

INFORMATION FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Integrative Biology is home to introductory level biology courses such as Animal Biology (Zoology/Biology 101), Animal Biology Lab (Zoology/Biology 102), Introductory Biology I (Zoology/Biology/Botany 151/153) and Introductory Biology II (Zoology/Biology/Botany 152) that serve over [30 bioscience majors](#) at UW-Madison campus. Department of Integrative Biology employs over 130 teaching assistants per academic year. This is a clear indication of how valuable the teaching assistants are to our teaching mission. Our TAs come from all across campus and to navigate the complex landscape of our campus we developed this document to help you find answers to your questions.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

The Department of Integrative Biology hires graduate students from across campus. Some with an extensive background in biology some with a more limited background. We have the obligation to prepare our TAs for the classroom. Each semester, we design workshops and training sessions to help both new and experienced TAs. Each training session aims to form a sense of community amongst TAs and provides a venue for returning, experienced TAs to share their experiences with new TAs to prepare them for the classroom.

In addition to the training sessions the department offers, there are a few TA training events on campus. A list of all TA training sessions are below. Additional information, including registration information and session dates and times can be found on the Department of Integrative Biology website: Graduate Program > [TA Resources](#).

Graduate Assistants' Equity Workshops: These workshops are REQUIRED for all graduate students who may be appointed as a TA for more than one semester.

Communications B Training: If you are assigned to teach Introductory Biology 151 or 152 you will need to complete the Comm B training. This training will prepare TAs for writing intensive courses such as Introductory Biology II (Zoology/Biology/Botany 152). This training session requires registration.

College of Letters and Science TA Training: L&S TA training presents the perfect opportunity to meet with TAs from other departments and learn from Teaching Fellow recipients of the current year. This TA training is mainly for new TAs but experienced TAs are also encouraged to attend.

International Students and SPEAK Test Requirement

Per UW System policy non-native English speakers are required to demonstrate proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned classroom duties as teaching assistants. Your

department will decide whether you, as an international student, need to take the SPEAK test and schedule it for you.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

[UW Delta Teaching Program](#) is dedicated to integrating research, teaching, and learning. The Delta Program in Research, Teaching and Learning promotes the development of a future national faculty in the natural and social sciences, engineering, and mathematics that is committed to implementing and advancing effective teaching practices for diverse student audiences as part of their professional careers. Many graduate students with interest in excelling in teaching involve in the Delta Program workshops and courses.

[Teaching and Learning Symposium](#) is a great way for all those who are interested in building a career in teaching. This event takes place on campus at the end of each spring semester and is free.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) of 1974, as amended – is a federal law that governs the privacy of student educational records, access to those records, and disclosure of information from them. These rules apply to TAs as graduate students but also to TAs as instructors. TAs need to be aware of what they can and cannot share about their students. Please see, http://registrar.wisc.edu/ferpa_key_terms.htm for more information.

Enrollment Requirements

To hold a teaching assistant appointment, you must enroll in classes. If you do not have to maintain full time status, minimum enrollment for TAs is 2 credits (3 credits for dissertators) during the fall and spring semesters. If you have be full time due to loan deferment or immigration status, etc. non-dissertator TAs with at least 33.33% must be enrolled for 6 credits, or those who hold an appointment of at least 50% must be enrolled for 4 credits. Dissertator TAs are considered full-time with 3 credits directly related to their dissertation. Maximum enrollment for PAs and TAs is 15 credits during the fall and spring semesters. All courses graduate students enroll must be 300-level or above and graded. For comprehensive information please see the [Graduate School website](#).

Appointment Levels

Teaching Assistants with no prior teaching experiences are appointed as standard TAs. Those who are dissertators with at least two semesters of teaching experience are appointed as Senior TAs. The only difference between the two appointments is the pay.

TA Performance

Department of Integrative Biology works with teaching assistants to help them reach their full potential as instructors. If the faculty instructor or the coordinators see problems with the TA performance, these will be addressed after the TA evaluations. TAs will receive support and feedback to improve their performance. Well performing TAs are valuable assets to our department and we'll reward their hard work with rehiring and award nominations.

Submitting Grades

It is **imperative** that all TAs submit grades that they kept track of to either the faculty instructor or the course coordinators in a timely manner. This is usually done in a format that is defined by the instructor or the coordinator. If you have any difficulty, consult with your instructor or coordinator or ask other TAs for assistance. Final grades are due no later than 96 hours after the final examination. Please discuss the '**incomplete**' policy with the instructor/coordinator.

BENEFITS

There are several benefits to being a Teaching Assistant. All benefits listed below can be discussed with the Department of Integrative Biology HR and Payroll Manager Carol Cooley (145 Noland Hall, cacooley@wisc.edu) Additional information with links to the UW-Madison Benefits website and all the forms can be found in the links below:

[Graduate Student Benefit Information and Forms](#)

[Benefit Seminars](#)

Health Insurance

Graduate employees have a choice of several HMOs in the Dane County area as well as a Standard Plan (allows you to see any doctor of your choice, etc.) The insurance includes some limited dental coverage. There is a monthly premium taken from your paycheck, which is set by the State of Wisconsin. Note: Plans change their rates every year and the cost could change yearly. It is possible to change plans each year in October.

Tuition Waiver

Any TA with an appointment of 33.3% or greater is entitled to have their tuition waived. Thus, if you are employed by the department, you should only have to pay segregated ("seg") fees. You can see the [Registrar's website](#) for more detailed information about segregated fees. (Be sure to choose "Graduate" under student career.)

Sick Leave

The contract with the University gives TAs sick leave of six days per semester, not more than 12 days per year. If you need to miss teaching your section(s) because of illness or injury (yours or someone in your immediate family), you can choose to use this sick leave. Ordinarily, especially for short illnesses, instead of taking sick leave teaching assistants will find another TA who is

teaching the same course or have experience in teaching the course to cover for their absences. Under this arrangement the TA will fulfill duties at a different time.

However, you should be aware that the option of taking sick leave exists. If you need to take sick leave, which cannot be arranged in advance, contact the course instructor/course coordinator as soon as possible. Taking sick leave does not require you to find a substitute. However, you should notify the TA Supervisor as soon as possible and provide assistance to identify a substitute. **Canceling class is not an option.** If approved, those who are covering for a TA on sick leave are eligible for compensation. To discuss this, first contact your course instructor/coordinator. They will work with Nazan Gillie and Carol Cooley.

If you need to miss classes due to a reason other than being sick (e.g. attending a conference, field trip for a class or a must go on a research trip), you need to provide your course instructor/coordinator with a coverage plan at the beginning of the semester. Canceling classes is not acceptable.

Other Benefits

The teaching contract gives students other financial benefits, which are rarely taken advantage of by graduate students but are definitely available to those who want them. They include Supplemental Dental insurance, Vision Insurance, Domestic Partner benefits, Employee Reimbursement Accounts (also called Flex or Medical Spending accounts), life insurance, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. If you are interested in these options, please consult with the Department Payroll/Benefits specialist, Carol Cooley (cacooley@wisc.edu).

DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES

Audio-Visual Equipment

All teaching labs are equipped with an AV projector. Some courses such as the Introductory Biology courses, have projectors on carts for rooms that do not have permanently mounted AV equipment. If you are teaching in a room that does not have an LCD project, you may check one out from the department office (145 Noland Hall).

Copying

Introductory Biology 151/152/153 TA's and instructors should use the copier located on the second floor of Noland Hall. All other department TAs and instructors have access to the department copier located in 151 Noland Hall. Visit the department office (145 Noland Hall) to obtain your copier code.

TA email list

The department maintains a listserv for all TAs within the department. This listserv uses the email address you provided in your TA application. To change to a different email address,

please contact Nazan Gillie (atilla@wisc.edu). It is important to have the most current and frequently checked email on this list to receive important announcements.

Mailboxes

If you would like to have a mailbox in Noland Hall, send a request to Nazan Gillie (atilla@wisc.edu). At the end of the semester, you are responsible for cleaning out the mailbox.

Reserving Rooms

To reserve classrooms for review sessions, makeup exams, or any other instructional purpose, please contact Nazan Gillie (atilla@wisc.edu). You need to request rooms at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned event. Room reservations are generally confirmed one week in advance of the event. The faculty instructor of the course or the coordinators request rooms. Your faculty instructor may ask you to request exam and review rooms.

Safety

Always be aware of the safety of yourself and the students. If anybody is hurt or injured, call 911. We are fortunate enough to be close to several good hospitals. Know your way around and how to evacuate the building (look at the signs by the elevators to know where to evacuate). In your teaching lab or the classroom, make sure you know where the nearest fire extinguisher is, learn how to use it. In case there is a campus lock down, make sure to explain the situation to your students, remain calm. Always remember, you are the leader in the room. In case of a shooting or any other kind of violent incident, close and block the door. Stay clear from doors and windows. For more information about safety, please explore [Environment, Health & Safety](#) website.