Teaching Assistants

Teaching and Learning Laboratory
Room 5-122
617.253.2850
web.mit.edu/tll/

For non-native English speakers

English Language Studies Program
Foreign Languages and Literatures
Room 46-235
617.253.2771
web.mit.edu/fll/;

For confidential discussions related to workplace issues

MIT Ombuds Office
Room 10-213
617.253.5921
web.mit.edu/ombud/

For Institute-wide support and referrals services

Graduate Students Office
Room 3-316
617.253.5801
web.mit.edu/gso/

For department-specific support

Departmental graduate administrators
web.mit.edu/gpp/oversight/administrators.html

For resources to support graduate students

Office of Undergraduate Advising and Academic Programming
Room 5-356
617.253.5801
web.mit.edu/uaap/

Student Support Services (S3)
Room 5-356
617.253.5801
web.mit.edu/s3/

For help with teaching

Teaching and Learning Laboratory
Room 5-122
617.253.2850
web.mit.edu/tll/

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## Responsibilities

At the beginning of each semester, teaching assistants have the right to know, and faculty are expected to provide, the following:

- An overview of the course, including course goals, topics, assignments.
- The number of hours/week the department expects TAs to devote to course-related activities. This number will be reasonable, given that TAs also have responsibilities as students and researchers.
- Specific course-related activities in which TAs are expected to engage (e.g., lead recitation sections, hold office hours, supervise labs, grade, attend lectures).
- Ways in which TAs are expected to work with course faculty.
- The distribution of work among TAs associated with the course.
- Methods and measurements by which TA performance will be evaluated (e.g., student evaluation surveys at the end of the semester, in-class observations by faculty during the semester).
- Resources at MIT accessible to TAs for assistance and support in teaching and mentoring students.
- Timely notification of any unexpected or unusual change in funding status as soon as the change is known, particularly if funding might be terminated.
- Any other department-specific expectations.

At the beginning of each semester, teaching assistants have the right to know, and faculty are expected to provide, the following:

- For further information on TA requirements, see: web.mit.edu/gso/gpp/roles/roles.html
- For information on TA appointments, see: web.mit.edu/gso/gpp/appointments.html

The duties of a teaching assistant may include assisting a faculty member in grading undergraduate homework and quizzes, instruction in the classroom and laboratory, preparing apparatus or material for demonstrations, posting Web-based materials, and conducting tutorials and discussion sections.

Regardless of assigned duties, TAs are expected to:

- Work a designated number of hours per week on average. However, the number of hours per week may vary somewhat during the semester.
- Know the goals of the subject and understand the course content. TAs may be asked to help prepare problem sets, in-class assignments, or exams, as well as organize the course. TAs may be required to attend lectures.
- Be dependable. If a TA can't lead recitations, or carry out any other assignment, he or she must inform the supervisor. TAs should consult with faculty to ensure that their grading standards are consistent with other graders.
- Avoid initiating or maintaining inappropriate relationships with students.
- Remain available at the end of the semester to help faculty with the administrative aspects of the subject.
- Comply with any additional department-specific requirements.

The duties of a teaching assistant may include assisting a faculty member in grading undergraduate homework and quizzes, instruction in the classroom and laboratory, preparing apparatus or material for demonstrations, posting Web-based materials, and conducting tutorials and discussion sections.

- Be dependable. If a TA can't lead recitations, or carry out any other assignment, he or she must inform the supervisor. TAs should consult with faculty to ensure that their grading standards are consistent with other graders.
- Avoid initiating or maintaining inappropriate relationships with students.
- Remain available at the end of the semester to help faculty with the administrative aspects of the subject.
- Comply with any additional department-specific requirements.

## Rewards

Fulfilling responsibilities as a teaching assistant enhances skills that will serve you well in your future career, whether in academia, business, or industry.

Your experience as a TA offers invaluable experience, helping you to:

- Gain a deep understanding of the subject material.
- Communicate thoughts and ideas effectively.
- Improve presentation skills.
- Develop your ability to motivate and mentor others.
- Strengthen group facilitation skills.
- Enhance negotiation and conflict mediation skills.
- Other rewards include:
  - Instructor-G Appointments. Advanced graduate students who show exemplary classroom performance may be appointed as an Instructor-G in recognition of their interest and ability in teaching. See also: web.mit.edu/gso/gpp/roles/roles.html.
  - Honors and awards. At semester or academic year end, many departments recognize exceptional performance by teaching assistants. Also, the Institute awards the Goodwin Medal each year for "conspicuously effective teaching" by a graduate student. Some prizes include monetary rewards. See also: web.mit.edu/gso/spotlight/Goodwin.html.

Other rewards include:

- Informational and Developmental. Advanced graduate students who show exemplary classroom performance may be appointed as an Instructor-G in recognition of their interest and ability in teaching. See also: web.mit.edu/gso/gpp/roles/roles.html.

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