

Your Role as a TA: Recommended Strategies for Students

T.A. Planning and Resources

The Center for Teaching and
Learning

SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND IDEAS TO CONSIDER BEFOREHAND:

- What are your strengths? Where would you like to see yourself grow?
- Consult the “Potential T.A. Roles” sheet; this worksheet can help you recognize the characteristics you already embody and see new possibilities. A role isn’t meant to be a rule, but a jumping-off point
- Have you seen the syllabus? Do you have any questions or concerns?

Think we're missing something? Feel free to contact the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at ctl@hampshire.edu!

**TALK WITH THE PROFESSOR
YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH
BEFORE THE COURSE BEGINS -
THIS IS CRUCIAL NEGOTIATING
YOUR ROLE AND
UNDERSTANDING THE
PROFESSOR'S EXPECTATIONS**

THE T.A., DEFINED

A teaching assistantship is equivalent to a semester-long course. Students are expected to attend class and spend a minimum of 6 hours weekly outside of class on duties related to the course. Teaching assistants engage in the material at a deep, sustained level throughout the semester in order to be able to assist in their negotiated role with the professor. It is important that the faculty and student be on the same page about expected roles and responsibilities for both student and professor. Clarification from the start will help ensure good communication and collaboration during the semester, lead to a better learning experience for the student and better support for the faculty and students. Agreed upon responsibilities are the basis for evaluation of the TA at the end of the course.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PROFESSOR:

- -What do they hope the students get out of the class?
- What are they working on in their teaching and how could you be helpful?
- What is their ideal role for a T.A.?
- How often should you meet (the role you take might require different degrees of coordination or collaboration)?

TA's as teaching partners: Recommended Strategies for Faculty

T.A. Planning and Resources

The Center for Teaching and Learning

SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND IDEAS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MEETING WITH YOUR TA:

- What are you hoping students will get out of the class? What are you hoping the T.A. will get out of the class? What are you hoping to get out of the class?
- If you have worked with this T.A. before (as a student in one of your courses, as a T.A., and/or as your advisee): What are their strengths and weaknesses? Where do you see opportunities for their growth? What goals do they have for themselves?
- What roles do you see your T.A. having? TA-ships are meant as learning experiences, not simply as logistical supports. What else would you like help with?

TALKING WITH YOUR T.A. BEFOREHAND IS CRUCIAL TO BOTH ESTABLISHING AND CLARIFYING THEIR ROLE IN YOUR CLASSROOM, AS WELL AS MAKING SURE THEY UNDERSTAND YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR BOTH THEM AND THE COURSE. CONSULT THE "POTENTIAL T.A. ROLES" SHEET FOR IDEAS ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES YOUR T.A. COULD HAVE

Think we're missing something? Feel free to contact the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at ctl@hampshire.edu!

GOING FORWARD:

-A meeting with your TA at the start is important for establishing the role your T.A. will play in your class; this allows your T.A. to walk in on the first day and cement their presence in your classroom. If students know your T.A.'s role in the class, they may be less intimidated by them or confused by their presence, especially in majority first-year classrooms.

-Establish a regular meeting time that works for both of you. Do you want to meet once a week, or once a month? Checking in mid-semester is strongly advised, as it is helpful evaluate your T.A. mid-semester. A meeting to discuss feedback is a great idea!

TA's as teaching partners: Recommended Strategies for Faculty, continued...

The Center for Teaching and Learning

Maintain good communication with your TA throughout the semester. They are often the best people to give you useful feedback about how the course is going, what students are getting, and where they might be stuck.

Think we're missing something? Feel free to contact the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at ctl@hampshire.edu!

KEEP IN MIND:

Your T.A. is an important resource for your pedagogy. T.A.'s understand students and classroom dynamics remarkably well, given their position as a fellow student. Open up a space with your T.A. to provide feedback on student engagement, participation, and work completion. Some T.A.'s will feel that any less-than-positive feedback is best kept to themselves, and may feel that presenting that information to you would be taken as an insult. Please keep this dynamic in mind as you engage in your work with them, and find ways to make it clear that their feedback will not have repercussions for other work you may do with them (i.e. being on their Div III committee).