

To: Psychology Department GTAs

RE: Guidelines and Expectations for being a Graduate Teaching Assistant

SUMMARY:

The below outlines the Departments commitment to provide training, supervision, and feedback to each GTA. The three levels of GTA assignments are outlined with expectations for faculty supervision and GTA responsibilities.

Core Points:

- Each GTA should have a faculty supervisor and receive training and feedback each semester
- Each GTA will receive feedback and an overall performance rating by their faculty supervisor via the Departments Graduate Admin Tool at the end of each semester
- For GTAs that are Teaching Fellows, Graduate Instructor of Records, or teach for certain lab assignments (e.g., Cognitive Psychology) they should sign up for 1 credit of PSY 784, Supervised College Teaching (FA and SP only)
- Students should work with their Program Coordinators to find an appropriate Faculty supervisor prior to the start of the assignment, if one cannot be found reach out to the Department for assistance
- Students should be familiar with the GTA agreement and GTA probation documents (found on the Department website)
- Students should seek prior approval from a mentor before applying for/accepting instructor of record or teaching fellow position

Throughout this document we will refer to the following 4 levels of GTA roles:

- Classroom support TA
- Lab instructor TA
- Graduate student instructor of record
- Teaching fellow

Training

Ideally, the responsibility graduate students take for courses increases commensurate with their teaching skills:

1. Class support TA (lecture and online courses)
2. Lab instructor TA
3. Graduate student instructor of record (lecture and online courses)
4. Teaching fellow

Graduate students should be given teaching responsibilities that are appropriate for their level of training, experience and knowledge.

- It is recommended that before becoming a graduate student instructor of record, students have:
 - Been a class support TA for the course
 - and
 - Been a Lab instructor TA
- At a minimum, before becoming a graduate student instructor of record, the student should have:
 - Delivered at least one guest lecture for which they have received feedback from a faculty who taught the same course (if possible)
And, when applicable,
 - Completed the corresponding graduate course or have equivalent experience as evaluated by the faculty who teaches the course
 - Received their Master's Degree
- Preferably, taken a department-approved course in teaching/instruction (if not offered/possible other courses can also meet this requirement including those offered by TILT)

Preferably, all graduate students planning to pursue a position as a graduate student Instructor of record will attend or have attended relevant training sessions available through the department or TILT. Preference for graduate student Instructor of record positions will be given based on the number and quality of training that a student has completed, prior relevant supervised teaching experience, and the feedback received from faculty about relevant prior teaching experiences. Training in and experience with teaching about the diversity of the human experience, by intersectionalities, locally and globally, and training in and experience teaching a diversity of students will be given credit for selection to graduate student Instructor of record positions.

Supervision

Teaching Fellows

All Teaching Fellows shall be supervised by faculty with experience teaching the course.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the Teaching Fellows prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
 - advise the Teaching Fellows on the creation of the syllabus
 - educate the Teaching Fellows regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity
 - oversee the negotiation of duties between the Teaching Fellows and their Classroom support TA(s), if applicable
- Observe at least one of the Teaching Fellows' lectures and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the Teaching Fellows to
 - provide support and check in for potential issues
 - advise the Teaching Fellows with regard to the creation of exams, and educate the Teaching Fellows on procedures for evaluating exam items
 - review mid-term and end-of-semester student evaluations
 - review feedback on classroom observation(s)

Teaching Fellow Graduate Students are expected to

- Read and electronically sign the GTA agreement posted on the Graduate Admin Tool each semester
- Understand the GTA probation document and implications associated with not meeting GTA expectations
- Work with their Teaching Fellow Supervisor to adhere to the Teaching Fellow expectations and requirements
- Reach out early and often with any questions, concerns, or ways the Department can support their experience

Graduate Student Instructor of Record

All graduate-student instructors of record shall be supervised by a faculty member, preferably with experience teaching the course.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the graduate student Instructor of record prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
 - advise the graduate student Instructor of record on the creation of the syllabus

- educate the graduate student Instructor of record regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity
- oversee the negotiation of duties between the graduate student the Instructor of record and classroom support TA, if applicable
- Observe at least one of the graduate student Instructor of record's lectures and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the graduate student Instructor of record to
 - provide support and check in for potential issues
 - advise the graduate student Instructor of record with regard to the creation of assignments and exams, and educate the graduate student Instructor of record on procedures for evaluating exam items
 - review mid-term and end-of-semester feedback from students
 - review feedback on classroom observation(s)

Graduate Student Instructor of Record are expected to

- Read and electronically sign the GTA agreement posted on the Graduate Admin Tool each semester
- Understand the GTA probation document and implications associated with not meeting GTA expectations
- Work with your Program Coordinator to find a suitable Faculty Supervisor (if summer the Graduate Programming Coordinator in the Department can serve in this role)
- Register for 1 credit of PSY 784, Supervised College Teaching, when teaching during FA or SP. If teaching in summer, work with their supervisor to register for FA or SP as to avoid a summer fee
- Work with their assigned Faculty Supervisor throughout the semester
- Reach out early and often with any questions, concerns, or ways the Department can support their experience

Lab instructor TAs

All Lab instructor TAs shall be supervised by a faculty with knowledge of the lab content area. If students are assigned to the Cognitive Psychology lab that need to sign up for 1 credit of PSY 784 due to the weekly meeting time associated with that assignment.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the Lab instructor TA prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
 - advise the Lab instructor TA on the creation of the syllabus and assignments
 - educate the Lab instructor TA regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity

- Observe at least one of the lab instructor TA's class sessions (lecture, demonstration, etc) and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the Lab instructor TA to
 - provide support and check in for potential issues
 - advise the Lab instructor TA on grading procedures (e.g., written assignments, creation of exams, if applicable)
 - review mid-term and end-of-semester student evaluations

Lab Instructor TAs are expected to

- Read and electronically sign the GTA agreement posted on the Graduate Admin Tool each semester
- Understand the GTA probation document and implications associated with not meeting GTA expectations
- Register for 1 credit of PSY 784, Supervised College Teaching, when teaching during FA or SP
 - If teaching in summer, work with supervisor to register for FA or SP as to avoid a summer fee
- Work with their assigned Faculty Supervisor throughout the semester
- Reach out early and often with any questions, concerns, or ways the Department can support their experience

Class Support TAs

All class support TAs shall be supervised by a faculty member who is the instructor of record for the course, or the supervisor for a graduate-student instructor of record.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the class support TA support prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
 - advise the class support TA on their responsibilities regarding grading assignments and class attendance, if applicable
 - educate the class support TA regarding pertinent university policies (e.g., sexual harassment and academic integrity) and/or direct them to where these policies exist
 - Faculty supervisors should be aware of the resources provided to all GTAs on the Department website: [Graduate Program – Department of Psychology | CSU \(colostate.edu\)](https://colostate.edu/graduate-program)
- In order to promote the class support TA's professional development, class support TAs should be encouraged to:
 - help create exams and evaluate exam items, if applicable
 - give 1-2 guest lectures to be observed by the faculty supervisor and for which the TA receives developmental feedback. We acknowledge that this may not be practical in courses which employ multiple class support TAs. In this case, alternative arrangements should be made for students who wish to give a guest lecture.

Class Support TAs are expected to

- Read and electronically sign the GTA agreement posted on the Graduate Admin Tool each semester
- Understand the GTA probation document and implications associated with not meeting GTA expectations
- Work with their assigned Faculty Supervisor throughout the semester
- Reach out early and often with any questions, concerns, or ways the Department can support their experience

Feedback

Research has shown that ‘previous teaching experience and feedback are important to the teaching outcome of graduate teaching assistants. But unguided experience usually leads to the same or less effective behaviors as a result of poor or non-existent supervision’ (Shannon et al., 1998; as cited in Huang, Strawderman, & Usher, 2013).

- As described under supervision, all Teaching Fellows, graduate student instructors of record, lab instructor TAs and class support TAs should be provided with the appropriate level of supervision/observation based on their assignment. Supervisors should provide developmental feedback to the graduate student each semester. Feedback should be delivered in writing and explained in a face-to-face meeting with the student.

Feedback can include:

1. the date(s), time(s), and places(s) of the actual observation(s)
2. the name of the class, the instructor, and the number of students
3. a brief summary of the goals of the class
4. a careful description of what went on in class
5. a categorical rating (satisfactory/needs additional development/unsatisfactory)
6. suggestions for improvement
7. summary comments and a descriptive assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning during the observation period that is appropriate to the student’s developmental level

Feedback Recording Mechanism:

GTA feedback will be recorded/maintained on the department graduate admin tool. It is recommended that students check the tool and communicate with their supervisor at the end of each semester.

Where: <https://cnsdrake.natsci.colostate.edu/gradmin>

There is a funding tab associated with each student that contains the following information:

- supervising instructor
- if the GTA position was supervised for the semester
- GTA can upload the syllabus

- ability to upload notes (one private and one the student can see)
- choice of a quick rating system (satisfactory/needs additional development/unsatisfactory)

GTA Feedback Survey:

This mechanism was created by the Graduate Representative Group in 2022 as a tool to gather information from students on their experience with their GTA role.

What: GTA Feedback Survey

Who: Any GTAs

Why: To give GTAs a means to share feedback on experiences with GTA responsibilities and supervisors

This survey was crafted by the Department Grad Rep Group (composed of a student from each of the PhD programs). This is a voluntary survey. The data will be deidentified (as needed) before sharing findings with the Head of the Department. If you can list what course you are working on this will maximize the Department's ability to make any necessary changes. If you have questions, please reach out to Sara Anne (sara.tompkins@colostate.edu).

https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9BImvoa5qUZ3pxc