

SUNY Geneseo Faculty Best Practices for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Employing an undergraduate teaching assistant (TA) can benefit faculty members and provide a transformative educational experience for the student. To ensure the best experience for both faculty and student TAs, the Office of the Provost recommends the following guidelines.

1. In selecting a teaching assistant, faculty should consider the following:

- The potential TA should have taken the course for which they will TA, or an equivalent, and received a grade significantly above average.
- The TA position should not have an adverse effect on the student's graduation or completion of graduation requirements.
- The potential TA should be made aware of departmental policies limiting use of TA credits toward the major or graduation.
- The TA opportunity is a high impact experience that should be offered to many qualified students; look for students who have not yet been a TA, with an awareness of diversity and equity in the selection.
- Recommend the student consult with Financial Aid if needed.

2. Faculty expectations of the teaching assistant should

- be made clear in writing in a contract or syllabus, which will include:
 - The course in which a student will enroll or method of financial compensation; usually INTD 305 or a department course in pedagogy
 - A regular meeting time with the faculty Instructor of Record
 - The work to be completed, including expectations in preparation, course attendance, office hours, lecturing, review sessions, grading & rubrics, training in ethics & safety
 - A self reflective statement by the TA at the end of the course
 - Criteria for evaluation in an end of semester written evaluation. If taken for course credit, criteria to be used in grading the TA
 - An S/U grading mode, unless the student will do substantial academic work as a TA (eg prepare a lecture which will be turned in to the faculty member)
- be consistent with the time associated with the credits the student will receive: three hours per week per credit hour
- include ethical and responsible behavior in working with students, handling their work, and assigning grades
- include a report of any past or present dating relationship with a student in the course (the faculty member should ensure no TA works with a student with whom they have a past or present relationship)
- include open and timely communication about all aspects of the TA's work

4. Faculty responsibilities to the undergraduate TA should include

- requiring or recommending the available training modules on Canvas, and discussing the content with the TA. Modules address ethics, privacy, safety, working with peers, cultural competency, mental health awareness, and self-reflection
- Providing supervision and mentorship in the tasks expected, including clear rubrics for any grading of students' work. Students should never grade work with subjective criteria, eg writing or open ended questions.
- Handling all grade disputes
- having TA's grade assignments by G#, or with names otherwise removed, where possible
- Discussing course content, pedagogy, assignments, and grading
- Mentoring the student in current curriculum and pedagogy in the field
- not asking a TA to assist with tasks unrelated to the course for which they are TAing
- Providing a written evaluation at the end of the semester, whether the student is taking the course for a grade or for financial compensation

SUNY's Guidelines: <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/UndergraduateTAGuideFinalversion.pdf>