

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING ASSISTANT GUIDELINES
Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications
2018-2019

Faculty in the Bellisario College of Communications may recruit undergraduate students who excelled in their undergraduate course to serve as teaching assistants (TAs) in subsequent offerings of the course.

The undergraduate TA experience should be more than providing a service to the faculty member and the college. It should also be a valuable, mentored learning experience for the student. Working under the close supervision of the faculty member, undergraduate TAs have the opportunity to gain teaching experience, develop mentoring and leadership skills, and build an understanding of how others learn, while helping other students to learn more effectively.

To facilitate the mentoring process, undergraduate students serving as TAs are required to apply for and enroll in at least one, and no more than three, credits of COMM 494 during the semester in which the teaching assistant work will be done. (Students are expected to provide 40 hours of work per credit.) The credits cannot be given after the course has been completed.

Undergraduate student TA responsibilities typically include administrative work, leading discussion groups, helping the course instructor prepare class lessons and materials, and holding office hours to assist as peer tutors. Under no circumstances, should TAs be asked to run a class in the faculty member's absence. Undergraduate students serving as TAs also should not be involved in grading or other forms of assessment that comprise any portion of a student's grade in the course.

Undergraduate TAs are expected to treat all students with dignity and respect, practice personal responsibility, and uphold high standards for academic integrity. Undergraduate TAs must also be aware of the Bellisario College of Communications Student Honor Code and Penn State's policies on sexual harassment.

Undergraduate students serving as TAs must have met all of the following criteria:

- Completed the course with a grade of A- or better
- Have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Attained at least fifth semester standing

Additionally, there are other important aspects of the undergraduate TA responsibility that students in this role should keep in mind:

Meeting Course Instructor Expectations

Prior to the starting date of the course, student TAs need to have a clear understanding of the faculty member's expectations about the nature of the work to be done, attendance in class, holding office hours, etc. As the semester unfolds, TAs should maintain regular contact with the faculty member teaching the course.

Student Privacy and Confidentiality

Undergraduate TAs may not have access to information about student performance in the class. It is imperative that TAs keep this information strictly confidential. Any information relating to a student's grade, class attendance, class performance or any other academic or personal issues should not be discussed with anyone except for the faculty member instructing the class.

Processes for Dealing with Student Complaints

Students, on occasion, may turn to an undergraduate TA with grade or other complaints about the class. It is important that TAs understand the process of the faculty members, department and college for addressing students complaints, and refer students appropriately.

Updated April 2018