
- Will TAs need to attend lectures/tutorials/etc (based on roles outlined in contract)?

Expectations

- Your expectations regarding TAs: preparedness, content competence, overall professionalism (punctuality, etc.), conduct with other TAs in the team, conduct in class, conduct outside of class, quality of feedback given to students, availability/responsiveness.
- What the TAs can expect from you.
- What are your expectations with regards to professionalism?

Boundaries

- Discuss limitations of TA role.
 - When to escalate things to the instructor or other resources.
 - Working hours beyond contract specifications.
 - Staying within expectations of graduate student collective agreement.
- Remind them of what they should do if encountering a student in crisis.
- Advise TAs on what they should do if there's a conflict of interest between them and a student.
- Advise TAs on the process of dealing with a suspected case of breach of academic integrity.

- Advise your TAs on what they should do when they receive a request for academic accommodations and academic considerations.

Communication

- How will you communicate with your TAs?
- How frequently will you meet with your TAs?
- Remind TAs to use their staff email for all things related to the course and to contact you and/or the students.

Duties

Training

- Will you give the TAs additional training needed to successfully TA the course?
- Is there any departmental TA training required?
- Ask your TAs if they have completed their training. If not, remind them that they need to complete it by the last day of the first month of the term.

Preparation

- Clarify what preparations TAs should be doing.
- How much should it take to prepare a typical lab/tutorial/section/class?

Contact

- If applicable, how and when are office hours to be conducted?
- Will TAs need to put on office hours or be present during that time?
- Will TAs be required to attend lectures?

Grading

- Provide specific instructions for grading assignments/quizzes/exams. Will the TAs be responsible for grading all these assessments?
- Process for calibrating marks and grading assignments in large courses with multiple TAs.
- Reiterate policies and procedures around academic integrity and what to do in case there is a breach of integrity.