Guidelines for Teaching Assistants

Pratt School of Engineering
Duke University

Presented by Associate Dean Monty Reichert
August 2012
(originated by Dianne Hendricks)
Index

• pg 4,5  PhD TA Requirements & Contacts
• pg 6  Teaching Lab Contacts
• pg 7-11  Basic Requirements & Responsibilities
• pg 9  Duke Community Standard
• pg 10  Cheating
• pg 12-17  Safety Issues
• pg 18-25  Interactions with Students
• pg 26,27  Grading
• pg 28  FERPA
• pg 29  ABET
• pg 30-33  Student Absences, Missing Assignments
• pg 34  Students with Disabilities
• pg 35-38  Concerns about Students Well-Being
• pg 39  Sakai Software
• pg 40-45  Teaching Tips
title: "Reasons for TA'ing" - originally published 10/17/2008
PhD Teaching Assistant Requirement

- As part of your Ph.D. education, you are required to TA two courses.

- You will communicate with the Director of Graduate Studies (for ECE) or Director of Graduate Studies Administrator (DGSA) (for BME, CEE, & MEMS) to fulfill this requirement.

- If you are interested in TAing a particular course, contact the DGS (for ECE) or DGSA (for BME, CEE, & MEMS).

- Your adviser may expect or want you to TA his/her course, but ALL TA assignments MUST be approved by the DGS (for ECE) or DGSA (for BME, CEE, & MEMS).
# Grad Program Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biomedical Engineering</th>
<th>Civil and Environmental Engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Barbour, DGSA</td>
<td>Ruby Nell Carpenter, DGSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:kathy.barbour@duke.edu">kathy.barbour@duke.edu</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:rubync@duke.edu">rubync@duke.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 919-660-5132</td>
<td>Phone: 919-660-5200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office: 1393 CIEMAS</td>
<td>Office: 121 Hudson Hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanical Engineering</th>
<th>Electrical Engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Parrish, DGSA</td>
<td>Samantha Morton, DGSA, on leave, contact Stacy Tantum, Associate DGS for the interim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:kparrish@duke.edu">kparrish@duke.edu</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:stacy.tantum@duke.edu">stacy.tantum@duke.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 919-660-5310</td>
<td>Office: 110 Hudson Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office: 144 Hudson Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Lab Contacts

**Electrical Engineering**
Kip Coonley  
kip.coonley@duke.edu 660-5186  
Justin Miles  
justin.miles@duke.edu 660-5240

**Mechanical Engineering**
Nikhil Bumb  
nb72@duke.edu 660-5161  
Pat McGuire  
pm56@duke.edu 660-5261

**Biomedical Engineering**
Matt Brown  
matt.brown@duke.edu 660-8817  
Marcus Henderson  
mhh@duke.edu 660-5191  
Maggie Mbugua  
mm428@duke.edu 660-8817

**Civil and Environmental Engineering**
Interim: Dr. Joseph Nadeau  
nadeau@duke.edu 660-5216  
Dwina Martin  
dwina@duke.edu 660-5481
Basic Requirements of TAs

• Understand the instructor’s specific expectations of TAs before semester
• Perform all duties in a timely and professional manner
• Become familiar with course material
• Know safety and emergency procedures
• Acquire appropriate safety training or training for specific skills
• Interact with students in an appropriate and respectful manner
• Attend all preparatory sessions
• Uphold the Duke Community Standard
Communicate with the instructor

Be sure that you understand the course instructor’s expectations of TAs before the semester begins.

Verify that you understand the course policies stated on the instructor’s syllabus.

Know the best way to contact instructor with any questions or concerns.

Discuss how to handle inappropriate behavior by students (e.g., if a student is extremely disruptive he/she will be asked to leave the lab and will get a zero for that lab report).

Report any problems during the semester to instructor.
Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to principles of honesty, fairness, and respect for others. Students share with faculty and staff the responsibility for promoting a climate of integrity. As citizens of this community, students are expected to adhere to these fundamental values at all times, in both their academic and non-academic endeavors.

• I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
• I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
• I will act if the Standard is compromised.

(http://www.integrity.duke.edu/standard.html)

Report any violations of the Duke Community Standard to the instructor.
TAs are often the first to identify cheating by students

• In 2011-2012 year, 43 Pratt students (grad & u-grad) were referred to their Judicial Board for possible academic dishonesty.

• As TA, you will see everyone’s lab reports and be likely to recognize copying or unlikely lab results.

• The first day of lab, clarify appropriate and unacceptable collaboration, with examples of each (and consequences).

• Do not confront a student with your suspicions. Discuss them with the course instructor.
Possible TA responsibilities include:

- Holding office hours and/or being available to students by appointment
- Running lab or recitation sessions (including brief introductory lectures)
- Attending preparatory sessions for labs
- Attending course lectures
- Grading (pre-lab quizzes, lab reports, exams, etc.)
- Maintain a separate record of selected grades for ABET review
- Posting course material to Sakai or other course website
- Maintaining clear records of students’ grades
- Designing homework problems, lab report questions, exam questions, etc.
- Tracking student attendance
- Attending regular meetings with instructor
- Presenting review sessions before exams
- Presenting a guest lecture
Safety and Emergency Procedures

Be sure to cover these procedures on the first day of class!

Post safety/emergency procedures to Sakai and give the information to students in a handout.

Identify the location of safety features (eye wash station, emergency shower, fire extinguisher) nearest your lab or classroom.

When appropriate, be sure students wear closed toe shoes, lab coats, gloves, etc.

NO food or drink in any lab!
Report all safety incidents to teaching lab administrator and/or course instructor
Emergency Contacts

Duke University Police:
684-2444

Durham Police:
911
In case of evacuation...

Know the appropriate evacuation route from your lab or classroom.

Get everyone out to safety.

Depending on the lab location, the meeting places are the lawn between Hudson Hall & CIEMAS, the lawn between Teer and LSRC, or the lobby of LSRC in bad weather.

If possible, turn off electronics, be sure chemicals are secure, and close (but do not lock) door before leaving lab or classroom.

AS THE TA, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

• Keeping the students in a group at the meeting place.

• Knowing the number of students present in class that day and the number of students who safely evacuated the building. This information is imperative for rescue personnel.
When a student is injured or sick

Duke University Police:
684-2444

- dispatch Duke EMT and/or Duke Police
- can escort sick student home or to Student Health Center
Security of teaching labs

• TAs are given the door code to the lab. Do NOT share this code with anyone else or let students see you enter the code.

• Be sure that all electronics are off and all chemicals are stored properly at the end of lab.

• Be sure that windows and doors are securely locked.

• Remember that this is a teaching space, not a stockroom for students or TAs! Do not give supplies to students for non-course projects, and do not take supplies for your own use.
TA Conduct with Students: Learn Names!

Learn names at the beginning of the semester to facilitate good communication and rapport with students.

A class roster with student pictures is available from STORM. To obtain a roster, contact the instructor of the course or your department office or DGSA.

Always bring a roster to class for attendance.
TA Conduct with Students: Communication

- Clearly state how and when students can contact you. Provide your email and campus phone information, but not your personal phone number. (Check the Duke directory to see what information is available to students.)

- Let students know acceptable times to contact you and how quickly they can expect you to reply.
Student and TA: Roles and Expectations

• At the beginning of the semester, it is very important that you state in detail what students can expect from you as their TA and what kind of behavior and performance you expect from students.

• To avoid any confusion, give students a handout and/or post this information on Sakai.
The first day of class: Discuss general course information

- When and how students can contact TA
- TA office hours (time and place) or availability
- Student attendance policy
- Assignment due dates, where to turn in assignments
- Late policy
- Individual work vs. group effort
- Format of assignments
- Grading policy
- This information should be available for students in writing (Sakai, handout, instructor’s syllabus)
TA conduct sets the tone for student behavior and performance

Engage students and always act in a respectful and professional manner.

Establish behavior and performance expectations on the first day of class. Provide this information in writing.

Classroom Management Tips:
• Do not allow students to disrupt class by using cell phones, checking email, listening to distracting music, etc.
• Be sure that all students are participating.
TA Conduct with Students: Professionalism

- Be prepared and on time
- Demonstrate respectful and ethical behavior at all times
- Interact with all students in a fair and consistent manner
- Provide constructive criticism in a respectful manner
- Do not speak poorly of other TAs, students or instructors
- Maintain confidentiality of student grades
- Apply course policies and expectations consistently
- Grade in a timely manner
- Be available to students as promised
- Report any infractions of Duke Community Standard to instructor
Be actively involved with students during lab or discussion sessions!

• Circulate among students; ask questions to be sure they understand the lab technique or concepts

• Identify students who are struggling and give guidance when needed or requested

• Do not conduct personal business during class

• Do not check email, surf online, read newspaper, etc.
…but be careful when interacting with students outside of class!

• Do NOT date students

• Do not behave in a manner that can be perceived as inappropriate
  http://www.duke.edu/web/equity/harassment.html

• Facebook Friend Request?
Grading

Consistently follow all grading policies established by instructor.

Grade assignments and return them to students as soon as possible. Let the students know your estimated grading time.

When students are given an assignment, provide grading rubric in writing. This is helpful for both students and TAs:

• allows students to know what is expected
• ensures TA fairness and consistency in grading
• serves as a reference so TA can address any student questions or disputes about grades
FERPA rules!

Students’ grades are confidential.

Family Educational Right to Privacy Act.

- Keep graded assignments secure until you hand them to the particular student.
- If possible, mark grades on the second page rather than the top page.
- More information is on the Pratt TA training web page.

http://www.pratt.duke.edu/grad/students/ta-training
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology

ABET

ABET is an organization that accredits engineering programs. To prepare for the ABET site visit, you will be asked to help collect ABET assessment data. Your tasks may include:

• Collect students’ grades for selected problems in exams, homework, and lab reports
• Maintaining a separate record of ABET assessment grades and problems
• For selected students, making copies of all the graded work
• Ask your course instructor which assessments should be collected for ABET review
When a student misses a lab

• You may contact a student who misses his/her lab, but it is the student’s responsibility to provide a reason for missing the lab and arrange a make-up lab according to the instructor’s policy.

• If a student misses a lab for a legitimate reason, the TA should schedule a lab make-up at the student and TA’s earliest convenience.

• If a student knows in advance that he/she will miss a lab, encourage the student to make up the lab in another section if possible.

• Note: for many classes, students must perform ALL labs and turn in all lab reports in order to pass the course.

• If a student has not contacted you about making up a lab or has missed more than one lab, contact the instructor.
When a student misses an assignment

The Pratt School of Engineering policies for missing graded assignments can be found at:

http://www.pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/policies/3486

Note that the policies are for missing graded assignments, not for missing class where no graded assignment is submitted.

Acceptable reasons for missing assignments:

Religious holiday, illness, extraordinary personal circumstance, an event in which the student is representing Duke University (e.g. athletics)
Missing Assignments: Short-Term Illness

In accordance with the revised Duke University Standard, students *must* use the official STINF form to inform their instructors about their illness. The TA and instructor should not make any accommodations for students unless the official form is used.

Note that the student may send the form to the instructor but not the TA. If in doubt, verify that the instructor was notified.

(http://www.pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/policies/3531)
Missing Assignments: 
Dean’s Excuses

Dean's Excuses are not issued for missing classes, only for missing graded assignments. They do not exempt students from completing assignments, but allow students to make special arrangements with instructors for submitting assignments.

Students may obtain a Dean’s Excuse from an academic dean for missing graded assignments for the following reasons:

• Long-term illness
• Critical family or personal circumstances (e.g. Mother in hospital, but not for weddings, vacations, job interviews, etc.)
• Event in which the student is representing Duke (presenting at a conference)

When possible, the Dean’s Excuse should be obtained before the assignment is due.

(http://www.pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/policies/3492)
Accommodating students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations should contact the Student Disability Access Office at (919) 668-1267 or go to:
http://www.access.duke.edu/students/index.php

Information for instructors regarding policies for students with disabilities:
http://www.access.duke.edu/students/faculty.php

Note: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must provide documentation and should discuss appropriate accommodations with the instructor of the course. The instructor should let the TA know of any accommodations needed for a student.
Addressing concerns about a student’s well-being

If you are concerned about a student’s behavior, physical or emotional health, academic performance or academic integrity, please contact both the instructor of the course and one of Pratt’s Undergraduate Academic Deans.

Undergrad. Education
Linda Franzoni
315 Teer
919-660-5386
franzoni@duke.edu

BME & ECE
Connie Simmons
314 Teer
919-660-5386
csimmons@duke.edu

CEE & MEMS
Lupita Temiquel-McMillian
312 Teer
919-660-5573
lupita.mcmillian@duke.edu
Giving advice to students

- Students may approach TAs about topics that are not related to the course such as class registration, choice of major, career advice, or even help with personal issues. It is your choice whether to engage in such conversations with students.

- DO NOT get involved in any conversation or relationship with a student that makes you or the student uncomfortable. Dating students is inappropriate.

- If you choose to discuss such topics with students, be sure to clarify that you are giving your opinion based only on your experience or observations. Direct students to campus resources when possible.
Directing students to resources on campus

Duke University Student Affairs
student groups, career center, counseling and psychological services (CAPS), residence life, mediation, and student health center:
http://www.studentaffairs.duke.edu

Duke University Academic Resource Center (tutoring and academic help):
http://web.duke.edu/arc

Comprehensive list of policies and procedures for Pratt undergraduates:
http://www.pratt.duke.edu/policies-procedures
To teach is to learn twice.

~Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, 1842
Helpful Tips for TAs

**Sakai Workshop Sessions**
To learn more about using Sakai, go to Duke Center for Instructional Technology:
http://cit.duke.edu/events/sakai/

Convert files to pdf format before posting online. Free conversion software is available online, such as http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/

Properly cite sources, do not break copyright laws, etc.
Helpful Tips for TAs

To communicate effectively and engage students:

Begin by asking if there are any questions to assess student preparedness and basic knowledge levels

Be sure students understand by asking them questions

Involve students in discussion

Be prepared to explain concepts in more than one way

Stay on track – if a student asks a tangential question, discuss after class
Helpful Tips for TAs

To encourage participation by all students:

Ask volunteers to show how to solve a problem on the whiteboard.

After a TA or student provides an answer, ask other students to rephrase the answer in their own words.

Present a question and start the answer, then call on a student by name to finish the answer.

When students give a partially correct answer, encourage them by saying that they are on the right track and paraphrase the correct aspects of their answer. Then ask if they can answer the rest of the question.

Do not let a student dominate the discussion.
Helpful Tips for TAs

**Different learning styles:**

Recognize that individuals have different learning styles (VARK - visual, auditory, read/write, kinesthetic). See: http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp

Identify your own learning style and capitalize on this strength.

Think of ways to teach students using different learning styles. This will help you reach more students and will also improve your teaching abilities.
Helpful Tips for TAs

How to respond when you don’t know the answer:

Be honest! Say “I don’t know”

Suggest resources for student

Find an answer and get back to student

Don’t be nervous. Students appreciate honesty and don’t expect TAs to know everything.
Helpful Tips for TAs

How to manage inappropriate behavior:
Tell students that a topic or behavior is inappropriate for class: “Let’s keep on track” or “That is more than you need to share with the rest of the class.”

Decline to answer a personal question that makes you uncomfortable.

As a TA, you should not be subjected to disrespectful or disruptive behavior. Deal with inappropriate behavior as discussed with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Report issues or concerns to the instructor.
Resources for College Teaching

The University of Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning
(http://teaching.uchicago.edu)

The Chronicle of Higher Education
(http://chronicle.com/section/Home/5)

National Science Teachers Association
(http://www.nsta.org)

http://collegeteachingtips.com
Have a great semester!!!