

Teaching Assistant

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Preface

Welcome to the "Teaching Team" of the Department of Integrative Biology. We congratulate you on obtaining a teaching assistantship. Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are awarded to students with excellent academic performance. Please do not consider it as "just-a-job" to help you through Graduate Studies but rather as a privilege. Teaching is an important complement to your training. Not only is teaching an excellent opportunity for learning, but also an experience of great value for future employment. Teaching reinforces your own knowledge base. Additionally, teaching offers an opportunity to develop leadership, self-confidence and interpersonal relationship skills.

Synergistic interactions between research and teaching are recognized widely, and especially promoted in the IB Grad Ó & spehe IB Grad hi~

Coronavirus (COVID – 19) UPDATES

Return to Campus

From the USF Coronavirus (COVID-19) website available at
<https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/>.

Face coverings <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/face-coverings.aspx>

Vaccination Information <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/vaccinations.aspx>

Hand Hygiene <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/vaccinations.aspx>

Disinfecting, Cleaning & PPE <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/enhanced-cleaning-disinfection.aspx>

Being a Teacher

Be prepared.prepared

Hierarchy of Responsibility

TA must always defer to the faculty member or other individual in charge of the course or labs.

TA cannot negotiate an “I” grade.

All change of grade forms are co-signed by TA and person in charge.

Late withdrawal must be co-signed.

If in doubt, check with supervisor or graduate director.

You are a Student too

Pursuit of your degree is your TOP priority.

Invest time in your students, but invest more in your own research and classes.

Limit yourself to 20 hours weekly on TA tasks if you are appointed at .50 FTE/20 hrs per week.

Get help if you're having trouble getting everything done in 20 hours.

Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants

As Teaching Assistants, you represent the IB Grad Program and the University of South Florida; therefore, you are expected to perform duties in an exemplary fashion. The key to your success is to perform the following tasks:

Maintain communication with the professor in charge of the laboratory or course.

Although our policy is to encourage TAs to develop their independence and creativity, the faculty or course coordinator assigned to oversee the laboratory is always available to help you in the understanding and performance of your assignment. These individuals will also monitor your class and evaluate your teaching performance. Please do not hesitate to go to them for any questions that you may have regarding your teaching and proctoring responsibilities.

Be well prepared to teach

Take time to ensure that the course organization and requirements are clear to students. This way you will have enough time to correct any problems that may occur. Your syllabus must be compatible with those of others teaching the same course.

In addition to understanding the laboratory experiments assigned to you and making the appropriate preparations, you should organize your presentations or lectures so that they will be effective. Provide students with an opportunity to get clarification on points covered in the lecture. Students will know when you are ill prepared for the material you are to cover in a given lab. Save yourself the embarrassment and NEVER go to class under prepared.

Keep the laboratory organized, clean and safe

Good organization and maintenance of a tidy laboratory will save you both time and headaches. Good organization promotes safety, a major concern for all.

Working with Faculty

Develop a good relationship with faculty

Most faculty/TA relationships are cordial, but some difficulties can arise. Here are some pointers that can help to encourage a healthy faculty/TA relationship. At the beginning of each semester, you will meet with the lab coordinator so that you can ask these and other questions.

Discuss all the faculty's expectations at the beginning of the semester.

- When supervising the lab, will you be responsible for obtaining supplies and materials, keeping track of materials, designing, and revising experiments, giving demonstrations?
- Will you be evaluating papers, lab reports, quizzes, student participation? Are the criteria for grading clear? Will the instructor review disputed grades?
- Will you have a chance to try new things and present new ideas?
- How many office hours per week?
- If your TA work is taking more than 20 hours per week, what should you do so as not to create conflict?
- Get tension out in the open; the IB Graduate Director is available, if needed, for consultation.
- Communicate frequently with your faculty research advisor and/or your lab coordinator.

Lecture Teaching Assistant (LTA)

Lecture TAs are assigned to help professors who teach large-enrollment lecture courses.

The specific duties the Lecture TA should expect to perform include, but are not limited to the following.

Attend all lectures to be prepared to assist the professor as needed.

Policies for TAs regarding “I” and withdrawals

Teaching Assistants should NOT negotiate an "I" (Incomplete) grade without explicit approval from the TA supervisor and/or the professor in charge of the course. When an "I" grade is assigned, an "I" grade contract form must be completed and co-signed by the TA and the professor in charge of the course.

ALL change of grade forms MUST be co-signed by the professor in charge of the course. None will be approved without the co-signature.

NO late withdrawals will be approved unless they are co-signed by the professor in charge of the course.

Creating a Positive Classroom Climate

How to get your students prepared for the lab

In some classes, you might organize “pop quizzes”, pre-lab outlines, and group discussions of predicted results. Your lab TA supervisor or Lab coordinator might require a particular approach, and you’re expected to take that one to maximize consistency across sections. Remember that students are more likely to prepare better if you as the TA are enthusiastic and supportive.

Be sensitive to individual differences. Try to accommodate all students in your section and be prepared to incorporate a variety of approaches to teach your class.

Tell the students what your expectations are. This is critical.

Be there early and stay late if need be.

Never ridicule a student! Always encourage.

Ask for feedback during the semester.

What else?

Know your resources when things go wrong.

Talk to TAs who have taught the lab before.

Realize you are qualified to teach effectively.

You know more than your students do.

FAQ

How does a TA write a quiz/test/handout?

Exams should reflect the depth and breadth of the materials covered in the lab and reflect the amount of time spent on a given topic. Your Lab Coordinator will provide more specific guidelines, and you can consult with prior TAs of the course for advice

Do I really need to reiterate the instructions even though they are in the lab manual?

YES, especially for Bio 1 & 2 during the first part of the semester. Sometimes the

How to deal with plagiarism

Some courses forgive the first offense of plagiarism, in others it results in an automatic F. Regardless of whether you choose to take action or not (and you probably won't every time...use your judgment and pick your battles wisely), there are steps that you need to take:

- Make a copy of the student's paper for your records. You may need this later if a student fights an accusation and you end up in front of the dean.
- Gather evidence of plagiarism. Print out the websites or other sources the student copied from. Indicate which passages w

Missing TA Responsibilities

There are a number of circumstances that are justified for missing your teaching responsibilities.

Needing time to prepare for exams.

Personal commitments not related to your studies.

Changes in research schedules that arise after class assignments have been agreed to.

In the event that a TA and a course coordinator cannot agree on either the legitimacy of an absence, or on arrangements for a substitute, the Graduate Director shall review and resolve the situation.

E-mail

TAs must check their USF email at least once a dayemail at least one

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Proctoring assignments

The Department requires that Teaching Assistants proctor examinations in non-major courses and courses for which there are no assistants. The IB Undergraduate Program Assistant, Ben Peoples, completes these proctoring assignments.

The Undergraduate Program Assistant shall make all proctoring assignments.

If you are scheduled to proctor, it is your responsibility to be there or to tell the Undergraduate Program Assistant (well in advance) of your inability to make that assignment, at which time another proctoring assignment will be given to you.

Acceptable excuses for not proctoring are class or teaching responsibilities at the same time; illness; attendance at a meeting of a scientific society.

Proctors ARE REQUIRED to contact the instructor they have been assigned to proctor for at least two days prior to the exam to receive any specific instructions. Please contact instructor via email, voice mail, or in person.

Complaints should be addressed to the IB Graduate Director

NOTE: Proctoring assignments will be sent via email to assigned TAs usually c

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Unexcused Absences of TAs for Proctoring Assignments

Unexcused absences are penalized as follows:

First - a letter advising the student of the serio

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Please be aware of the following information, which is Article 10 of the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Regents and the Graduate Assistants Union.

An employee shall not be required to perform assigned duties when disabled or otherwise unable to perform them because of injury, illness, jury duty, required U.S. milita " "