

Department of Physics and Astronomy Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are an integral component of the Department's educational mission. Teaching Assistants contribute to this mission in several ways: assisting in undergraduate and graduate laboratories, leading recitation sessions, conducting homework help sessions for undergraduate courses, assisting with curricular and facilities improvement in undergraduate laboratories, grading problems and examinations, and occasionally providing special instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The time required for these duties should average 15 hours per week in a 15 week semester and never exceed 20 hours per week.

Before teaching assignments are made, the Director of Instructional Laboratory Facilities (DILF) of the Department will ask the faculty for their needs and preferences for TAs and also ask the TAs for their preferences for teaching duties.

Faculty and students are required to submit their preferences to the DILF at least one week prior to the start of each term for their preferences to be acknowledged.

Preferences will be considered and honored, if possible, subject to the constraints of meeting the Department's needs. Minimal revisions to assignments can be made during the first week of classes when scheduling conflicts occur. Problems with the teaching assignments should be called to the immediate attention of the DILF and the Graduate Chair (GC).

If students are sick or unable to perform their TA duties, they must inform the Instructor of Record for their assigned duties and the DILF immediately.

Irregularities in performing TA duties should be first discussed and resolved with the Instructor of Record for the assigned duties. If issues persist the Instructor of Record or the TA should escalate those issues to the DILF and the GC.

At the end of each semester, all TA advisors rate their TAs' performance of duty "above average", "satisfactory", or "not satisfactory".

Above average evaluations will assist the GC, DILF, and the Graduate Committee in selecting deserving students for College and Department Teaching Awards. Those evaluations must be justified.

Satisfactory evaluations should be the norm, indicating students conscientiously fulfilling their teaching duties. No justification is needed.

Non-satisfactory evaluations should indicate that issues concerning students performing their TA duties persisted during a term and could not be resolved between the student and the Instructor of Record. Those evaluations must be justified.

Students will receive periodically or on request a summary of those ratings.

First year students will be evaluated. However the consequences of a "non-satisfactory" rating described below will not apply to first-year students.

A student with a first non-satisfactory rating will receive a letter of warning from the GC and will have the opportunity to discuss issues that occurred with the GC and the DILF. Together they will work on a plan for improvement. The GC has the option to annul the non-satisfactory rating if appropriate.

After a student receives a second non-satisfactory rating the GC and the Graduate Committee will implement further sanctions, ranging from a reduction to half workload, along with a corresponding reduction of stipend to the minimum set by the Graduate College, to a determination that the student is no longer eligible for a Teaching Assistantship from the Department.

*Ch. Elster
Graduate Chair*

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