

## DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY TA POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The Department of Biology expects teaching assistants (TAs) to perform satisfactorily in three areas. TAs should (1) perform the tasks specified by their teaching faculty supervisor; (2) proctor exams as directed by the Biology Graduate Program office and the faculty member in charge of the exam; and (3) receive satisfactory TA evaluations from the instructor/lab coordinator. Specific requirements related to each of these areas are listed below. In addition, the Biology Department expects that TAs perform their assignments with appropriate professional behavior. Professional behavior includes, but is not limited to, arriving to class on time, communicating in advance with the instructor in the case of illness or other problems, treating all students with respect, and following all lab safety practices.

- Biology expects TAs to perform the tasks assigned by their teaching faculty supervisor by the agreed upon deadline.
  - These tasks could include (but are not limited to) meeting with the lab coordinator, preparing materials for lectures or laboratory classes, teaching lectures or labs, maintaining animals and/or animal facilities used in lab classes, grading assignments, or any other tasks requested by the faculty supervisor or lab coordinator that are required as part of the normal operating procedures of a course.
  - These tasks must take no more than 20 hours per week on average, given a reasonable effort on the part of the TA.
    - Biology requires faculty teaching supervisors to ensure that their TAs work less than 20 hours per week.
    - Biology expects TAs to restrict their work as a TA to the tasks assigned by their teaching faculty supervisor and to perform those tasks in a reasonable amount of time.
  - TAs should seek and expect support from their teaching faculty advisors concerning conflicts with students that arise as a result of their role in a course. Conflicts that are not resolved by the teaching faculty advisor should be brought to the attention of the Associate Chair of Biology.
  - TAs should seek support from the Associate Chair of Biology concerning conflicts with their teaching faculty advisor.
- Biology expects TAs to proctor exams as directed by the Biology Graduate Program (BGP) office and the faculty member in charge of the exam
  - TAs should sign up to proctor exams when instructed to do so by the BGP office. The number, time and location of the exams will be determined by the BGP.
  - TAs should follow the instructions of the faculty member in charge of the exam. Proctoring responsibilities include arriving at the exam site on time, distributing examination materials, monitoring student behavior during the exam, reporting aberrant student behaviors to the faculty member in charge, collecting examination materials, and checking student IDs.
- Biology expects TAs to be evaluated by the instructor and (for TAs that interact directly with students) students and to receive satisfactory evaluations. TAs that fail to receive satisfactory evaluations from the instructor of record will be notified by the Associate Chair of Biology and directed to participate in training designed to help them improve their performance.
  - TAs will get feedback from their teaching faculty advisor at two times.

- The first will come during the semester in the form of the University/College/Graduate School TA Observation forms. TAs are expected to respond to the form, sign it, and if improvements are necessary, request a meeting with their teaching faculty supervisor to discuss feedback.
- The second will come at the end of the semester in the University/College/Graduate School TA Evaluation forms. TAs are expected to respond to the form and sign it and are encouraged to request a meeting with their teaching faculty supervisor to discuss feedback.
- TAs should read their TCE reports. TAs are encouraged to evaluate their TCE report, noting what they felt were their most significant strengths and weaknesses and their plan to address their weaknesses and then discuss their plan with their teaching faculty supervisor for the course.

Biology encourages TAs to meet with the Associate Chair of Biology to provide feedback about their teaching assignment, particularly when the TA has specific concerns about previous courses they have taught.

#### Failure to Meet Expectations:

- TAs who do not fulfill obligations as specified above could have future teaching assistantships revoked or their priority for receipt of future teaching assistantships lowered. This will ultimately be decided by the Associate Chair of Biology, but the TA should be actively involved in attempting to improve their performance and to communicate with the Associate Chair/BGP throughout this process.
  - TAs will be notified in writing by their teaching/proctoring faculty supervisor and the BGP when their performance teaching or proctoring is unsatisfactory and will be given the opportunity to respond and improve.
  - TAs failing to meet expectations after intervention by their teaching/examination faculty supervisor will be notified by the Associate Chair of Biology (or Chair of Biology if the Associate Chair is the faculty supervisor) and provided with additional feedback and another opportunity to respond and improve.
  - TAs failing to meet expectations after intervention by the Associate Chair of Biology will have their priority level for receipt of a future TA lowered and will be referred to the Chair of Biology and given a third opportunity to respond and improve.
  - TAs failing to meet expectations after intervention by the Chair of Biology will jeopardize their chances of receiving future TA funding.