

## FACULTY INSTRUCTOR & TA AGREEMENT

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**Purpose:** Open and clear communication is critical for a successful teaching team. The department has prepared a *Faculty Instructor & TA Agreement* form to ensure faculty, course instructors (if applicable), and TAs have the information they need to regularly communicate and address challenges during the semester. Note that the term “Instructor” is used in the remainder of this form to refer both to faculty and course instructors. All members of the teaching team are asked to sign a copy of the agreement, indicating that they understand the course responsibilities.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COURSE

Discuss the following topics among your teaching team:

- What are the lead instructors’ teaching styles? (ex: lecture-based, problem-based, discussion-based, flipped classroom, etc.)
- What are the students of this course normally like? (ex: engaged, passive, talkative, reserved, experienced, new to biology, etc.)
- What do students tend to find easy or challenging? (ex: students tend to struggle with questions about experimental design, etc.)

Make sure to also discuss and share the following information as it is outlined in the syllabus...

- Names and contact info of all teaching staff (including other TAs)
- Learning outcomes for the course
- Prerequisites for students enrolled in course
- Required/recommended textbooks/resources for course
- Class topics and schedule
- Dates of assessments
- Grading policies
- Extension or late work policies
- Absence policies (lecture and recitation)
- Policy on collaboration and student misconduct
- Types of student accommodations

This course will use the following technologies:

- Canvas   Stellar   MITx   Gradescope   Piazza   Google Drive  
Other:

The teaching staff will primarily communicate course-related information:

- In person   During weekly staff meetings   By email   By Slack  
Other:

- Additionally, discuss how student issues or conflicts within the teaching team should be communicated to the faculty or course instructor.

The best way to reach faculty or course instructors for an urgent course-related matter is:

## TA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Identify the specific roles of TAs for this course:

- Lecture assistant
- Course administrator
- Grader
- Recitation facilitator
- Discussion leader
- Review session leader
- Other:

What degree of autonomy do TAs have?

What does the lead instructor expect TAs to do during recitations? Discuss what activities should be prioritized.

- Review lecture material
- Lead problem-solving sessions
- Provide exam reviews
- Lead discussion sections
- Other:

Listed below are common teaching responsibilities. Identify who is responsible for each role. For responsibilities allocated to TAs, indicate how often they should expect to engage in these activities (daily, weekly, once per month, etc.) and, if applicable, estimate the number of hours week-to-week TA responsibilities will occupy during the semester:

Teaching Responsibility	Whose responsibility?	How often?	Hours/week
Attending lectures			
Attending staff meetings			
Preparing for recitations/labs/discussions			
Conducting recitations/lab/discussions			
Conducting office hours			
Drafting psets or assignments			
Providing feedback/correcting psets			
Drafting pset or assignment answer keys			
Emailing teaching staff/TAs/students			
Maintaining course website			
Responding to student emails about absences/accommodations/grades			
Other:			
<b>Total Hours:</b>			

Most courses have exam weeks, which require additional teaching responsibilities. Identify who is responsible for each role and, if applicable, the added number of TA hours during exam weeks (if the course has a different form of assessment, please adapt the responsibilities as necessary):

Teaching Responsibility	Whose responsibility?	How many times per semester?	Hours
Providing feedback on draft exams			
Preparing exam review			
Conducting exam review/ extra office hours			
Responding to student questions before exam			
Grading the exam			
Responding to student questions after the exam (clarifications about grading, etc.)			
Drafting exam answer keys			
Other:			
<b>Total Hours:</b>			

As a departmental standard, TAs should expect to work no more than **20 hours/week on average**. Describe what TAs should do if they find their responsibilities consistently consuming more than the estimated hours/week during the semester:

The instructor for this course will ask for feedback on the following materials prior to issuing materials to students:

- Problem sets
- Recitation materials
- Exams
- Other:

These materials will be provided to TAs at least \_\_\_\_\_ days in advance.

How regularly will the instructor ask for feedback on these materials?

*In accordance with departmental guidelines, a faculty member or course instructor must be responsible for all final versions of graded assignments to be administered in the subject, including problem sets, exams, answer keys, or other assigned materials.*

TAs may direct students in the course to Student Support Services (S3) for help with personal hardship, stress, anxiety, and additional support. However, TAs are not responsible for coordinating with S3.

- Discuss common student issues in the course, and when TAs should refer student cases to the course staff.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TAs

### Departmental Resources

- Instructor of TA training
- TA training team
- Teaching Development Fellow
- BioREFS: [biorefs@mit.edu](mailto:biorefs@mit.edu)

### Planned Department Events

- TA Orientation (topics include: Introduction to Teaching, Teaching in a Diverse Classroom, Getting to know IDHR, TA panel, Course-specific discussion)
- TA Pedagogy Certificate Program (topics include: Organizing a recitation, Engaging students, Effective grading, Fostering inclusivity, Supporting students, and more)

### Institute-wide Resources

- Teaching + Learning Lab (TLL) (<https://tll.mit.edu/>) and TA Days
- Student Support Services (S3) (<https://studentlife.mit.edu/s3>)

While the course expectations outlined here may change based on the needs of the students, the Instructors and TAs of this course agree to uphold the spirit of this agreement, and to thoughtfully discuss changes and challenges when they arise.

To sign electronically please type your name, or add an e-signature, recording the date of your signature.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty

\_\_\_\_\_  
Course Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
TA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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