

Guidelines for Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Instructors

These guidelines should be considered flexible and subject to negotiation between the TA and the instructor at the beginning of each semester.

The Psychology Department views TAs as “Instructors in Training.” As such, TAs may be asked to learn, perform, and ultimately take responsibility for any or all of the duties of a full-time instructor. Suggested duties and responsibilities are listed in the form “Guidelines for TA Responsibilities” and the form “Best Practices and Recommendations for Online Instructors”, available on the Graduate Student Resources and Forms web page. This form should be completed jointly and signed by the TA and the instructor at the start of each semester.

TAs may be responsible for any or all of the following:

- Grading tests, assignments, papers, drafts of papers
- Constructing, proctoring, and grading tests and exams
- Constructing, carrying out, and grading makeup tests and exams
- Assistance with classes that may include lecturing (no more than three times) and class demonstrations

Assistance with class materials including photocopying, placing material on reserves, and managing the D2L website

- Office hours** (not to exceed 3 hrs. per week), answering student email
- Attending classes
- Reading the textbook or other course materials
- Conduct review sessions or online discussions
- Maintaining class records
- Other duties that may include webpage management, SALT services, or note taking

** Please note that the Psychology Department policy is that all online courses must have “in person” office hours (not to exceed 3 hrs per week). Additional online office hours or student contact time should be negotiated with the instructor.

In general, TAs are not asked to:

- Prepare an instructor’s lectures or PowerPoint presentations
- Do research or readings that are not relevant to the course
- Handle, on their own, incidents of academic misconduct without the instructor’s presence
- Proctor exams on a regular basis without the instructor’s presence. In most large classes, two proctors will be needed; one of these should usually be the instructor. If the instructor is unable to attend, another proctor should be requested.
- Have more than 3 office hours per week
- Guest lecture without adequate notice and time to prepare (~ 1 week).
- Complete grading of exams, papers or drafts without rubrics or reasonably clear grading guidelines

There may be times when these or other tasks are necessary, and these specific circumstances should be discussed and negotiated with the instructor. If a TA is concerned about the tasks they are being asked to undertake, they should discuss this with the Director of Graduate Studies as early as possible in the semester. Midway through the semester, TAs may request feedback from the instructors concerning their performance. This feedback may be provided on the form “TA Mid-Semester Evaluation.” At the end of the semester, instructors will be asked to complete the “Psychology TA Semester Evaluation.” Completion of this form is mandated by the Graduate College and the results of this evaluation are reported to the Graduate College. A “Low” evaluation may lead to termination of the TA. The mid-semester feedback is designed to ensure that all students are able to achieve a minimum rating of “Adequate.”