



The Graduate School TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

Teaching Assistantships provide students with educational and professional benefits by enhancing their pedagogical skills. While departments, faculty, and students benefit from the services provided by teaching assistants (TAs), the rationale for supporting teaching assistants through merit awards in the Graduate School is centered on the role the experience plays in students' professional and educational development. Students holding Teaching Assistantships devote their time to a combined program of study and instructional activities. The merit award received by teaching assistants is in recognition of their service to the university and to further support their learning.

Depending on the student's experience and departmental needs, a Teaching Assistantship consists of a graduate student either serving as an instructor of record/primary instructor for a course or serving as a teaching assistant to a faculty instructor for a course. In the latter role, typical activities include:

- Attending lectures
- Reading syllabus material
- Grading course assignments
- Holding office hours
- Working with students in a laboratory class
- Leading discussion groups
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Proctoring examinations
- Teaching an occasional class
- Preparing instructional material

In either role, a student holding a Teaching Assistantship must receive semester-long guidance from a mentor -- either the faculty instructor for the course or, in the case of graduate students serving as teachers of record/primary instructors, an assigned faculty mentor. The mentoring structure supports the pedagogical and professional development component of the Teaching Assistantship experience.

Restriction on Multiple Awards

The Graduate School does not permit students to hold simultaneously more than one full assistantship or fellowship. In addition, the Graduate School does not permit students to hold a full assistantship or fellowship and hold an hourly paid position at Loyola during the academic year.

Hours and Period of Appointment

Engagement in instructional activities should average between 16 and 19.5 hours per week. Given the instructional rhythm of a semester, there will be some variation in the actual number of hours spent on instructional activities per week. Faculty mentoring TAs should develop a general plan of action with their TAs to plot out and monitor the number of hours spent over the course of the semester.

During the Fall and/or Spring semesters, the University classifies teaching assistants as full-time students and they are expected to serve in this role for the sixteen weeks of the academic semester. Students cannot be asked to perform the duties of the Teaching Assistantships during University holidays. There may be exceptional circumstances where Teaching Assistantship activities must be conducted during University holidays/closures and/or immediately prior to or after the end of a semester/session and those tasks cannot be delegated to other individuals. In such circumstances, the equivalent amount of compensatory time away from the assistantship position on a non-holiday weekday during the semester/session must be arranged in exchange. In addition, teaching assistants should be made aware by their mentor prior to the start of the assistantship appointment of the schedule for the assistantship position, be informed of the amount of compensatory time away, and be able to participate in the determination of the schedule for that compensatory time away.

Department Pedagogical Instruction

The Graduate School expects all departments to provide teaching assistants with teaching instruction. This may occur in a formal course (with a course number) or in an intensive or year-long seminar that is noted on each student's transcript

as a milestone. In addition, the Graduate School provides a self-directed online basics course for all teaching assistants that can be accessed by contacting gradschool@luc.edu.

Assessment

All teaching assistants, including those serving as teachers of record/primary instructors and those assisting a faculty instructor, should be given formative and summative feedback by their faculty mentor while serving in this role. It is the responsibility of the faculty mentor to provide constructive feedback on a regular basis over the course of the semester. Each teaching assistant should be assessed in writing at the conclusion of each semester, and include a discussion about their strengths, weaknesses, and goals for improvement. This assessment should be based on the observation of the TA in action.

English Proficiency

All teaching assistants with native languages other than American English are required to take an English Proficiency test on campus during the week before school begins. Based on the results of this test, teaching assistants may be required to take one or two ESL courses during their first semester at Loyola. This requirement is designed to insure the ability of teaching assistants to communicate effectively in spoken and written English.

Accessibility

As full-time student trainees, teaching assistants on merit awards from the Graduate School may seek reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities that impact their performance as Teaching Assistants from the Student Accessibility Center.

Terms of Renewal of Position

Assistants are required to keep a minimum 3.0 GPA (each semester as well as cumulatively), make progress toward their degree, and perform assistantship duties in an acceptable manner. In the case of multi-year assistantships, a student may not have any more than one outstanding incomplete grade by July 15, or the assistantship will not be renewed.

- Maintaining academic standing, per Graduate School or departmental academic requirements, is mandatory and failure to do so will result in the teaching assistantship being withdrawn. Departments may have higher minimum GPA requirements for their assistants and, if so, these requirements trump the minimum GPA requirement of the Graduate School.
- Should a TA's activities be deemed unacceptable by the department, the Graduate Program Director should inform the student in writing that his/her teaching activities are unsatisfactory. The letter should include information about the deficiencies and a remediation plan of action. Additionally, the letter should include a date for re-assessment. If the student fails to improve his or her teaching performance in the time specified, the assistantship will be withdrawn.
- In very specific instances, such as violations of university policies, academic dishonesty, or violations of ethical or professional code of conduct, the assistant may have his or her teaching activities suspended immediately and a departmental recommendation of withdrawal to the Graduate School is in order. Non-renewal/withdrawal appeals, just as all other student grievances, should first be made at the departmental level before moving to the Graduate School.
- The stipend will be stopped at the date of the withdrawal.

Relinquish Assistantship

Departments depend on the services of teaching assistants for the period of appointment. If the TA must relinquish his or her assistantship during the course of the academic year, the student must follow these steps:

- Discuss the intent to relinquish their assistantship with the Graduate Program Director well in advance of the actual date so appropriate plans to award the TAship to another student can be made.
- Submit a formal letter explaining the reason(s) for and date of the withdrawal. A copy of this letter should be sent to the Graduate School.
- Return of any keys and teaching-related materials to the department.
- The assistant's stipend will be ended upon receipt of the letter of relinquishment.