

HDQM Teaching Assistantships
Departmental Guidelines
Summer, 2018

Faculty and administration in the Department of Human Development & Quantitative Methodology (HDQM) wish to establish practices that reflect our community's efforts to provide training experiences for Teaching Assistants (TAs) that will inform their future teaching, afford fair and reasonable amounts and types of assistance for instructional faculty, and that are in alignment with the Graduate School policy on graduate assistantships (See <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships/> .

This document explains the following departmental practices with regard to

- Assignment of TAs to courses
- Learning opportunities and duties for TAs
- Questions or concerns
- TA agreements
- Performance review

Course Assignment

Final assignment of TAs to department courses is the purview and responsibility of the HDQM Department Chair and the Director of Academic Services and Outreach (DASO). The goal is to provide each student with a valuable learning experience. However, multiple influences come to bear on final assignments across TAs for any given semester. Therefore, administrators, faculty, and students should consider any course in the TA's program area (and in some instances, across program areas) to be an appropriate assignment for HDQM TAs, assuming in the case of a graduate course that the student has taken the course or an equivalent course themselves and earned an acceptable grade (i.e., B or higher).

Learning Opportunities and Appropriate Duties

HDQM TAs are intended to support students' professional development in the role of college instructor. Course instructor supervision of assigned TA duties can be an appropriate way of providing that mentorship, but the faculty instructor should also be training the student toward the attainment of other competencies that he/she will need as a future autonomous course instructor in his/her program area. In addition, TAships provide students with experiences that will enhance their research skills by providing them with opportunities to gain more knowledge of the content in their field, as well as to form collegial relationships with faculty that may lead to further opportunities for future research collaborations. In support of TAs' learning, the department will provide a TA training session at the beginning of each semester, during which essential topics will be covered and TAs' questions will be addressed. Finally, TAs are strongly encouraged to attend the August TA Orientation hosted by the Teaching Learning Transformation Center (TLTC), for which the department will provide prior notice.

A TA's time spent on duties may not exceed the hours associated with the assistantship, which may equal either 10 or 20 hours per week for, respectively, a half-time or full-time appointment. The number of hours on any given week may vary, but across the whole semester the average should not exceed that number of hours. TAs are required to keep an online log of the hours they spend on

teaching assistance. The log (see Appendix A for a suggested format) should be shared with the course instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies for the student's program. Instructors are expected to monitor these logs and adjust TA assignments as needed.

In the EDHD program area, most TAs are assigned to undergraduate courses. TAs in the EDMS program area include two different types: A training program to prepare TAs to independently teach an undergraduate course, and assignment to serve as a TA for a graduate level course. Assignment to the training program is dependent on the student's potential to succeed in independent instruction at the undergraduate level.

To the extent possible and as appropriate for the program areas, HDQM TAs should have opportunities to learn about principles of practice related to:

- Syllabus construction
- Application of all university policy related to undergraduate teaching
- Writing of course objectives and course planning
 - How to plan for an entire semester
 - How to plan for a single course session
- Different kinds of assessment methods and how to evaluate them appropriately
- Instructional methods - lecture, discussion, video, on-line v. face-to-face instruction, etc.
- Classroom management
- Motivating students to achieve and promotion of student active engagement

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| EDHD Course TAs |
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Semester 1 – Appropriate Duties

- Grading of objective (e.g., multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching) course assessments
- Weekly office hours, guided by clear expectations for what the TA should/should not address during those hours and examples of student situations that should be referred to the instructor
- Class attendance, as agreed upon by the instructor and TA
- In-class or on-line discussion group leadership, with instructor supervision
- Management and oversight of small group discussions or presentation projects, with instructor supervision
- With instructor supervision, opportunities to deliver direct instruction of appropriate amounts and types of course content
 - During the first semester, students should not be asked to do this more than once or twice, and never without the course instructor being present. Students should receive feedback from the instructor on their presentations.
- Students may attempt to grade subjective assessments under the guidance and supervision of the faculty mentor, but should not be given responsibility for autonomous grading of any portion of these kinds of assessments.
 - For example, a first semester TA might apply rubric criteria in a grading exercise during which he/she assigns a grade to approximately 5 - 10 student papers each time a subjective assignment is due. The TA would then explain the rationale for each grade to

the instructor, who may retain or change the grade. In either instance, the instructor assumes full responsibility for the final grade assigned to the paper.

- Proctoring an exam period, as long as the TA has been mentored to understand policies related to the University's Code of Academic Integrity and the instructor or another department faculty member is available by email or phone during the exam period.

Semester 2 – Appropriate Duties

In addition to all Semester 1 duties:

- Supported grading of 10-15 subjective assessments, each time an assignment is due, per the process outlined in the “Semester 1” guidelines
- Increased opportunities for supervised, autonomous instruction, but never in the absence of the instructor
- Other appropriate opportunities for selected components of course management, as agreed upon by the instructor and the TA

Semester 1 & 2 – Unsuitable Duties

- Autonomous, unsupervised teaching of a class session or any portion thereof
- Teaching or discussion group oversight where controversial course topics may challenge the skill level or personal readiness of the student to address such issues
- Dealing with personally sensitive or complex undergraduate student issues, e.g., need for counseling intervention or referral to other support units on campus
- Management of undergraduate student violations of the Code of Academic Integrity
- Independent oversight of student accommodations as outlined by the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support
- Independent grading of subjective assessments

Semester 3 or Beyond – Appropriate Duties

- All “Semester 1 and 2 – Appropriate Duties:”
- Increased opportunities to deliver direct instruction of appropriate course content. The instructor should always be present and the TA should receive feedback on the presentation.
- Some independent grading of subjective assessments under the supervision of the faculty mentor, with the understanding that the instructor assumes full responsibility for all grades in the course
 - For example, in a large section with a 4-7 page paper assignment, an experienced TA might independently grade half of the student papers. For shorter assignments, the TA might grade the majority, but this proportion should not exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ of all assignments for any particular assignment. The TAs should then meet with the instructor to describe how a sub-sample of the papers were graded against the assignment rubric. Assuming TA and instructor agreement on the grading of the sub-sample papers, assigned grades for all papers graded by the TA may be entered. In this situation, the students in the course should be informed of the grader for their paper, with the understanding that the instructor takes full responsibility for all grades.

Semester 3 or Beyond - Unsuitable Duties

- Independent grading of all subjective assessments in a course, with or without instructor supervision
- Unsupervised management of an entire class session (not to include lab meetings in large lecture sections)
- Management of undergraduate student violations of the Code of Academic Integrity
- Independent oversight of student accommodations as outlined by the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support
- Teaching or discussion group oversight where controversial course topics may challenge the skill level or personal readiness of the student to address such issues
- Independently managing personally sensitive or complex undergraduate student issues, e.g., need for counseling intervention or referral to other support units on campus

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| <i>EDMS Course TAs</i> |
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Following are suggestions for appropriate responsibilities for TAs in the EDMS training program and TAs assigned to graduate level courses, as well as a list of duties considered unsuitable.

Appropriate Duties

- Grading of objective and closed-form problem set course assessments and assignments with a clear rubric for grading any constructed response items
- Weekly office hours with clear expectations for what the student should/should not address during those hours, including specific examples of student situations that should be referred to the instructor
- Class attendance (if schedule allows)
- In-class or on-line discussion group leadership, with instructor supervision for planning of such sessions
- Management and oversight of small group discussions or presentation projects, with instructor supervision
- Proctoring an exam period as long as the TA has been mentored to understand policies related to the University's Code of Academic Integrity and the instructor or another department faculty member is available by email or phone during the exam period
- Developing and presenting a mini-lesson, with instructor supervision

Unsuitable Assignments

- Responsibilities for autonomous, unsupervised teaching of a class session or any portion thereof, unless well-planned and practiced with the instructor
- Management of student violations of the Code of Academic Integrity
- Independently managing personally sensitive or complex undergraduate student issues, e.g., need for counseling intervention or referral to other support units on campus

When Questions or Concerns Arise

What should a TA do if it seems that a course instructor's expectations do not align with the expectations outlined in this document?

- If possible, the TA should first work toward resolution of the issue(s) by discussing any concerns with the course instructor. If the TA is not comfortable addressing concerns with the course instructor, he/she should seek guidance from his/her faculty advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies for his/her program area.
- If resolution cannot be reached through the efforts described above, the student, the Academic Advisor, and/or the Director of Graduate Studies should report the concern to both the Department Chair and the Director of Academic Services and Outreach.
- If the concern cannot be addressed at the departmental level, a formal grievance may be filed. Please see the Graduate School policy on Formal Grievances at <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships/#text> for information on how to proceed.

What should a course instructor do if it seems that a TA's performance does not align with the expectations outlined in this document?

- The course instructor should first make every attempt to resolve any misunderstandings and provide support so that the TA has an opportunity to improve his/her performance.
- If low performance persists, the faculty mentor should seek assistance from the Director of Graduate Studies for the TA's program.
- Concerns that cannot be resolved through the efforts of the Director of Graduate Studies should be referred to the Department Chair and Director of Academic Services and Outreach.

TA Agreements

Instructors should create a list of course-related duties for which the TA will be responsible, and review those duties with the TA prior to the start of classes. These agreements are intended to establish clarity with regard to the TA's duties and serve as a point of reference in the event that a question or concern arises during the semester. Duties should align with guidelines for the EDHD TA's year/semester of assistantship or the EDMS TA's assignment to the training model or graduate course, and may not exceed the number of hours associated with the assistantship.

The TA Agreement should also include a list of personal goals that have been identified by the TA and agreed upon with the course instructor. These goals should articulate specific areas of college teaching in which the TA hopes to grow and develop during his/her learning experience in the course.

Within one week of the start of classes, Instructor/TA teams must submit copies of signed agreements to the Director of Academic Services & Outreach (DASO) and the Director of Graduate Studies for the TA's program. If acceptable agreements are not submitted by the deadline, the Department Chair reserves the right to re-assign the TA to other duties. Please see Appendix B for a TA Agreement template.

Performance Reviews

Several opportunities for evaluation of TA performance and goal attainment are available in HDQM.

Required reviews. HDQM TAs must have the opportunity to engage in discussions with the course instructor about their performance in the course and the extent to which they are meeting their personal goals. Course instructors and TAs must agree on a plan for interim evaluations of the TA's performance and personal goal attainment, to occur at regular intervals across the semester. Written summaries of the meetings should be signed by the TA and the instructor. Please see Appendix C for a Performance Review template.

Course evaluations. TAs who are eligible for evaluation through the University's Course Evaluation system will be assigned a status by the Director of Academic Services and Outreach such that students in the course will be prompted to evaluate the TA at the end of the semester. When those evaluations become available, the TA may request a meeting with the course instructor to discuss trends in those evaluation data and how to best plan for future experiences in the role of TA or autonomous course instructor.

Optional Observations. With course instructor approval, TAs may invite faculty or graduate student instructors to observe their performance in any of the in-class duties listed under "Suitable Duties" sections of this document. Plans for consultation on those observations are at the discretion of the TA and the observer.

Optional Teaching Learning Transformation Center (TLTC) support. TAs are encouraged to become familiar with the resources offered by the TLTC for strengthening their performance in a course. A list of workshops, opportunities for personal consultations, certificate programs, and other services offered by this unit are available at <https://tltc.umd.edu/>.

Appendix A**Weekly Log**

| Week # | Hours Spent | Duties Performed | Running Total | Average/Week |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
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| 8 | | | | |
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| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | |
| 13 | | | | |
| 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | | |
| Final Exam Period | | | | |

Appendix B
HDQM TA Assignment Agreement
University of Maryland

Statement of Mutual Expectations for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

This GTA checklist is intended to improve communication between instructors and GTAs concerning roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Please review this checklist with each GTA at the beginning of each semester, and check all items that apply.

Name of Instructor: _____

Instructor email address: _____

Graduate teaching assistant: _____

GTA email address: _____

Course: _____

Semester/year: _____

Start Date: _____

End Date: _____

This is a:

- 10 hour a week GTA appointment
- 20 hour a week GTA appointment
- other (please specify): _____

This form is being completed by (please check one):

- The instructor only
- The GTA only
- The instructor and GTA together

Expectations regarding professionalism (check all that apply)

- Attend all regularly scheduled classes
- Arrive on time to class and meetings
- Respond promptly to emails from students and instructor
- Meet deadlines for grading and other responsibilities
- Maintain student confidentiality
- Complete UMD's 10 minute FERPA tutorial at <http://www.sis.umd.edu/ferpa>
- Demonstrate knowledge of university honor code policies, professional ethics, and other course related policies. The new student-friendly website explaining course related policies is available here: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>
- Maintain positive professional relationships with students, other GTAs/undergraduate teaching assistants (UTAs), and instructor

- Maintain engagement with classroom activities (e.g., avoiding distractions such as texting and social media)
- Ask questions when unsure of responsibilities or course content
- Demonstrate knowledge of student support services including the UMD Counseling center, writing center, and Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) support
- Communicate with instructor in a timely manner if an illness or other unavoidable absence conflicts with your GTA duties
- Other duties (please describe in space below)

Expectations regarding teaching and mentoring activities (check all that apply)

- Teach recitation/discussion/laboratory sections of course
- Attend, manage, and teach all recitation/discussion/laboratory sections as needed
- Prepare recitation/discussion/laboratory material with instructor input
- Coordinate recitation/discussion/laboratory with lectures, with instructor input
- Arrange with instructor for date and time to hold office hours. If unable to hold office hours on the prearranged date and time, immediately notify instructor to arrange for alternate accommodations for the students
- Assist with identifying underperforming students and communicate with instructors regarding these students
- Hold extra help or review sessions for students, as appropriate
- Provide corrective feedback to students in a positive and constructive manner
- Provide clear explanations of course material to students
- Supervise, train, and manage undergraduate teaching assistants in coordination with the instructor
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of course content
- Stay informed and ahead of the course schedule to anticipate and plan for upcoming assignments, exams, deadlines, etc.
- Help students stay informed and ahead of the course schedule to anticipate and plan for upcoming assignments, exams, deadlines, etc.
- Provide guest lectures
- Grade assignments and provide solutions in a timely manner
- Be available to assist with grading exams when needed
- Distribute laboratory material to students
- Other (please specify)

Expectations of GTA for supporting instructor (check all that apply)

- Manage ELMS or other course websites
- Learn to use technology or equipment used in the course
- Assist in preparation of classroom activities (class demonstrations, videos, laboratory assignments, etc.)
- Prepare and/or provide quiz questions and/or solutions
- Prepare and/or provide exam questions and/or solutions
- Maintain the grade book
- Photocopy exams and other materials in advance of class
- Coordinate ADS exams and assist with ADS accommodations
- Set up power point slides, lab equipment, or other material before class
- Other (please specify)

Expectations of instructor mentorship of the GTA (check all that apply)

- Review syllabus with TA prior to semester
- Provide clear directions in grading exams and assignments
- Mentor TA regarding teaching pedagogy
- Assist TA in developing material for guest lectures
- Provide ample advanced notice of scheduled assignments or changes to assignments
- Communicate with TA on a regular basis to discuss class
- Review UMD policies with TA
- Provide feedback to student and potential assessment of student in regards to their performance as a TA
- Mentor GTA on how to address student questions regarding exams and assignments, including grading rubrics and handling student complaints about grading
- Other (please specify in space below)

Retrieved 7/5/18 from <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships/>

TA Program Year/Semester: _____

TA's Duties

TA's Goals

Instructor: Print name & Sign/Date TA/Print name & Sign/Date

Appendix C
Performance Review Template

TA: _____

Course Instructor: _____

Semester: _____

Performance Review #: _____

Date: _____

TA's Duties

TA's Goals

Summary Evaluation

Interim/New Goals

Instructor: Print name & Sign/Date TA/Print name & Sign/Date