



School of Education

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## TEACHING ASSISTANT DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Teaching assistants in the School of Education perform a variety of tasks. While your role may vary in different courses, you will generally be expected to perform the following duties:

- Grade assignments
- Proctor and grade exams
- Develop and maintain a grade record (either spreadsheet, or online)
  - Calculate grades based on the assigned weights listed in the course syllabus
- Respond to email from students and the course instructor
- Attend lectures
- Hold office hours to assist students
- Assist the course instructor with preparation of course assignments, exams, or lectures
- Familiarize yourself with course content

In addition to these common duties, you are expected to display the following characteristics during your service:

- **Communication**: Maintain consistent communication with the instructor/s and students. You should check your email daily and be able to respond to student emails within 48 hours or sooner if necessary due to nature of inquiry. Respond to emails from the instructor as soon as possible. In addition to maintaining consistent communication with the instructor and students, you should communicate any uncertainties you may have as soon as possible. If you have any questions regarding the course, ask for clarity right away. You should keep the instructor/s abreast of any issues that arise. Consider copying the instructor/s on your communications with students.
- **Initiative**: You will receive various duties from your assigned supervisor, but you are expected to show an ability to work independently. You are expected to be able to make decisions on your own, but also expected to discuss decisions with your supervisor.
- **Engagement**: You may be expected to play an active role in course discussions. This may include participating with students during activities, talking with students during discussions, or may be as simple as getting to know student names.
- **Punctuality**: You are expected to arrive to the assigned classroom prior to the beginning of the class period to assist the instructor/s with any last minute activities (e.g., technology set-up, room set-up, handouts, etc.). Arrive on time to meetings with the instructor/s. When handling grading assignments, communicate with the instructor/s as to when you expect to be able to complete the load.

- Time management: Monitor your time to be able to complete grading tasks in a timely manner. If grading is taking longer than expected, communicate this with the instructor and be able to give an estimate as to when it will be completed. Please be aware that grading loads may vary throughout the quarter, so you should plan your time accordingly.
- Feedback: You are expected to provide students with useful feedback on their assignments. This includes being able to tell the student what they can improve upon and what they did well and should do more of.
- Content Proficiency: Even when assigned a course outside your content mastery area, you are expected to be able to assist students in finding answers to their questions. Not only should you be keeping up with course readings, but you should also know of available resources to direct students to when the question is outside of your capacity to assist with. Also, being familiar with content will assist you while grading.
- Academic Honesty: In addition to being familiar with university policy regarding academic honesty (<http://honesty.uci.edu/>), you are expected to treat each student fairly in your grading. You must communicate with your faculty supervisor if you suspect any incidences of academic dishonesty in student work.

Prior to the start of the quarter, meet with the course instructor to learn of your particular duties for the course and the duties you are not expected to fulfill.

Other topics to discuss:

Expectations for timely grading: You should be told an estimate for the amount of time each assignment will take to grade. You should also be told the expected timeline for returning grades. For example, if each student's paper will take 20 minutes to grade and there are 60 students in the class, you should know how long that you have to complete the grading. If the grading of the assignments takes longer than expected, you should communicate this with the instructor and ask for strategies for approaching the grading.

Guidelines for grading assignments and exams: You should learn how much feedback the instructor wants you to give the students. This will influence the amount of time it will take to complete the grading. If the instructor has rubrics available for the various assignments, you should be given them prior to starting the grading. If you are unfamiliar with the use of rubrics, the instructor will either assist you in understanding them or will direct you to available resources (i.e., Pedagogical Fellow).

Communication: Instructors differ in their preferred means of communication, so it is important to discuss this prior to the start of the quarter. The instructor is also expected to communicate with you regarding your work throughout the quarter. Just as the students expect feedback from you, you should expect feedback from the instructor. This should be an ongoing process.

Guidance for professional development: Working as a TA offers you the opportunity to see an alternative perspective to university teaching, so the instructor should be able to offer you feedback as to how you can grow as an instructor. At the end of the quarter, you might ask to meet with the instructor to discuss what worked and what can be improved upon.