

GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS (UTAs)

College Curriculum Council

updated September 2009

1. **ACADEMIC PREPARATION.** UTAs will normally have taken, and excelled in, the course for which they are serving as assistants. Faculty should contact the dean's office to ascertain that the proposed student is in good standing, and that he or she has not violated any of the University's codes of conduct.
2. **TRAINING.** Departments must provide adequate training to make UTAs aware of their responsibilities as teachers, and their power over other students. Faculty should arrange regular weekly meetings to clarify course content and expectations. UTAs should understand relevant departmental and University regulations.
3. **TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES and GRADING.** The Faculty Rules and Regulations (IV, F) includes the following policy statement about UTAs:

Teaching Responsibilities: The class hours required for any course should not be taught by undergraduate assistants. Supplementary classes, such as voluntary discussion sections or tutorial work, may be taught by undergraduate assistants who are directly supervised by the faculty member in charge of the course. Such supervision shall usually consist of frequent meetings with the undergraduate assistants to discuss pedagogical matters and/or occasional attendance at discussions led by undergraduate assistants. The direction of laboratory sessions, field trips and projects by undergraduate teaching assistants is permissible, provided such individuals do not bear primary responsibility for any formal instruction.

Evaluation and Grading Evaluation (and hence all grading), is the exclusive responsibility of appointed faculty members. Recommendations on evaluations and grades by undergraduate assistants may be appropriate, provided these recommendations are adequately reviewed and judged by the responsible faculty members. The faculty member should re-evaluate work appraised by undergraduate assistants if asked to do so by any student.

As a general rule, UTAs should not be asked to grade subjective examinations or papers without extensive faculty oversight, nor should they evaluate or supervise the work of friends.

4. **OFFICE HOURS.** UTAs should schedule regular office hours to enable students in the class to meet with them easily. Departments should make space available for this purpose.
5. **WORKLOAD and COMPENSATION:** Faculty need to guard against overworking UTAs. Brown students are zealous volunteers and teachers, and UTAs have to find a balance between their teaching and their academic work. Faculty should give assistants adequate time to complete grading or any other assignment. UTAs will be paid at a reasonable hourly rate and should expect to work no more than 7 - 10 hours per week. (*Note to Department Managers: this expenditure must be reported using the subcode dedicated for undergraduate assistants.*)
6. **EVALUATION.** All UTAs have a right to receive evaluation of their work, from both the professor and the students in the class. Departments must make such feedback available to teaching assistants at the end of the semester.
7. **RISK MANAGEMENT.** UTAs should not be responsible for high-risk laboratory experiments or other similar exercises (such as a class field trip). UTAs should also not be involved in the investigation of academic misconduct of fellow students: if a TA suspects another student of being in violation of the academic code, he or she should report this suspicion to the faculty member, who will take charge of the investigation.