

TATTO Duties and Responsibilities for GDBBS TAs & Course Directors

Preamble

Under the TATTO program set forth by the Graduate School, all Ph.D. students must serve as a Teaching Assistant for one semester as partial fulfillment of a requirement for completion of their degree program. Staff members in the Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences are responsible for assigning students to appropriate courses. Every effort is made to reconcile the needs of the course directors and the input of the DGSs with the preferences and skills of individual students, such that the experience is a rewarding one for students and faculty alike. It is also their responsibility to ensure that students are treated in accordance with the policies set forth in this document, and that student performance in the TA assignment is adequate.

This document is intended to clarify Division policies regarding the responsibilities and expectations of GDBBS TAs. It is meant to inform Division students and their mentors about what can legitimately be expected of a TA. Course directors will then have realistic expectations for their TAs and be able to make arrangements to ensure that their courses run smoothly.

The Teaching Assistantship

In fulfillment of the Teaching Assistantship requirement of TATTO, students in the GDBBS will assist a faculty course director in the teaching of a graduate, undergraduate, medical, or allied health course for a period of one semester.

Duties appropriate for a GDBBS TA

The precise duties involved may vary from course to course and may include attending lectures, conducting review sessions, tutoring, leading discussion groups, giving lectures, or serving as a laboratory instructor. Duties not directly involving instruction, such as administering and grading exams and preparing reagents for laboratory exercises, are part of the teaching experience and therefore may legitimately be given to a TA. Ideally, if a TA is asked to grade exams or tests, he or she should also participate in preparing the exam questions. In any event, the time spent in these non-instructional duties may not constitute more than 25% of the total time spent in the teaching assistantship.

A GDBBS TA may **not** be asked to perform menial assignments, such as photocopying, that could be accomplished by a work-study student, secretarial assistant, or photocopy service. Course directors who need extensive unskilled assistance should obtain it elsewhere. The only instance in which a TA should be expected to do photocopying work is if the material is needed for his/her own lecture, tutorial, or review session.

Time Commitment

Course directors are reminded that GDBBS students are expected to maintain an active research effort in addition to their TA assignment and any classes they may have to take. It would be counterproductive to try to establish an absolute limit on the time we can expect students to commit to their TA assignment in a given week. However, the recommended guideline for time a TA spends on all duties associated with his/her assignment (including preparation time) should not exceed 10 hours a week averaged over the entire semester. Course directors who need assistance for greater blocks of time should request more than one TA. On the other hand, the Division and the Graduate School view the TA assignment as an integral part of the student's education. Therefore, it is expected that the assignment will be given significant priority in the student's schedule.

Grievances

The above guidelines are meant to be flexible and to help establish a basis of understanding between the TA and course director. To prevent dissatisfaction, it is important that they reach agreement (in detail) before the course starts on what the student's duties will be. If problems arise during the assignment, the TA and course director should attempt to resolve them by discussion, using this document as a guide. If, after discussion, the student feels that the assigned duties are inappropriate or excessive, or if the course director is dissatisfied with the student's performance or commitment, the problem should be taken to GDBBS Director.

If student performance as a TA in a course is judged to have been inadequate, the GDBBS Director may elect to reassign the student to serve again as a TA in a subsequent semester. On the other hand, if it becomes apparent that students are being required to perform inappropriate duties or spend excessive time on a TA assignment, the GDBBS Director may consider refusing to grant a TA to that course in subsequent semesters. This action will only be taken if prior attempts to resolve the problem in consultation with the course director have failed.