

**Arizona State University**  
**Teaching/Research Assistant/Associate (TA/RA)**  
**Policies and Procedures Handbook**

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## TA/RA Policies and Procedure Handbook: Introduction

This publication provides an overview of ASU policies and support services pertinent to teaching and research assistants and associates (TA/RA). This handbook is a resource for graduate students, their academic units, and other appointing units on campus. It includes information related to:

- General conditions of appointment
- Benefits
- Teaching assistant/associate appointments
- Research assistant/associate appointments
- Additional resources for teaching and research assistants and associates

The teaching and research assistant/associate role is an important one to the ASU community. A TA/RA appointment provides graduate students with professional development opportunities that are unique to academia while also supporting the university's teaching, research, and service missions.

This handbook describes the general roles and responsibilities of TAs and RAs as well as policies regarding their supervision and evaluation. Appointing units are responsible for outlining the details of their expectation of the student's assignment in appointment letter. Appendix A includes a sample appointment letter.

While many of the general policies and expectations also apply to graduate service assistants (GSA) and graduate interns, GSAs and interns are not bound by the same eligibility requirements as TAs and RAs and do not receive the same benefits as TAs and RAs (e.g., tuition remission, health insurance).

## Type of Appointments

ASU offers two kinds of assistantships/associateships:

- (1) teaching assistantships/associateships (TAs)
- (2) research assistantships/associateships (RAs).

Each classification has its own specific attributes and conditions, carefully read the relevant sections below.

### *Teaching Assistant*

A teaching assistant is an enrolled student appointed part-time by the university whose primary responsibility is in an instructional capacity. Teaching assistants may lecture, lead discussion groups, serve as an assistant to laboratory classes, tutor students, proctor examinations, grade tests and papers, and provide general assistance in the instructional process under the direct supervision of a faculty supervisor.

### *Teaching Associate*

A teaching associate is an enrolled graduate student appointed part-time by the university under the direct supervision of a faculty member whose primary responsibility is in an instructional capacity and who holds a master's degree or its equivalent. The roles of the

teaching associate are similar to those of the teaching assistant, but may differ in terms of responsibilities (e.g., course level). Departments may consider students who have completed a master's degree or its equivalent (30 hours of graduate work) for a teaching associateship.

### ***Research Assistant***

A research assistant is an enrolled student appointed part-time by the university whose primary responsibilities are research related. Graduate research assistants may assist faculty members in research and creative activities, perform administrative or editorial duties directly connected to research and creative activities, develop and evaluate instructional materials and/or curricula, or assume responsibilities for a designated research area under the direct supervision of a faculty member.

### ***Research Associate***

A graduate research associate is an enrolled student appointed part-time by the university under the direct supervision of a faculty member whose primary responsibilities are research related. Research associates are similar to research assistants but generally have a higher degree of research responsibility. Departments may consider students who have completed a master's degree or its equivalent (30 hours of graduate work) for a research associateship

## **Appointment and Enrollment Policies and Procedures**

Teaching and research assistants/associates (TAs and RAs, respectively) are full-time graduate students admitted to a degree program and appointed on a part-time basis by Arizona State University (ASU). TAs and RAs must have enrolled for at least 6 hours of appropriate credit during fall and spring semester. Appropriate credit is determined by the student's academic unit. TAs and RAs must maintain a 3.0 GPA (or higher if determined by their academic unit) during a TA/RA appointment.

Federal tax law considers TAs/RAs to be full-time students carrying out duties that enhance their professional development under the guidance of a faculty mentor, for which they receive a compensatory stipend. Following Arizona Board of Regents' policy, work that is primarily clerical or other work not associated with teaching or research is not appropriate for TAs and RAs. If a unit requires such duties of a graduate student, they should consider appointing a GSA or consult Human Resources.

### ***Criteria for Appointment***

A unit selecting a TA/RA must base the appointment on an evaluation of a student's academic credentials and potential for sustained achievement in the field of study and a high standard of performance in teaching or research.

## *Terms of Appointment*

A TA/RA offer must be in writing. Verbal arrangements between a student and faculty member does not constitute an official offer. A student cannot begin any duties associated with an appointment until the business manager, or other unit designee, of the appointing unit, receives a signed offer letter. An offer letter should include at minimum the following information:

- Appointment term(s) (i.e., fall, spring, academic year)
- Minimum credit hour enrollment required
- Appointment level (assistant or associate) and compensatory stipend
- Tuition remission benefits (see “Benefits for Teaching and Research Assistants/Associates” on page 11)
- Instructions and deadline for acceptance of offer
- Information about required orientations or trainings. This includes stipulations regarding language proficiency and the Teaching Assistants/Associates Development (TAD) program (see “TAD” on page 12)
- Essential job functions of the TA/RA appointment, include specific duties and responsibilities of the assignment, and/or the nature of the project
- Name of the faculty supervisor and form of supervision
- Performance review process and criteria (including minimum required GPA, if greater than 3.0), grievance procedures, and conditions of reappointment, schedule expectations about the number of hours spent on duties/project during the week, weekends and holiday breaks, along with policies regarding absences
- Internal policies for holding appointments outside of academic unit, or holding teaching or consulting positions while enrolled (see “Workload” on page 6)
- Directions to this policy handbook <https://graduate.asu.edu/ta-ra-handbook>
- Academic unit’s right to rescind, modify, or terminate offers (see “Termination before End of Appointment Period” page 8, “Involuntary Termination for Position Abandonment”, page 9 and Rescinded or Modified Offers” on page 10)
- Policies for international student whose primary language is not English, the academic unit should notify the student that the offer is dependent upon satisfactory fulfillment of the English speaking skills policy (see “Language Proficiency for International TAs” on page 10)

Appendix A provides a sample offer letters which is also located at <https://graduate.asu.edu/graduate-support-staff>.

If the appointment letter received by a student does not include the above information, the student should contact their appointing unit for written clarification.

Communications such as e-mails between faculty and students do not constitute official offers of appointment. Students should not begin an appointment as a TA/RA until they have

received a formal appointment letter.

### ***Eligibility***

Only students enrolled and admitted in a degree program at ASU are eligible to receive an appointment as a TA/RA. TA/RA must enroll for a minimum of six hours during the fall and spring semester. A TA/RA must have enrolled for a minimum of one hour during the summer session(s). Students cannot have audited courses to fulfill this requirement. Students will need prior approval from the academic unit to use undergraduate-level coursework to fulfill this requirement.

Academic units may require more than six hours of enrollment each semester. The minimum enrollment requirement will be included in the unit's TA/RA offer letter.

Students are required to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA during their appointment. Academic units may require students to maintain a higher GPA. The minimum GPA requirement will be included in the unit's offer letter.

### ***Language Proficiency for International Teaching Assistants/Associates (ITAs)***

Students whose native language is not English must meet spoken English requirements before they can have any primary teaching responsibilities. All prospective international teaching assistants (ITAs) must achieve a score of 55 or higher on the SPEAK test. The SPEAK test is the local version of the Test of Spoken English (TSE), authorized by Educational Testing Services (ETS) and administered at ASU through Global Launch. In order to assume full teaching responsibilities, such as serving as the instructor of a class or leading discussion groups TAs must be certified. Only students who serve as lab assistants or tutors can receive a score of 50 and assume non-teaching responsibilities. Students scoring below 50 will not serve as lab assistants, tutors, or any teaching responsibilities unless they enrolled in the ITA Teacher Training Course and pass with ITA certification. For more information, please visit <https://learnenglish.asu.edu/international-teaching-assistant>

### ***Workload***

Since the primary purpose of an assistantship/associateship is to assist the student in successfully completing an academic program, students holding appointments as teaching or research assistants (or associates) will work no more than .50 FTE (20 hours per week) during the fall and spring semesters. TAs and RAs may work up to 1.00 FTE (40 hours per week) during summer sessions and semester breaks. However, TAs and RAs may not average more than .625 FTE (25 hours per week) during the year as measured by the Affordable Care Act (October through September). Graduate students who exceed this limit are terminated from their appointment and will not be eligible for reappointment for 26 weeks.

These guidelines also apply to Graduate Interns and Graduate Service Assistants. For more information, see <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm305-05.html> and [www.asu.edu/hr/documents/grademploymentmay2014.pdf](http://www.asu.edu/hr/documents/grademploymentmay2014.pdf).

Graduate students may be hired as Faculty Associates (FAs) if they do not hold a TA/RA position, if their TA/RA position is less than .50 FTE, or during the summer semester. However, the graduate student employment guidelines must still be followed. See <https://cfo.asu.edu/faq/2935>, <https://cfo.asu.edu/faq/2936>, and <https://cfo.asu.edu/aca-faqs-parttimeteaching> for more information.

TAs/RAs are not restricted from holding additional teaching or consulting positions outside of the university unless otherwise indicated by their appointing unit. Academic units may choose to stipulate that by accepting their assistantship, TAs/RAs agree not to hold any outside teaching or consultant position without prior consultation and agreement between the department and the TA/RA.

### ***Enrollment***

During the fall and spring semesters, a TA/RA must enroll for a minimum of six hours. Students with TA/RA appointments during the summer must enroll for a minimum of one hour during the summer (the one hour may be in any summer, session offered during the summer).

The office of Graduate Education does not have a maximum credit hour enrollment policy. Academic units will set course loads for their students that facilitate each student's academic progress.

### ***Required Orientation/Meetings***

All teaching assistants/associates are required to complete the Teaching Assistant Development (TAD) program administered by the office of Graduate Education. The TAD Program provides ASU TA/RAs with strategies for successfully interacting with students and tips on how to lead discussions and grade students' work. For more information on fulfilling the requirements of this program, go to <https://graduate.asu.edu/tad>. In addition, many departments require TAs/RAs to attend an orientation session or training prior to the beginning of classes as a condition of appointment.

TAs/RAs should also meet with their faculty supervisor at least two weeks before the start of the semester, or shortly after the unit provides a written appointment. Appendix B provided a guide for the first meeting,

### ***Reappointments***

TA/RA appointments are, by definition, term appointments. TAs/RAs should not assume reappointment merely because they did not receive a termination notification at the end of a term. Reappointments are subject to and contingent upon the continuing availability of funds, satisfactory academic progress and performance as determined by a student's academic unit and appointing unit. In considering reappointments, the appointing unit or project director must consider the TA's/RA's contribution to the objectives of the unit or project along with the assistant's/associate's academic progress.

## ***Evaluation***

The appointing unit faculty supervisor or project director should conduct a periodic review and a written evaluation each term. Each appointing unit should establish its own criteria and include the criteria in the appointment letter. Written evaluation should include be: prompt, efficient, and address accurate completion of assigned tasks; ability to work independently once tasks are explained; ability to analyze problems and find solutions; cooperation with supervisors and other TAs/RAs; and professional behavior. The TA/RA should subsequently sign the evaluation and may append a written response. The evaluator should provide a copy to the student and forward a copy of these documents to the student's faculty advisor and the head of the academic unit for placement in the student's official file.

Evaluation of performance shall not be based on sex, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, nor shall it be influenced by a student exercising protected rights to freedom of expression or association.

For sample evaluation documents, see Appendix C.

## ***Report of Academic Progress***

Each academic program must have a statement of what constitutes satisfactory academic progress within their academic program handbook. At the end of each academic term and for the duration of TA/RA appointment, TA/RAs should present an academic progress report and a transcript to their supervising faculty member should the appointment be outside their academic unit. The TA's dissertation advisor and supervising faculty member should sign the academic report, and this report should remain in the student file within their academic unit.

## ***Absence from Service***

A TA/RA should notify their supervisor in advance of an absence and, when possible, assist in obtaining a replacement or rearrangement of the duties. Excessive absences, regardless of the reason, are cause for termination before the end of the appointment period. TAs/RAs should consult with the supervising faculty member about specific policies regarding absence from service.

## ***Termination before End of Appointment Period***

The head of the appointing unit may make TA/RA assignments and re-assignments whenever warranted. TAs are responsible and required to fulfill their assignment throughout the semester as outlined in an appointment letter until they receive a revised letter by the appointing unit. There are both voluntary and involuntary reasons that a unit can terminate an assistantship/associateship. Reasons for involuntary termination may include, but are not limited to the following:

- change in academic discipline (major)
- academic or scientific misconduct
- poor academic performance or excessive absences
- misconduct in assigned duties
- unsatisfactory performance in assigned duties
- breach of ASU Student Code of Conduct (<https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>)
- incapacitation of the TA/RA appointment for an extended period of time
- professional misconduct as defined in ASU's Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd>)
- misuse of university assets, including but not limited to computing resources (e.g., copyright infringement, viewing pornography)

In those cases, where the job performance of a TA/RA is not meeting expectations, the supervising faculty member should advise the student, both orally and in writing. The supervising faculty should attempt to help the TA/RA improve their performance before terminating the appointment. Additionally, a supervising faculty member or head of the academic unit should document the reasons for the actions to terminate prior to the end of the appointment term. The dean of the academic college and the Dean of Graduate Education should receive a copy of the letter outlining cause for termination prior to the end of the original appointment. Within 10 days of the receipt of the notice of termination, the TA/RA may appeal the decision at the unit and college level. The Dean of Graduate Education should receive a copy of the appeal. Dismissal procedures found at <https://graduate.asu.edu/graduate-support-staff>.

Reasons for voluntary termination may include, but are not limited to the following:

- change in academic discipline (major)
- health problems
- interference with academic progress
- unfair or unreasonable demands
- unforeseen family responsibilities

If a TA/RA is unable to continue an appointment, they must inform the supervising faculty member in writing of the reasons for the action. The academic unit faculty director or chair of the academic unit and the Dean of Graduate Education should receive a copy of the memo should the termination occur prior to the end of the semester.

### ***Involuntary Termination for Position Abandonment***

A supervising faculty member or academic unit can terminate a TA/RA who has abandoned their position. A TA/RA who has not reported for their assignment for three or more, consecutive business days (or 3/5 of a regular week's workload) has abandoned their position. The supervising faculty member should send a letter via mail (return receipt requested) or e-mail (read receipt requested) outlining the details in the original appointment letter, including the start date of the appointment and the length of time the TA/RA has failed reporting for duty. The letter should also include but not limited to outlining the TA/RA responsibilities and length of time for not communicating with the faculty advisor or any other department member of difficulties or conflicts they were

experiencing. The TA/RA has two days (or 2/5 of a normal workweek) to reply and address the concern. After the two days, the appointing unit should send a confirming letter or e-mail terminating the TA/RA appointment due to the abandonment.

### ***Rescinded or Modified Offers***

Appointing units have the right to rescind or modify TA/RA offers prior to the beginning of the appointment term, given reasonable cause. Reasons for the rescinding or modification of offers may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Change in academic unit's financial situation
- Student misconduct
- Change in student's academic discipline or enrollment status
- Failure of student to accept offer by deadline indicated in offer letter
- Failure of student to complete required orientations or trainings as indicated in offer letter

Appointing units must issue a formal letter outlining causes for rescinding or modifying an offer.

### ***Compensatory Stipend Disbursement***

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has determined that the stipend portion of TA/RA appointments is compensatory in nature and the university will disburse funds through the university payroll system. TAs/RAs will receive their stipend disbursements on a biweekly basis. TAs/RAs are responsible to confirm with the appointing department that they completed all necessary materials and submitted materials to the appropriate university offices. TAs/RAs should confirm and understand this process prior to the start of their appointment.

### ***Income Tax Withholding on TA/RA Stipend Compensation***

Stipend compensation distributed to TAs/RAs through the payroll system are subject to federal and state income tax withholding. The amount of withholding depends on how the TA/RA completes IRS Form W-4, Employee Withholding Allowance Certificate, and the Arizona Form A-4, Withholding Percentage Election. The university payroll process reviewed during department orientation include these forms and should be reviewed and prepared carefully. If a TA/RA does not have a department orientation, the forms also are available at <https://cfo.asu.edu/hr-forms>. Under some circumstances, a TA/RA may be exempt from income tax withholding, but all TAs/RAs must complete the forms.

### ***FICA***

While wages are normally subject to the 7.65% federal FICA tax (Social Security and Medicare), TAs/RAs are exempt from this tax provided they meet minimum enrollment guidelines established by the university. Additional information regarding the student FICA tax exemption and enrollment guidelines are online at <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/fin/fin601.html>.

## ***Proof of Citizenship/Right to Work in the United States: All New Employees***

Federal regulations require that all new ASU employees and affiliates show proof, in person, of citizenship or right to work in the United States. To ensure that new TAs/RAs receive their first stipend on the first disbursement date of the semester, TAs/RAs must present two forms of identification to Human Resources and complete the federally required I-9 document within three working days after the date of appointment (the date the student begins to perform his/her duties at ASU). TAs should contact their appointing department to see if a HR representative will be available at their department orientation. The I-9 document can be picked up from the student's academic department or at Human Resources.

An international student transferring from another school within the United States is responsible for contacting the International Student Advisor on that campus to ensure that the SEVIS transfer is complete. International students transferring from another school are responsible for ensuring appropriate procedures are complete. Upon arriving at ASU, international students must contact the International Student and Scholars Center (ISSC) in the Student Services Building, Room 170, 480-727-4776, [issc@asu.edu](mailto:issc@asu.edu). International students must check in with ISO before going to Human Resources to verify authorization to hold a TA/RA appointment or work in any capacity on campus. Additional information is on-line at <https://students.asu.edu/international/issc>.

## **Benefits for Teaching and Research Assistants/Associates**

The student's academic unit must enter appointment information, including name of supervising faculty member, and FTE appointment into gPortal via PeopleSoft (<https://webapp4.asu.edu/myasu/pscs>). Appointing units outside of the student's academic home should ask the home unit to enter this information if they approve of the appointment.

### ***Tuition***

Students with TA/RA .50 FTE appointments (i.e., 20 hours per week), who are appointed within the first 9 weeks of a semester during the academic year, receive an award covering tuition for the semester. Students with TA/RA .50 FTE appointments during the summer session(s) receive an award covering tuition.

Students with TA/RA .25-.49 FTE appointments (i.e., 10-19 hours per week), who are appointed within the first 9 weeks of a semester during the academic year, receive an award covering 100% of the nonresident portion of tuition and an award covering 50% of the remaining tuition for the semester. Students with TA/RA .25-.49 FTE appointments during the summer session(s) receive an award covering 100% of the nonresident portion of tuition and an award covering 50% of the remaining tuition.

The Tuition Payment Office will extend the deadline for payment of any remaining tuition. For more information, contact the Student Accounts Office (480-965-6341).

Tuition remission is a non-taxable fringe benefit to graduate TAs/RAs. The university cannot convert this benefit into a cash award. A TA/RA will receive a tuition remission benefit in one of two ways: (1) a credit to their student account, or (2) reimbursed at a rate consistent with the number of enrolled credit hours.

### ***Health Insurance***

The university provides an award covering the premium for individual health insurance for teaching and research assistants/associates who meet the minimum eligibility requirements during the duration of their appointment (coverage periods are August 16–January 15 and January 16–August 15). These are:

- appointment at 50% time (20 hours per week)
- hired as a TA or RA no later than the end of the eighth week of classes of the semester
- registered for a minimum of 6 credit hours in appropriate coursework each semester, as required by federal policy.

In order to receive this benefit, students must sign in at My ASU (<http://asu.edu/myasu>). Under Quick Links, click on Health & Wellness, then click Enroll/Cancel Student Health Insurance.

For students not meeting minimum eligibility requirements, health insurance is available for purchase to TAs/RAs as it is to all graduate students and must be selected at the time of registration. Family health insurance may be purchased, but the student is responsible for payment of the premium and all other related expenses for family members. (For further information on student and family health insurance, see <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/health/insurance>).

### ***Parental Leave***

TAs/RAs with .50 FTE appointments may receive six weeks of paid leave for purposes of recovering from childbirth. For further information on parental leave, see HHU <https://provost.asu.edu/academic-personnel/parental-leave>.

### ***Library Privileges***

TAs/RAs are entitled to an extended borrowing period of 90 days.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### ***Equal Opportunity Policy Statement***

Discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status. Equal opportunity includes, but is not limited to, recruitment, appointing, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfers, university-sponsored training, education, tuition assistance, and social and recreational programs. More information about this policy is available at <http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-equityandinclusion>.

## ***Religious Beliefs and Practices***

No employee, agent, or institution under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board of Regents shall discriminate or retaliate against any student, employee, or other individual because of an individual's religious belief or practice or any absence thereof. Furthermore, administrators and faculty members must reasonably accommodate individual religious practices. A refusal to accommodate is justified only when undue hardship will result from each available alternative or reasonable accommodation. No administrator or faculty member shall retaliate or otherwise discriminate against any student, employee, or prospective employee because that individual sought a religious accommodation pursuant to this policy. More information about this policy is available at <http://cfo.asu.edu/hr-equityandinclusion>.

## ***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the working/learning environment and creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment or takes the form of seeking sexual favors in exchange for a promise of a benefit or a threat of a penalty. Sexual harassment is a violation of ASU policy as well as state and federal law. More information about this policy is available at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/>.

## ***Amorous Relationship***

TA/RA's may not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student over whom they exert control or influence, real or perceived. TA/RA may not have a romantic or sexual relationships with students registered in a class in which they are the appointed TA/RA. Regardless of the TA/RA assigned role such as a grader, lab assistant or mentor, in their official capacity, they may not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. Violation of this provision of the TA/RA policy may lead to involuntary termination of the TA/RA appointment period and/or a ban from future appointments or employment with the university.

## ***Ownership of Intellectual Property***

Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) Intellectual Property Policy (ABOR 6-908, <https://www.azregents.edu/board-committees/policy-manual>) generally states that all discoveries or inventions resulting from research or creative activities carried on by or under the direction of any university employee, supported by university funds or funds administered by the university or ABOR, or developed using university resources or facilities, belong to ABOR. ABOR is permissible to use and control intellectual property resulting from discoveries, inventions, and research in ways that produce benefit to the university and to the public. Materials such as research notes developed in the lab or in the field are also the property of ABOR. This policy provides a corresponding benefit to the inventor. Additional information about the policies are located within from the Office of Arizona Technology Enterprises and online at <http://www.azte.com/>.

## ***Academic Integrity***

ASU holds all students to the highest standard of academic integrity. The failure of any student to meet these standards may result in suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of the individual colleges. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, tampering, plagiarism, or facilitating such activities. The university and college academic integrity policies are available online at <https://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

## ***Assistants/Associates and Commercial Services***

TAs/RAs appointed to support a specific course/class may not take or provide notes for that course/class to commercial note-taking services or students. The college Dean and course instructor(s) can make exceptions on a case-by-case basis as in the instance of an authorized support service for disabled students.

## ***Student Anti-Retaliation Statement***

Students have the right to be free from retaliation. Threats or other forms of intimidation or retribution against a student who files a complaint or grievance, requests an administrative remedy, participates in an investigation, appears as a witness at an administrative hearing, or opposes an unlawful act, discriminatory practice, or policy are prohibited and subject to university disciplinary procedures. Students with complaints of retaliation should utilize the procedures available under the University Code of Conduct, the Student Code of Conduct, the Graduate Student Grievance Procedure, the Student Employee Grievance Procedure, the Sexual Harassment Policy, nondiscrimination policies, or other available administrative procedures as appropriate. For assistance with procedures, students should contact the dean of the academic college if the circumstances relate to a course or academic evaluation, the Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion if the circumstances relate to a claim of discrimination or harassment, or the Dean of Students for all other circumstances.

## APPENDIX A: SAMMPLE APPOINTMENT LETTER

[Date]

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The [department/division/unit] of \_\_\_\_\_ is pleased to offer you a position as a [teaching/research] [assistant/associate] [(TA)/(RA)] for the [\_INSERT YR\_\_fall semester OR academic year. etc.]. This is a [HALF/TIME, third-time/quarter-time/eighth-time, etc.] appointment with a compensatory stipend of [\$\_\_\_\_\_]. ASU stipends are paid bi-weekly; your first pay date will be [list first pay date].

The university provides an award covering a portion of the tuition costs for TAs/RAs with .25-.49 FTE appointments. The estimated tuition cost for students enrolling in 7 or more hours is \$2,703 per semester. If you have applied for and/or received financial aid, acceptance of this assistantship may decrease your financial aid funding eligibility. .

**Add a paragraph describing, as specifically as possible, the assistantship assignment and any orientation/training required by the department. Be sure to include dates, responsibilities, and faculty supervisor.**

Please be advised that as an employee of ASU, you will be subject to Arizona Board of Regents Policy 6-908 relating to the ownership of intellectual property (see [www.abor.asu.edu/1\\_the\\_regents/policymanual/index.html](http://www.abor.asu.edu/1_the_regents/policymanual/index.html)). ASU retains the right to retain ownership in intellectual property developed by its employees. Employees receive recognition for and share in the revenue of intellectual property with commercial value. The Arizona Technology Enterprises (AzTE) is responsible for the development and commercialization of intellectual property developed by ASU employees (see [www.azte.com](http://www.azte.com)). As an employee, you have an obligation to disclose any intellectual property you create to AzTE.

**Add a paragraph on TA training if it is applicable to your hire, as follows:**

New TAs are required to attend an Orientation and Training Program for Teaching Assistants and Associates. Two sessions are available: Thursday, August 11 from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. and Friday, August 12 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. For further information, please visit [Teaching Assistant Development \(TAD\) program](#). The first pay period of the [fall/spring] semester includes the hours spent at the TA orientation sessions. Failure to comply with orientation requirements may jeopardize eligibility for Graduate Education awards programs and graduate appointments (e.g., travel grants, research awards and the assistantship).

**If this offer is being made to a student whose primary language is not English, add the following:**

Graduate teaching assistants/associates whose native language is not English are required to take the TSE/SPEAK test or TOEFL iBT test. In order to assume primary teaching responsibilities students must earn a minimum score of 55 on the TSE/SPEAK test or 26 on the TOEFL iBT. A score of 50 on the TSE/SPEAK test is acceptable if the position is for a lab assistant or tutor.

**Please note that TAs and RAs must enroll for a minimum of six (6) non-audit units each fall and spring semester of their assistantship/associateship appointment. See the [TA/RA Handbook](#) for additional information.**

We are pleased to be able to provide this [teaching/research] [assistantship/associateship] appointment and appreciate your interest in our program and faculty. We would like to hear of your decision by [date]. If we have not received your acceptance by this date, the assistantship may be offered to another candidate.

Please indicate your acceptance of this [assistantship/associateship] by signing below and returning this form to the department. If you have any questions about these offers or the program, please call 480-965- \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ I accept this assistantship.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to accept this assistantship.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: FIRST MEETING GUIDE FOR TAs AND SUPERVISORS

The appointing academic unit should provide TAs with the name of the instructor they will be assisting, as well as information regarding the course name, description, times, etc. When possible, TAs should contact their supervisor at least two weeks before the start of the course. The following is a list of topics and questions TAs and supervisors should discuss to lay the foundation of their working relationship for the semester. While this exchange can take place via e-mail, an in-person conversation is highly recommended.

### *Course Logistics*

- Verify the TA has been assigned to the correct course
- Verify class days and times
- How many students will the TA be responsible for?
- What are the objectives of the course? Is it a prerequisite for majors? General education for non-majors?
- Who will supervise the TA? How? How often?
- Will there be other TAs for the course?

### *Responsibilities*

- How will the responsibilities of the course be divided between the TA, the supervisor, and (if applicable) other TAs?
- What will be the TA's responsibilities? Will the TA:
  - Lead discussions regularly? Occasionally? When the instructor is absent?
  - Lecture regularly? Occasionally? When the instructor is absent?
  - Tutor and/or give individual assistance?
  - Organize group help/review sessions?
  - Conduct/supervise laboratory exercises?
  - Keep track of and obtain supplies and materials?
  - Give demonstrations?
  - Prepare for/clean up after labs?
  - Use AV equipment? Be responsible for getting/returning this equipment?
  - Attend lectures? If so, how often? If not, how will the TA be updated on course progress?
  - Prepare course materials (such as syllabi, exams, quizzes, manuals, guides, assignments, experiments)?
  - Grade (papers, projects, reports, quizzes, examinations, participation, attendance)?
- Discuss the TA's office hours: how many hours should the TA hold per week? When? Where? Should they coordinate with the instructor's office hours?

### *Policies and Procedures*

- What is departmental procedure for handling such problems as plagiarism, cheating, and grade appeals? What should the TA do if they notice these issues?
- What are department procedures for grades? What are the instructor's practices and policies for grading?
- How much help is too much? What kind of assistance should/shouldn't the TA give students?
- How should the TA handle emergencies (such as lab emergencies)?
- If the TA is responsible for scheduling AV equipment, how do they do so?
- What should a TA do, and whom should they contact, if they are unable to attend a class session?
- Should the TA handle disputes, or will the instructor? Should the TA report student concerns with lectures, exams, and/or course materials?

- What are the guidelines for TA communication with students? For example, should the TA copy the instructor on all e-mail communication with students, or only notify the instructor if there is a problem?

### ***TA Goals and Evaluation***

TAships are important professional development opportunities, and supervisors should encourage and assist their students to make the most of them:

- Discuss the TA's strengths and weaknesses as relates to their responsibilities and to the subject matter of the course. How can the TA take advantage of these strengths to succeed as a TA? How can they use their TAship to improve on their weaknesses?
- What does the TA want to gain from the TA experience, and how can the instructor foster progress towards these goals?
- How much autonomy or latitude will the TA have to try new things/to present new ideas?
- How will the TA be evaluated? When will the TA be evaluated? By whom? (The instructor? the department? the students?) Will the TA have access to evaluation results? Will they be allowed to include questions on student evaluation forms?

## APPENDIX C: TA PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DOCUMENTS

### *Performance Review Guidelines - Teaching Assistants*

Faculty Supervisors are encouraged to complete the following review process for TAs assigned to their courses.

1. Meet with the TA before the semester begins to discuss their duties and your expectations of them as your TA.

Duties might include (but are not limited to):

- Attending lectures (Do you expect attendance at all lectures or at certain lectures?)
- Giving lectures (Which lectures do you expect them to provide?)
- Leading breakout or lab sections (How many per week? What should they include?)
- Holding weekly office hours (How many?)
- Copying or printing coursework and handouts
- Preparing assignments/quizzes/exams, etc.
- Grading
- Proctoring exams
- Keeping attendance and grade records
- Meeting with you and/or other TAs for the course

Expectations might include (but are not limited to):

- Clear communication, both verbally and written
- Respectful interactions with the professor, other TAs, and students
- Awareness of students' learning needs
- Fairness in grading and interacting with students
- Appropriate use of materials, equipment, and techniques
- Sufficient knowledge of course subject matter and materials
- Prompt in attending lectures and sections, and in meeting deadlines
- Organized
- Professional conduct

2. At mid-term and again at the end of the semester, evaluate the TA's performance based on the duties and expectations you discussed at the beginning of the semester. You may consider rating their performance as "Needs Improvement," "Meets Expectations," or "Exceeds Expectations," ratings that could be broken into categories (e.g., a TA may exceed expectations in grading and record keeping, but need improvement in being punctual). It is recommended you provide both written and verbal feedback to your TA.

## *Performance Review Guidelines – TAs as Instructors of Record*

If a graduate student you supervise is the instructor of record for a course, you are encouraged to observe their class at least once per semester. The purpose of this observation is to provide helpful feedback for the TA as they continue to develop their teaching style and skills. It also provides you the ability to comment on their teaching skills in letters of recommendation.

When observing a class, considering the following review process:

1. Ask the TA to provide you with a brief description or lesson plan for the day of observation.
2. As you observe the class, take notes that you can use to give feedback to the TA.
3. Consider class elements such as the following:
  - how the TA uses the classroom space, technology, and materials
  - how the session is organized
  - the suitability of the content
  - the TA's communication style
  - the instructor-student interactions
  - how the TA works to fulfill and/or adapts their lesson plan
4. If you find it helpful, you might consider using the observation rubric on the next page.
5. After you have observed the class, share your feedback with the TA. Provide them with written comments that they can refer to later. In addition, an in-person discussion about their class is highly valuable.

Observation Rubric*	
Organization (1-5)	<p>1 = The session objective is unclear with no organization of main points.</p> <p>2 = There is a basic objective but main points of the session are ambiguous.</p> <p>3 = The session follows a general objective that is supported by main points. Some information is ambiguous.</p> <p>4 = The session follows a logical organization; main points are clear. Some irrelevant drifts away from the objective. Shows good planning, but may be somewhat inflexible.</p> <p>5 = The session is clear, logical, and very organized around a well-developed objective. Shows excellent planning. May include flexibility that does not drift far from objective.</p>
Suitability of Content (1-5)	<p>1 = Content is irrelevant or not at the level of this group of students.</p> <p>2 = Content is relevant, but not presented at the students' level.</p> <p>3 = Content is relevant, somewhat engaging and somewhat appropriate to the students' level.</p> <p>4 = Content is highly relevant, engaging and mostly appropriate to the students' level. A sufficient amount of material is covered.</p> <p>5 = Content is highly relevant, engaging and appropriate to the students' level. The amount of material covered fits well with what should be expected of this session.</p>
Communication Style (1-5)	<p>1 = Voice can hardly be heard, little eye contact, distracting speech fillers and distracting opinions.</p> <p>2 = Voice can be heard, but is monotonous. Little eye contact. Some distracting behaviors.</p> <p>3 = Presentation style does not significantly take away from, yet does not contribute meaningfully to student learning.</p> <p>4 = Voice production is articulate, engaging, sincere, and shows conviction. Eye contact, appearance, posture, facial expressions and gestures promote learning.</p> <p>5 = Confident, well-articulated, enthusiastic voice production. Presentation style is friendly, genuine, and animated. Eye contact, body posture, gestures, and facial expressions create a strong bond with students, promoting learning.</p>
Instructor-Student Interaction (1-5)	<p>1 = Only the instructor speaks during the session. Little or no student interaction. Instructor has no command over what students do.</p> <p>2 = Instructor generally dominates discourse with little student participation. Instructor has basic management of the session.</p> <p>3 = Instructor somewhat dominates discourse, but answers students' questions and tries to encourage some active participation. Instructor manages the session sufficiently well to cover the content.</p> <p>4 = Students take an active role in the session when it is appropriate. Instructor maintains command of the session and promotes participation. Instructor-Student interaction or student group work promotes learning. May fail to anticipate some problems, or may not be fully clear in addressing questions.</p> <p>5 = Students participate actively and productively in discussion. Instructor maintains a good command of the session that highly promotes participation and allows flexibility when necessary. Instructor-Student interaction promotes learning outcomes and motivates students. Instructor is efficient in assessing student needs, anticipates problems, and is effective in addressing questions.</p>
Use of Materials (1-5)	<p>1 = Relies on abstract explanations. Uses irrelevant or confusing resources</p> <p>2 = Some explanations are too abstract. Basic use of materials or media to illustrate content.</p> <p>3 = Materials/media are appropriately used to illustrate content, but there are not enough examples or there is limited access to resources.</p> <p>4 = Materials/media enhance learning by providing enough examples or access. Procedures may not be fully clear. Some instructional strategies may not work sufficiently well.</p> <p>5 = Materials/media highly enhance learning and engage students. Procedures are clear, instructional strategies are highly effective. Students have access to resources and actively make use of materials.</p>

\* Rubric developed by and used with permission from the ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association