Role of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UMD

University Policies Applicable to GTAs

Responsibilities

The responsibility of the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is to provide assistance to a supervising teacher in specified courses. The responsibilities will vary from department to department but may involve laboratory instruction, recitation and, less frequently, lecturing. Teaching assistants will participate in setting up labs, preparing examinations, reading reports, grading and other tasks involved in the teaching process. GTAs are expected to maintain regular office hours during which time they will be available to students. Some departments specify the number of office hours TAs should plan to hold. The teaching assistant has an especially important and often difficult role. Teaching can be challenging, especially for those with little experience. The primary purposes of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation are to help new teaching assistants overcome challenges and to provide them with useful ideas and resources to implement in their teaching assignments. While the teaching assistant is a teacher and a faculty member, s/he is also a graduate student who is taking courses and doing research for a thesis or Plan B paper. These responsibilities place heavy demands of time and effort on the TA.

Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships are intended to help students finance their graduate education, but more significantly, they provide a form of apprenticeship and help prepare the GTA for a career in teaching and research. GTAs should take full advantage of the opportunity afforded to learn and practice the craft of teaching.

Academic Status and Registration Requirements

1. All GTA appointees must be currently registered in the Graduate School or in another post-baccalaureate degree program for a minimum of six credits during each semester of appointment. Appointment to a graduate assistantship may not begin before the semester of admission to a graduate-level program, except in the case of students admitted for fall semester who may hold appointments beginning the previous summer. Graduate assistant appointment dates correspond to the beginning and end of each semester as defined by payroll period dates. Please see the payroll schedule on this document:
   http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/payroll/calendars/.

2. Those who may NOT hold appointments as graduate teaching assistants include:
   a. Non-students
   b. Undergraduates
c. Adult Special or Coursework Only students
d. Graduate students from other universities (this does not include students attending the University of Minnesota under the CIC Traveling Scholars program)
e. Applicants who have not yet been admitted to the Graduate School
f. Graduate students who have received their degrees
g. International students having an F-2 visa.

3. All graduate teaching assistants must be making satisfactory progress toward their degrees. A hold will be placed on the records of a student who has accepted pay for graduate assistantship work and who has not registered for that semester, or who has canceled all valid registration that semester. Should you withdraw from all of your classes during semester, you will be liable for the entire semester’s tuition. Back registration for that semester must be completed before the student will be allowed to register for future semesters or to hold additional graduate assistant appointments. Any registration in the Graduate School will fulfill this requirement.

**Workload**

Graduate assistants may hold either of two types of appointments. They may hold appointments in which the work load and compensation are based on a fixed percentage for a full-time position; for example, a 50 percent appointment would imply an average of 20 hours of work per week at one-half the rate of pay for a full-time position. Graduate assistants may also hold hourly appointments for which they will be compensated at the hourly rate for that position. In either case, all duties related to the appointment are included in determining the number of hours worked per week. The work schedule should be flexible so that a graduate assistant can work less than the average number of hours per week when other responsibilities arise (such as examinations), and more than the average number of hours per week when the duties of the appointment require it. In no instance may a graduate teaching assistant be required to perform duties that are not related to the instructional or service missions of the hiring unit.

During fall and spring semesters, GTAs at the University of Minnesota may not hold combined appointments totaling more than 75 percent time in all University payroll classes and appointments, including Continuing Education and civil service positions, without permission of the Graduate School. It is the responsibility of the hiring department, with the consent of the student’s advisor, to request such permission in writing. Graduate assistants may hold up to a 100 percent time appointment during the summer. Under no circumstances may a graduate assistant hold appointments totaling more than 100 percent time. Graduate students may not hold appointments for which
there is no monetary compensation, nor are they allowed to hold appointments for which they receive only course credit or resident tuition rates.

As indicated above, a 50% appointment would entail an average of 20 hours per week. A typical requirement might mean an average of 10 hours of contact per week per semester. This requirement will vary from department to department. The following represents a typical distribution effort of a 50% GTA in one of the sciences:

- 10 hours contact (with students in class)
- 2 hours lab set up
- 2 hours office
- 1 hour TA meeting
- 5 hours prep time (quiz preparation, grading, etc.)

Total: 20 hours

Each department will determine appropriate distribution of effort as determined by the needs and responsibilities of the department. The information should be presented to the teaching assistant in writing by the department at the start of the appointment.

**Compensation**

Graduate assistants are compensated according to a pay range established each year by the University’s central administration and approved by the Board of Regents. Graduate assistants may be appointed to a rate of pay anywhere within this range. In determining the rate for an individual graduate assistant, a department may consider such criteria as the nature of the duties assigned and the individual’s experience. Compensation paid to graduate assistants employed in the same or different departments may vary according to these criteria.

Updated schedules of compensation rates are distributed to departments each July at the beginning of the University’s fiscal year. Contact your employing department for information on the pay ranges currently in effect or consult the Graduate Assistant Employment Web site at: [http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/gae/).

**Tuition**

All graduate assistants with appointments of at least 12.5% will receive a tuition benefit according to the numbers of hours worked per semester, with a 100% tuition benefits earned for 390 hours per semester (20 hours per week for 19.5 weeks, which is a 50% benefit appointment). Students appointed between 195 and 390 hours per semester will receive prorated tuition benefits. For example, a 25% appointment (10 hours per week for 19.5 weeks, or 195 total hours) would receive a half tuition benefit. Graduate
assistants are defined as those students who have appointments as teaching assistants on a 50% appointment or greater will be the dollar value of the Graduate School’s tuition band (for 2011-2012 the tuition band is 6-14 credits). In terms of dollars this will be $7,006.00 for residents. For other levels of appointments this dollar value will be less (for example, resident rates are $1,167.67 per credit). The dollar value of the tuition benefit is deducted from the total tuition incurred when tuition is calculated. Any remaining difference will be the responsibility of the graduate assistant.

Tuition benefits cover only tuition and all or a portion of the University fee, depending upon the appointment percentage and the number of registered credits. Tuition benefits do not pay for other charges, such as lab fees, installment fees, late charges, late registration fees, etc., which are assessed by the Student Accounts Receivable office and charged to the student’s account. Graduate assistants are responsible for payment of such charges not covered by graduate assistant tuition benefits.

If you are a non-resident and subject to non-resident tuition rates, you will first receive a non-resident waiver to bring your tuition down to resident rates and the tuition benefit associated with your assistantship will be applied.

If you hold an assistantship during the summer you will also receive a tuition benefit. However, depending upon the length of your appointment, this benefit may not be as great as during the academic year. To receive a tuition benefit of $7,006 for the summer session, you have to have a 50% appointment for 19.5 weeks during the summer. Typically, summer appointments are less than 19.5 weeks, in which case your tuition benefit would be less than $7,006.

For purposes of this program, graduate assistants are defined as those whose appointments require registration in the Graduate School (for example, teaching assistants, research assistants, administrative fellows, etc.). Students should see to it that their home departments complete a Tuition Remission Form and forward it, along with the appointment document, to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Administration. Once verified, this form will serve to determine the percentage of tuition waiver you receive. Students will be responsible for certain fees and charges beyond the tuition.

If you are a nonresident graduate assistant with an appointment of at least 25%, your immediate family (defined as spouse, children, parents, or legal guardian or ward living in your household) is eligible to pay resident tuition rates during each semester of your appointment. These family privileges may be extended beyond the term of qualifying appointment.
Graduate students not employed at least 25% time and those not holding assistantships pay tuition and fees according to the schedule found at this site:

**Taxation**

Income taxes will be withheld from your paycheck unless you are exempt from taxation under a tax treaty between your country and the United States. You can determine if a treaty exists by asking the University Payroll Department or consulting Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties: [http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p901.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p901.pdf). Questions regarding your taxation can be answered by calling the University Payroll Department at (612) 625-2016 or the local IRS office here in Duluth (218) 626-1624, Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Non-resident aliens present in the United States on F-1 and J-1 visas must file an annual income tax return on Forms 1040NR or 1040 NR-EZ, as well as a Minnesota state income tax return, even though they have not earned any income while in the United States. Note that this is a special version of the normal Form 1040 used by most American citizens and permanent residents. The filing requirements and rules related to Form 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ differ from the requirements that apply to U.S. residents. Please visit the following site for more information: [http://www.d.umn.edu/internationalstudents/us_gov.html#tax_information](http://www.d.umn.edu/internationalstudents/us_gov.html#tax_information)

Relevant publications from the Internal Revenue Service include:

Publication 519: U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens

Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties

Publication 970: Tax Benefits for Education

Publications and tax forms may be retrieved from the World Wide Web. You can download forms from the IRS site, or order them by calling the Internal Revenue Service Forms number, 1-800-829-3676.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment in any situation is reprehensible. It subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers of students, faculty and staff. It is viewed as a violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at the University. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as follows:
Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment or academic advancement, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

This policy on sexual harassment applies to the entire University and to the conduct of students and all employees (civil service, faculty and administration). Please see policies and procedures at www.eoaa.umn.edu.

Consenting Relationships

Consenting romantic and sexual relationships between a faculty member and student, or between a supervisor and employee, while not expressly forbidden, are generally deemed very unwise. Codes of ethics for most professional associations forbid professional-client sexual relationships. In the view of the University Senate, the professor-student relationship is one of professional and client. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student, as well as the power exercised by the professor in giving praise or blame, grades, recommendations for further study and future employment, etc., greatly diminish the student’s actual freedom of choice should sexual favors be included among the professor’s legitimate demands. Therefore, faculty members are warned against the possible costs of even an apparently consenting relationship, in regard to the academic efforts of both the faculty member and the student. A faculty member who enters into a sexual relationship with a student, or a supervisor with an employee, where a professional power differential exists, must realize that, if a charge of sexual harassment is subsequently lodged, it will be exceedingly difficult to prove immunity on grounds of mutual consent.

Sexual Violence

It is the responsibility of the administration of this University to uphold the requirements of Title VII and other laws prohibiting sexual violence. The academic and working environment of the University must be kept free of these negative influences. Sexual violence is an extreme form of sexual harassment involving physical violence against an individual. Such incidents may constitute criminal violations and also are a violation of the sexual harassment policy of the University. Please see UMD’s Sexual Assault Protocol: http://www.d.umn.edu/umdoeo/sexual_assault_protocol.html
Justice requires that the rights and concerns of both complainant and respondent be fully assured. The University shall make every effort to assure and protect these rights and shall undertake no action that threatens or compromises them.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, those entrusted with carrying out this policy will look at the record as a whole and at the totality of the circumstances, such as the nature of the sexual advances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. A determination of the suitability of a particular action will be made from the facts on a case-by-case basis.

To make an anonymous report you can make use of the EthicsPoint confidential reporting service:
https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/9167/duluth_employment.html

**Behavior Guidelines for Teaching Assistants**

Teaching assistants responsible for classroom or laboratory instruction are expected to maintain standards of professional ethics appropriate for any member of a university faculty.

Classes should be conducted and material presented in accordance with objectives of the instructor to whom the teaching assistant is assigned. Teaching assistants whose responsibilities include grading should establish clear, firm, consistent and objective standards for evaluating student performance and should assign grades only on the basis of those standards. Teaching assistants should be reasonably accessible to students by keeping regularly scheduled office hours.

All students should be encouraged to express themselves in class discussions, and all should be treated with equal respect. Jokes or disparaging remarks about individuals based on their sex, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, veteran status or national origin are inappropriate and unacceptable in the classroom and outside of it. In addition, neither disparaging remarks, nor racist or sexist behavior by students is permitted in the classroom.

Discrimination based on one’s membership in a protected class and sexual harassment are sensitive and troubling issues. All forms of discriminatory language and behavior can seriously limit or damage a student’s ability to take full advantage of educational opportunities at the University. Avoid using discriminatory language or terms of endearment when addressing students; avoid sexual innuendo in interactions with students. Teaching assistants who use the power and influence of that position to force sexual cooperation from students are violating University policy. Such behaviors may serve as the basis of legal action against the offending party, the teaching assistant’s home department, and/or the University. Such behavior is unacceptable and considered a
violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as University policy. It could result in disciplinary action against the teaching assistant, and in the loss of federal monies to the University.

University employees need to be aware that any amorous involvement with a student may result in formal action against them if the student should choose to initiate a complaint. Even if the relationship is consensual, the employee, because of his or her special responsibility, will be held accountable for unprofessional behavior.

Teaching assistants should strive to maintain integrity by establishing a strictly professional relationship with students inside and outside of the classroom.

The GTA and the Department

The teaching assistant’s department is responsible for all of the teaching assistant’s work as a GTA, from making the teaching assignment, to supervising and evaluating the GTA’s classroom performance. Some departments also conduct periodic reviews and evaluations of their GTAs and make the results of such evaluations available to the GTAs. Departments may handle the evaluation of GTAs in a variety of ways. The faculty member who is responsible for the instruction of the course in which a GTA is assigned may visit the GTA’s section periodically. In addition, most departments utilize student evaluations as a means of assessing GTA performance.

Questions about the GTA position should be directed to the GTA’s home department. Department secretaries and administrative assistants are often good sources of information on administrative matters. The faculty member in charge of the course the GTA is teaching will also be able to assign many such questions. Either the Director of Graduate Studies, or the department chairperson, has the ultimate responsibility for GTAs in the department. Departments generally provide GTAs with office space, laboratory space and other facilities necessary for effective teaching. These usually include a desk, shelf space, mailbox, and access to a computer, duplication services and telephone.

The previous sections have been adapted from “The TA at U of D: Handbook for Teaching Assistants,” University of Delaware.

GTA-Faculty Relationships

The keys to success in any relationship are respect and communication. Misunderstandings occur between GTAs and professors when both take each other for granted and expect one to guess the needs and feelings of the other. One professor might want the TA to engage in extensive online research for tens of hours each week. Another might want the TA to come to his or her office 15 minutes before class. Professors who have worked with many GTAs sometimes assume every GTA knows what the professor
wants the GTA to do, when the reality is that GTAs who are new to a professor need to know explicitly what is expected. GTAs, for their part, need to ask specific questions, like “Shall I visit your office before class tomorrow?”; “Are there handouts I should review and distribute?” Experience shows that such questions can help both parties form successful relationships.

If you have too much work, or if there are problems of other kinds, it almost always helps to talk to the professor. Let the professor know that you respect and trust him or her, and that you understand his or her situation and point of view.

The most important element in a relationship between a GTA and the faculty member is open communication. This should be established at the beginning of the semester and maintained throughout the course. GTAs and professors should discuss the framework and the background of the course so that they can work together to teach the course more effectively. GTAs should ask the professor for his or her decisions on many of the following matters before the course begins:

- How much latitude does the GTA have in the course?
- What exactly are the goals of this course?
- Is there a guiding methodology for the course with which GTAs (and students) should be familiar?
- Are there any additional materials that would help the TA be better prepared for the course?
- What is the procedure for handling student complaints, issues of plagiarism or cheating?
- Who will be making up the exams? What kinds of exams will they be?
- How exactly are grades determined?


**Office Hours**

The GTA’s office is an important extension of the classroom. This is one of the few places where the protective shield of impersonality at a university can be broken. Every GTA must have office hours, but the students may not be required to come in during those times. Some departments have a required number of weekly office hours. Usually office hours are scheduled before the semester begins and announced to the students during the first week. One alternative is to check with the students about convenient times before scheduling office hours.

To get students to come in during office hours, it is useful to emphasize that student visits during office hours are welcome. It might be helpful to invite students to
come in on an individual basis, one at a time. A comment on a paper (e.g. “Please see me about this.”) brings about a 75% response. Stress the importance and value of office visits both to you and to them. Most GTAs deal with freshmen and sophomores who are not used to personal contact at the University. If those first few who come in have positive experiences, the word will spread. Some GTAs find that posting the answers to quizzes or homework problems inside the office door is an effective means of attracting students to office hours.

Getting students to come in during office hours is not always a problem. Many students may come in for many different reasons. Students may request help with the material from the course for which the TA works. This may include the logistics of a course containing unfamiliar material. Alternatively, students may approach the TA with personal problems. Here are some suggestions for facilitating a helpful tutorial or counseling session:

- Try to be as approachable as possible. The best thing to do when a student comes in to office hours is to make him or her feel welcome. Offer the student a chair. It takes only a little bit of care to create a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere in which communication is natural and easy.
- Rely on the student to tell you about why s/he has come in during office hours. Do not press students to disclose hidden problems. If students actively request help, be prepared to offer it, but do not assume it is necessary to go beyond expressed requests.
- Listen to students who come in during office hours. Give undivided attention. Offering undivided attention is one of the best ways to make students feel welcome and will work most effectively in encouraging communication. Ask questions—doing so demonstrates a sincere interest and recognition of the importance of student concerns. Students are sensitive to wasting the TA’s time; listening attentively and responding thoughtfully helps allay student anxiety.
- TAs may not always have the answer or information the student requests. There is nothing wrong with saying, “I don’t know, but I can find out for you.”

In situations where students are asking for more personal counseling, the TA may not be the most qualified person for the student to consult. If the student requires more specific or professional advice, be prepared to suggest someone who can provide it. When offering a referral, write down the person’s name and office location. When a student takes a slip of paper with him/her, s/he is more likely to act on that advice.

Teaching Tips for GTAs

Survival Tips for the First Class Meeting

1. Locate and visit the classroom assigned to the class several days before the first meeting.
2. Arrive early at the classroom in case the room has been changed, or if there is a problem.
3. Write the course, section and your name on the chalkboard or white board.
4. Introduce yourself.
5. If there is information about your students you would like to know, provide students with 3x5 cards on which to record that information.
6. One of the most important functions of the first day of class is to indicate how your section fits in with the structure of the course. The students should know what is expected of them in your section as it relates to the course objectives set by your supervising professor.
7. Students generally want to know about anything affecting their grades: attendance, test and quiz policies, homework, how much work the course requires, your expectations, and your grading policy. Put this in writing along with the office location and office hours. There may be a master syllabus for the class, but you can generate a syllabus for your section containing this information.

Setting the Classroom Climate

1. Arrive a few minutes early to chat with students about the course assignments or campus events.
2. Stay after class to answer questions.
3. Encourage students to ask questions during class.
4. Acknowledge and reinforce students’ contributions.
5. Be tolerant of other viewpoints.
6. Keep office hours.
7. Invite students to stop by the office to discuss upcoming assignments, as well as their performance on tests, quizzes and assignments.
8. Obtain feedback from the group about your teaching by using mid-semester, or more frequent student evaluation questionnaires.
9. Hold extra help or review sessions outside of regularly scheduled classes.

This material was adapted from “Handbook for Teaching Assistants at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.” Office of Instructional Resources: 1980.
**Building a Supportive Classroom Environment**

1. Learn student names.
2. Provide encouragement.
3. Avoid judging students.
4. Learn something personal about each student.
5. Treat your students as adults.
6. Never humiliate a student.
7. Make yourself available.
8. Be as positive as possible.
9. Be in touch with people such as the student’s adviser, or your own supervisor.
10. Be aware of resources available through the Tutoring Center
    (http://www.d.umn.edu/tutoring/)
11. Use the course e-mail. (It is possible to set up a class alias whereby an entire class can receive an e-mail message that you want to send. This is an easy way to keep the class on track if an announcement slips your mind. Go to: http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/facstaff/ to set up a section alias.


**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

The University takes the position that the best way to handle cheating is to prevent it. If it occurs, deal with it swiftly and decisively. Here is a link to the UMD policy on Academic Dishonesty:
http://www.d.umn.edu/conduct/integrity/Academic_Integrity_Policy.htm

Plagiarism is the most prevalent form of cheating on campus, and it is also the hardest to prevent. Plagiarism in a term paper or other writing assignment cannot be proven unless the original source is found. An instructor who suspects that a student has plagiarized a source should compare the questionable material with other samples of the student’s writing, if possible. Instructors should always feel free to contact any students they suspect of plagiarism and inquire about the student’s use of sources and methodology. Some students cannot distinguish between paraphrasing and plagiarism, and many do not understand the implications of cheating and plagiarism. Teachers can refer students who need to improve their writing skills to the writing section of the Tutoring Center which specializes in such assistance.

Students of the University are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one’s research, to steal the words or ideas of another, or to cheat on an examination, corrupt the essential process by which knowledge is advanced.
All cases of cheating should be discussed initially with the GTA’s supervising
faculty member. If there is sufficient evidence, the GTA and faculty member will report
the alleged academic dishonesty to the Conduct Code Coordinator. Any information
pertinent to the complaint is collected and reviewed by the coordinator. The Conduct
Code Coordinator will interview the students involved in the alleged cheating and
provide them with a statement of students’ options and rights.

Any student appearing before the Conduct Code Coordinator or the Student
Behavior Judiciary Committee will have an opportunity to hear all evidence, face the
accuser and question adverse or incorrect statements or testimony. All proceedings are
confidential, except as released in writing by the student, or required by court order. The
complete Student Conduct Code is available online:
http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html

The following suggestions may help minimize cheating in your classroom:

1. At the beginning of the semester, clarify acceptable interaction with others (e.g.
fellow students) for work done out of class.
2. Define plagiarism.
3. Ensure equal access to study materials, such as old homework solutions, exam
papers, etc.
4. Reduce the portion of the final grade (less than 10%) which is assigned to take-
home exams, lab reports and homework assignments.
5. Carefully define course and exam requirements. (Unreasonably difficult and
unrealistic demands, as well as trite, uninteresting activities invite cheating.)
6. Develop exams which are realistic and fair with respect to the material taught.
(Requiring memorization of a large number of dates, locations and formulae may
be resented.)
7. Construct the testing situation so as to make copying and other forms of cheating
difficult:
   a. Keep exams secured.
   b. Be sure of the integrity of others involved in test reproduction.
   c. Dispose of waste materials carefully.
8. Specific recommendations for the testing situation:
   a. When possible, spread out student seating. For crowded classrooms, use
two or more different exam forms on two or more different colors of
paper.
   b. Proctor exams closely; both instructors and GTAs should be present.
Have outside materials placed at the front of the room. Check for desk
etchings. Assign seats alphabetically. Require photo ID for entry, to be
left on the corner of the desk during exams to avoid one student taking an
exam for another.
c. Prohibit student talking and questions after the exam has started; don’t allow students to share calculators during the exam.
d. Exam papers may be left at seats, turned over to cover responses. After students leave the room, faculty and/or GTAs should pick up exams in sequence by rows, preventing paper switching by “neighbors.” Evidence of copying can be more easily obtained by scoring one question at a time.
e. Answer sheets and scratch paper may be bound prior to distributing them, preventing students from bringing their own scratch paper.
f. Collect an exam signature card the first week of class. At each exam, have students sign a different color card. If you suspect “substitution,” you can check exam signatures against originals.

The ideal situation is to establish an academic atmosphere which promotes honesty as the standard. The above tips provide faculty with methods for detecting deviations and documentation of evidence for cases to be carried through the Student Judicial System.


**Feedback on Teaching Skills**

**Student Evaluations**

At some point in your assignment as a GTA, preferably sooner rather than later, you may want to carry out a performance self-evaluation. Consulting with others may indicate that your expectations are too low or too high. Responses can be assessed more easily if the goals for your section are clear, and the standards you have put in to place are high, but realistic.

Individual departments provide GTAs with evaluation forms at the end of each semester. The GTA generally administers the evaluation during the last week of classes.

It is desirable to supplement the student evaluations by soliciting student response while the course is still in progress. This can be accomplished in formal or informal ways. For example, you may distribute your own questionnaire, asking specific questions about your guidance of discussions, lecture style, and the quality or quantity of readings, as well as inviting other comments. Alternatively, you may ask students for oral comments, either about general performance or specific potential problems. You should encourage students to be honest in their assessments. If you are asking students to review you, in
particular, you should ask a proxy to administer the evaluation and you should leave the room during the evaluation.

The faculty member responsible for supervising the GTA may sit in on lectures or discussions and then comment on the GTA’s performance. You may want to invite your supervising professor, another professor, or a fellow GTA to come to the class at a particular time so as to offer peer review.

**Individualized Consultations**

The Instructional Development Service (IDS), 209 Bohannon Hall, 726-6355, is dedicated to facilitating and improving instruction at UMD. Individualized, confidential teaching consultations are one of the most important ways of assisting teachers. The process of individualized consultations provides a GTA the opportunity to examine his or her teaching. It is based on the idea that a GTA, who is the content expert, and a consultant, who is informed about teaching and learning principles, can work together for more effective instruction.

The process to be used is determined between the GTA and a professional IDS consultant. It may include discussions of teaching philosophy and practices, classroom observations, assessments of classroom materials, discussions of alternative teaching strategies and practice sessions. Whatever steps are utilized, the purpose of the consultation is to identify techniques and approaches to convey knowledge and processes to students which are appropriate for individual GTAs. The process is voluntary and confidential.

Please see the IDS Web site: [http://www.d.umn.edu/ids/](http://www.d.umn.edu/ids/)

**Concerns of International Graduate Teaching Assistants**

International teaching assistants share the problems of their U.S. counterparts. All teaching assistants have to learn about the details of their assignments (such as keeping office hours and ordering desk copies of texts), proper communications with their instructors (including obtaining answers to assignments or test questions and establishing grading procedures and policies) and proper communications with students (for example, confronting behavioral problems, guaranteeing out-of-class availability and handling late papers or suspected plagiarism).

However, international teaching assistants encounter difficulties that their U.S. counterparts do not. Teaching assistants from another country may not be functioning in their native languages or cultures. The English studied so long and so diligently in school settings abroad often bears little resemblance to the
language used by the students in the teaching assistant’s classes. Student drop word endings, delete portions of sentences and use an array of slang expressions. In addition, U.S. culture in general, and the U.S. university system in particular, can be overwhelming and confusing. A world where professors may wish to be called by their first names and where students openly challenge professors’ ideas in class may be surprising, if not offensive, to many from abroad.

Conversely, for the U.S. student unused to interacting with students from abroad, the international teaching assistant’s language and behavior may be puzzling and frustrating. Given the linguistic and cultural differences of those involved in such educational situations, miscommunication can be a common occurrence. The issue then becomes one of avoiding, or remedying miscommunication.

Special Difficulties

The following concerns are common among international teaching assistants:

**What sort of relationship may a teaching assistant have with students?** Above all, relationships with students must be professional. Although cultures may vary, teaching assistants are expected to conform in this respect to U.S. standards. In general, teaching assistants should define their relationships with students solely by their position and responsibility as teaching assistants. If you have any doubts about what behavior is considered appropriate, consult your supervising instructor.

**What if a student or a professor is not understood?** The best response is honesty. Say, “I'm sorry. I don’t understand. Could you please repeat (or rephrase) your question (or remark)?” Ignoring a student, or giving an irrelevant answer, can cause frustration and even anger. Simply dismissing difficulties of this kind will not solve the problem. Sooner or later students will realize that you do not understand them. You will gain their respect, and perhaps teach them something about their own use of language, by admitting the problem. Most people are happy to provide help if it is requested.

**What if a student (or someone else) doesn’t understand the teaching assistant?** The information should be repeated or, better yet, rephrased. Use examples. Try the black/white board, charts, or other visual aids, if appropriate. If the difficulty is in understanding spoken material, experiment with writing the material. Quite often, students will not admit that they do not understand. The problem may concern the content or the English-speaking ability of the teaching assistant. Look for puzzled expressions, lack of response, or students talking to
each other. Use comprehension-checking phrases (“Do you understand? Are you with me? Any questions at this point?”). Give students an opportunity to ask questions to clarify information.

**What if a particular student’s behavior seems offensive?** Before reacting negatively, consider whether the student is exhibiting behavior that is expected and acceptable in U.S. culture. Whenever any situation occurs that can lead to misunderstanding, anger, or resentment, analyze the event to determine whether or not the cause is cultural difference. Although in many cultures it is considered rude or disrespectful for a student to question, challenge or disagree with a professor, these behaviors are frequent and expected in U.S. universities. Similarly, students might eat, or drink soft drinks and coffee in the classroom. Such actions are probably not intended to be disrespectful. Check your department’s policies on eating or drinking in the classroom. These notices are sometimes posted in the room. As the person in charge of the class, however, the teaching assistant sets the rules, and it must be made clear to the class whether or not these behaviors are permitted.

**Sources of Support**

International teaching assistants have a particularly difficult responsibility. They must convey academic information to students in a foreign language and in an alien cultural setting. To do the job well, they should seek as much language assistance and cultural information as possible. At the same time, supervisors and students should be sensitive to the particularly difficult task of the international teaching assistant.

The UMD International Student Office in 237 Kirby Student Center, 726-7531, [http://www.d.umn.edu/internationalstudents/index.html](http://www.d.umn.edu/internationalstudents/index.html), provides a number of services for international students. Trisha O’Keefe, International Student Advisor, encourages students to drop in and get to know her. In addition to answering questions about visas, travel and work permits, the International Student Office is the focal point for the International Club and a community volunteer program.

The International Club meets once every two weeks. Activities such as skiing, attending concerts and sponsoring the Feast of Nations, are facilitated by this club.

The community volunteer program offers opportunities for international students to meet local families for get-togethers.
The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, Chester Park 156, offers a speech clinic for individuals with dialect-speech patterns.

Guide to Campus Resources

Supportive Services Program

Solon Campus Center 60, 726-6152, [http://www.d.umn.edu/student/ssp/](http://www.d.umn.edu/student/ssp/)

The Supportive Service Program (SSP) Office offers academic support services that help students succeed in college and plan careers. The services include tutoring, academic advising, advocacy and leadership training. It offers courses, workshops and seminars in basic educational skills. The courses are listed every term in the class schedule and include Writing Strategies, Study Strategies, Personal Development and Basic Mathematics. The mission is to empower students to participate actively in the university community, achieve academic success and make a successful transition to their career choices after UMD. The SSP workshops cover such topics as study skills, note-taking, test taking, time management, stress management and how to register. Watch for announcements of the workshops in the student newspaper, the residence hall newspaper, and on signs and banners in the campus hallways. SSP also offers Tutor Training and TA training. First Year Experience leadership opportunities also exist for interested students.

Its programs include the following, as well as the Tutoring Center and Disability Services:


Career Services offers counseling to help students make educational and career decisions. Help is available to choose courses, majors and careers, explore graduate school options and learn job search skills. Tests and computer programs may be used to investigate occupations related to values and interests. The Career Resource Center has information about occupations, internships, employers and graduate and professional schools. Workshops are sponsored addressing career topics such as majors related to occupations, how to apply to graduate school and job hunting strategies. Each year a Job Fair and a Graduate and Professional School Day are also sponsored. Placement services include registration with UMD Resume Referral Service, credential files for teaching candidates and on-campus interviews.

**Disability Resources**, Kirby Student Center 258 (within the Multicultural Center), 726-6130, [http://www.d.umn.edu/access/](http://www.d.umn.edu/access/)

Disability Resources promotes both academic and physical access to students with disabilities, providing services on an individual and flexible basis.
Leadership Programs: Kirby Leadership Institute, Kirby Student Center 115, 726-8740

The Kirby Leadership Institute at UMD offers a variety of leadership seminars, workshops, symposia and community learning partnerships designed to help students develop strategies and skills for success. The workshops are open to all students, staff and faculty at UMD.

Tutoring Center, Solon Campus Center 40, 726-6248, http://www.d.umn.edu/tutoring/

Each semester 85 to 100 undergraduate tutors provide individualized and small group instruction for students seeking help with homework. Tutors take a training class, achieve national certification and make it possible for the UMD Tutoring Center to be one of the nation’s busiest.

Free, walk-in tutoring is provided by undergraduate tutors. Appointments are not necessary and students do not need to sign in. Students who come to the Center to see a tutor can use the hanging signs to find the right area and go directly there. Tutors wear name tags.

Tutors can give one-time assistance with a single problem or concept, or they can work with a student frequently throughout the semester. They can help an individual student for only a few minutes or for an entire hour.

Tutors are referred to the Tutoring Center by their academic departments based on their grades in courses they will tutor and their overall GPA. Most tutors take a tutor training class during the first semester of tutoring.

Students should bring textbooks, notes and the class syllabus when visiting the Tutoring Center to help the tutor determine how the instructor is approaching the assigned material.

Early morning (8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.) and later afternoon (3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.) hours are less crowded, so students will be able to receive more individual help at those times. Students are encouraged to seek help early in the semester, rather than waiting shortly before exams, or very late in the semester. Coming in at the beginning of an hour works best since tutors change on an hourly basis in most cases.

Symbols, such as a # or + after a tutor’s name on the schedule denote specific courses s/he cannot tutor.

The Tutoring Center is open Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (Please note, however, that tutors for some disciplines are not available at all of these times.) Tutoring hours for specific subjects are posted in Solon
Campus Center 40. Copies of each schedule are available for students to pick up from the Solon Campus Center 40 brochure rack. Tutoring hours are also posted on the Internet, as well as a list of subjects covered: http://www.d.umn.edu/tutoring

Writing Tutor Expectations:

Writing tutors can be asked to help students with:

1. Pre-writing
   a. Choosing topics
   b. Narrowing topics
   c. Generating ideas through brainstorming, free writing, etc.
   d. Exploring topics
   e. Identifying audience, purpose, etc.
2. Drafting and Revision
   a. Providing a dialogue to help the writer develop ideas
   b. Encouraging specificity
   c. Encouraging further development and exploration of ideas
   d. Responding as an intended audience member
   e. Evaluating the logic of an argument
   f. Formulating a thesis
   g. Formulating claims
   h. Identifying inadequately supported generalizations
   i. Evaluating organization
   j. Paraphrasing
   k. Attribution and documentation
3. Editing
   a. Identifying patterns of errors (fragments, comma splices, subject/verb agreement, etc.)
   b. Identifying and helping to clarify confusing or unclear sentences.
   c. Explaining mechanical and or grammatical problems.
   d. Identifying documentation and attribution problems.

Writing Tutors cannot be asked to help students with:

1. Proofreading an entire text while the writer goes for coffee.
2. Evaluating or predicting grades.
3. Identifying and helping correct all errors in a text.

This office functions as the support service for students of African, African American and Carribean descent. Services include academic advising, tutorial services, individual counseling and mentorship programs. Educational and cultural events are coordinated annually to expose the UMD and Duluth community to issues that affect people of the African Diaspora. The office maintains a repository of materials addressing cultural, socio-political and economic issues. Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.


Enhances and enriches the cultural, academic, supportive and social environment of the UMD campus. The Center is also designed to increase the recruitment and retention of American Indian and Alaskan Native students while promoting new and improved ideas which contribute to cultural diversity. The A.I.L.R.C. has a strong commitment to develop and build self-reliance and self-esteem, which leads to empowerment of our students to meet the goal of becoming contributing citizens.

**Asian Pacific American Student Services Program**, Kirby Student Center 233, Asian Pacific American Student Association, 270J (within the Multicultural Center), 726-6335, [http://www.d.umn.edu/mlrc/apasp/](http://www.d.umn.edu/mlrc/apasp/)

Asian Pacific American Student Services offers peer advising, counseling and tutoring. The student organization sponsors social and cultural events, including the celebration of the Vietnamese New Year (Tet).


GLBT strives to provide individual and institutional support to students, faculty, staff and the community at large in five strategic areas: Information/Referral, Advocacy, Education, Consultation and Coordination.

The QASU provides a safe space for queer and supportive students, faculty and staff. The office also provides numerous books, magazines and articles regarding sexuality, coming out, hate crimes and STDs. Members of the QASU visit classrooms and constituents of the community, educating others about issues surrounding queer individuals. The students who work with the QASU also lobby the administration to create a positive environment for queer and supportive students, faculty and staff.

This office provides peer advising, counseling and tutoring to Hispanic students. The program works with the Hispanic Organization to coordinate campus-wide efforts toward cultural diversity, such as Latin American Awareness Week and the Hispanic Fiesta.


The mission of the Women’s Resource and Action Center at UMD is to facilitate the empowerment of women, both individually and collectively. It is a safe and supportive place to meet friends, get information, study or relax. The Women’s Center sponsors various women-centered programs and activities throughout the year. For example, workshops and support groups on specific women’s issues are offered and are usually free of charge. The Women’s Center provides information and referrals about resources available to women on campus or in the community. The Director of the Women’s Resource and Action Center is available for personal counseling.
UMD Bookstores


Campus Books sells textbooks, general reading books, school supplies, and office and art supplies.

UMD Stores, 2nd floor, Kirby Plaza, 726-8520

UMD Stores sells greeting cards, magazines, grocery items, candy, beverages, health and beauty items, stationery and small gift items. It is also the official store for UMD clothing and gift items. The Bulldog Shop sells sweatshirts, t-shirts, jackets, children’s clothing and many other items.

UMD Computer Corner, 1st floor, Kirby Plaza, 726-6218

Located within the bookstore, the Computer Corner sells computers and computer accessories to students, faculty and staff of the university. Items for purchase include computers, computer software, modems, disks, computer paper, computer books and magazines, and much more.

Graduate School Office


The UMD Graduate Office is the collegiate office for all graduate students at UMD. It is the most accurate source of information about graduate school.

Information Technology Systems and Services

Kirby Plaza, Room 386 Phone: 726-7587 or 726-8847, http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/

Help Desk: Phone 726-8847; Service request forms at http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/requests/

Technology Resources for Faculty and Staff: http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/facstaff/

Desktop Service and Support: http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/desktop/

Library and Learning Resources

Library Administration, 726-8102

Reference Desk, 726-8100

General Circulation, Reserve & Hours, 726-6120
The UMD Library provides students, GTAs and faculty with resources required for the learning, teaching and research missions of the university. The collection contains approximately 600,000 volumes, with over 1400 print and 25,000 electronic periodical subscriptions, 3700 video titles, and a selective U.S. government documents depository. The library also provides electronic access to an expanding range of resources, including the library catalogue, indexes, reference sources and full-text periodicals. For library information and access to electronic resources, connect to the UMD Library home page at http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/

When classes are in session the library is open:

Monday through Thursday  7:30 a.m. to Midnight
Friday                  7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday                9:00 a.m. to Midnight

Reference librarians can assist patrons with a variety of needs as they use the library’s resources from consultation to print and electronic research sources. Also, reference librarians can help with computer or microfilm equipment. Library tours are offered each semester, and librarians provide library instruction for classes by appointment. Academic departments have been assigned to broad subject areas with a librarian designated to work with each subject area to provide specialized reference service and library instruction. Persons requiring assistance because of a permanent or temporary disability should contact Charlene Brown (Lib 136, 726-8539) or go to: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/services/disability.htm.

When classes are in session, the Reference Desk is open:

Monday through Thursday  9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Friday                  9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday                12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday                  2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Interlibrary loan

The purpose of interlibrary loan (ILL) is to obtain research materials not owned by the UMD Library from other libraries for the benefit of the UMD community. ILL uses a variety of resource sharing networks to borrow books, including dissertations and theses, and journal articles from other institutions. Since each lending institution sets its own policies, it is not possible to guarantee the receipt of materials. A minimum of 10 working days is required for all requests. Information about submitting requests is available through the library’s ILL page: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/ill/index.htm.

Contact librarians at the Reference Desk for search assistance.

The Reserve/Media desk is part of the main circulation desk on the first floor of the library. The reserve service provides assigned readings for which there will be heavy demand. Students may check out reserve materials for a short period of time, the most common is a two-hour limit. Copies of old exams may also be put on reserve for student use. UMD faculty, staff and GTAs may put materials on reserve by bringing them to the Reserve/Media Desk. All necessary forms are available from the library home page.

The UMD Archives documents and records UMD history by collecting and making available materials such as accreditation reports; biographical materials; blueprints; bulletins and catalogues; correspondence; directives, memos and announcements to faculty, staff and students; minutes; news clippings; newsletters; oral history; organization charts; personal papers of faculty and staff; photographs; proposals; reports; schedules; scrapbooks and other memorabilia; speeches; and documented student activities.

The UMD Library has a number of special collections. Check out this site for information and locations: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/homenav/coll/index.htm

The UMD Government Documents Depository provides a collection of U.S. and Minnesota documents, as well as reference services for government information. UMD is a selective depository for federal documents (approximately 40%), and full depository for Minnesota documents. These documents come in paper, microfiche, video and electronic formats: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/homenav/gov/index.htm

A book return is built into the circulation desk counter top. A second book return is in the first-floor hallway near the library entrance.

Loan policies for UMD Graduate Students can be found at: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/circ/gradpriv.htm

For information on paying fines and fees, please see: http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/circ/daily-fine-rate.htm

UMD’s Printing Services offers printing, duplicating and graphic design services to administrative and academic communities of the University. Services include: laminating, copyright permissions, design and printing of brochures, flyers, forms, letterhead, envelopes, books and booklets, postcards, business cards, resumes, etc. Printing Services has the capability to receive your original documents via the campus computer network. That means you can print directly to their Docutech laser printer for 600 dpi black and white output, or to their Xerox Majestic color laser printer for 400 dpi color output onto matte or glossy paper. Price quotes and paper samples are available upon request.

Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, 156 Chester Park, 726-8199

Affiliation

The Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic is the clinical teaching unit within the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The Department is part of the College of Education and Human Service Professions at the University of Minnesota Duluth. The clinic is generously supported by funding from the Edwin Eddy Family Foundations, making the clinic accessible to everyone in the community.

Mission

The goals of the Robert F. Pierce Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic are to: assist people of all ages with speech, language and hearing disorders through comprehensive assessment and individually designed treatment programs; and to provide a practicum experience for students in the department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Students are supervised by professional speech-language pathologists and audiologists certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Professionals at the clinic help clients, family members and other professionals gain a better understanding of communication disorders by advancing knowledge of communication disorders through research.

Referral Procedures

Anyone may access the services of the clinic. To schedule an appointment for an evaluation, or to inquire about therapy services, call (218) 726-8199.
Fees

A nominal clinic access fee is charged to offset, in part, the operating costs of the clinic. A financial assistance program is available for those who cannot afford the fee. Services are not covered by insurance.

Hearing Services Available for Children and Adults:

- Hearing evaluation
- Aural rehabilitation and counseling
- Hearing screening for institutions
- In-service/consultation for agencies
- Industrial (OSHA) screening and evaluation
- Central auditory function evaluation


Please use the above Website to check hours.

Services available include general outpatient medical care, gynecologic services, laboratory and X-ray services (charged to student’s health insurance), medications, minor surgery and sports medicine. In addition, the center provides individual and group counseling and therapy services to students experiencing ongoing or situational psychological or behavioral difficulties. Counseling services include chemical abuse counseling, adult children of alcoholic parents groups, self esteem groups, eating issues, stress management and relationship counseling.

Programs focus on the developmental needs of university students to maximize their potential so they will benefit from the academic environment and university experience.

Students with after-hours and weekend emergencies are cared for by the emergency physicians at St. Luke’s Hospital (218) 249-5616, St. Luke’s Urgent Care (218) 249-6095, Essentia Health (formerly known as St. Mary’s and Miller Dwan) (218) 727-8762.
Helpful Phone Numbers:

Career Services  22 Solon Campus Center  (218) 726-7985

Collegiate Student Affairs Offices

Labovitz School of Business and Economics
111A  LSBE  (218) 726-6594

College of Education and Human Service Professions
120 Bohannon Hall  (218) 726-7156

School of Fine Arts  239 Engineering  (218) 726-8436

College of Liberal Arts
310 Kirby Plaza  (218) 726-8180

Swenson College of Science and Engineering
140 Engineering  (218) 726-7585

Safewalk Escort Service  195 Kirby Student Center  (218) 726-6100

Financial Aid  23 Solon Campus Center  (218) 726-8000

First Year Experience  60 Solon Campus Center  (218) 726-6393

Housing Office  149 Lake Superior Hall  (218) 726-8178

Duluth Transit Bus Schedule/U Pass  (218) 722-7283

Kirby Information Desk  (218) 726-7163

Campus Police  287 Darland  (218) 726-7000

Registrar  23 Solon Campus Center  (218) 726-8000

Religious Advisers  105 Kirby Student Center  (218) 726-8737

Student Employment Office  255 Darland  (218) 726-7912

Ticket Offices

Athletics  Romano Gym/HPER  (218) 726-8595

Theater  Marshall Performing Arts Center  (218) 726-8561
For UMD’s Academic Calendar go to:
http://www.d.umn.edu/calendar/academic_cal.html