

Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Department and University Policies for Teaching Assistants

1 General Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants

The GLA position is a supervised position with very specific duties helping students in the MILE and the MAC:

- Course coordinators and the MAC coordinator direct GLAs. You will need to follow the instructions of the coordinator.
- It is critical to show up on time and work on the job you are assigned. Your working time as a GLA is not for doing your own homework or anything other than your responsibilities as a GLA.

The GTA position has more responsibility. You are the instructor of record for a section. Typically you will be supervised by a course coordinator.

- You need to: Show up to class on-time. Use the full class time. Hold regular office hours in which you help students. Grade student work promptly. Work under the direction of the course coordinator. Follow all course policies set by the course coordinator. Use the syllabus required for the course. Check your roll.
- Do not ever: Come to class late. Dismiss class early. Ignore course policies. Submit grades late.
- If you have questions about policies for the course, ask the course coordinator.
- You must hold regularly scheduled office hours outside of class during which you are fully available to help your students. Three hours per week is a reasonable minimum. If you must cancel office hours, notify your class and reschedule the missed hours.

2 Working Hours and Assigned Courses for Graduate Assistants

- M.S. students with a GLA can be assigned to 10, 15, or 20 hours per week work in a MILE lab or the MAC.
- Ph.D. students with a GLA will be assigned to work 20 hours per week in a MILE lab or the MAC.
- An M.S. or Ph.D. student with a departmental GTA will be assigned to teach the equivalent of three three credit hour courses per annual year.
- Students with university level fellowships (such as an MBD, B&B, or University Fellowship) will be assigned to teach one three credit hour course per annual year.
- All students assigned to teach as instructor of record, whether they have a GTA or fellowship, must complete Math 9116 during the first fall semester in which they have support.
- Any contrary university level policies, such as university rules related to fellowships, will supersede the above policies.

3 **Substitute Instructors**

You can't cancel your class under any circumstance. It is your responsibility to make sure your class is taught. If you are unable to teach your class for some reason, it is your responsibility to find someone to substitute. Only other instructors in the math department can serve as acceptable substitutes. You need to notify your course coordinator and separately notify the department by providing information on any classes missed and leaving the Substitute Instructor form (see end of this document) in the front office of the department.

To make sure your classes will meet no matter what, you should decide at the beginning of the semester who will cover your classes in case of an emergency. In case of emergency you will need to work with your agreed upon substitute and the course coordinator to make sure your class meets as scheduled.

4 Syllabi

As a GTA you will find that a clear and complete syllabus benefits both you and your students. It is good for your students because it lets them know what to expect from the course. It is good for you because if you apply reasonable policies that are clearly written in the syllabus, then student complaints about your policies won't be a problem. In most cases, you will not have to write a syllabus. All coordinated courses have a single standard syllabus that you are required to use; all you have to do is attach your name, contact information, and the time and place of your section.

A syllabus should have the following:

- Complete course title and number, your name, the term.
- Office hours and contact information.
- Prerequisites.
- Learning outcomes. In some cases these can be simply a reference to the course content standards at <http://mathstat.gsu.edu/files/2014/10/Course-Content.pdf>
- Course requirements and assignments.
- For 4000/6000 level courses: what additional work is expected of graduate students. (This is not optional).
- Grade scale and how the final grade is computed.
- Make-up examination policy and inclement weather policy. (e.g. If the university closes on an exam date, the exam is moved to the next class.)
- An attendance policy.
- Textbook.
- Withdrawal date. October 11 for Fall 2016.
- A specific policy on academic dishonesty, such as a zero for any plagiarized work or any work on which cheating occurred. Also refer to the university Policy on Academic Honesty. For example: This course is conducted in a manner consistent with the university policy on academic honesty at <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>
- The statement: "Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation."

- The statement: “Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought.”
- The statement: “The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.”

5 Emails

Student emails (`yourname@student.gsu.edu`) are considered protected information under FERPA. You should get a separate GSU email (`yourname@gsu.edu`) for use as an instructor. This will be the address you give to your students.

In most cases, when you are hired as a GTA, paper work is submitted to the University's HR department, and an official GSU email should be automatically created. If this does not happen, you should contact our office manager, Sandra Ahuama-Jonas. She is the only one authorized to send in a request for a GSU email. **You should not send in your own request for a GSU email account.**

6 Enrollment

- Late registration is the first week of classes. During this time students can drop and add classes.
- During late registration and the second week of classes students without suitable pre-requisites can be involuntarily withdrawn courses. In some cases, coordinators will ask you to submit a registration adjustment for such students.
- After late registration, instructors can add students. Do not do this without consulting your course coordinator.
- For registration adjustments: Log in to Paws (<http://paws.gsu.edu>) Click on the “classes” tab. Click on the on-line registration adjustment form. Fill in the form. (Approving authority email is: mathregapprove@gsu.edu).
- If a student is in the wrong course, a switch of sections is preferable to a drop. (e.g. if a precalculus student decides that he or she needs to go back to college algebra). You need to talk to your coordinator about this and make sure that the student can go into the other section.
- **Checking your roll:** It is critical that you check your roll and compare it to the attendance list in your course and your grade records at key points during the semester. The official source of your class roll is GoSolar and nothing else (**not** iCollege or MyMathLab). You need to look for:
 - Students who are attending but not registered. Such students should not be allowed to continue attending or to submit work for grading.
 - Students who are registered but never attend. Such students need to be reported during roll verification. You should contact the students prior to roll verification to find out why they are not attending.

It is not sufficient to check your roll at the beginning of the semester. At the minimum, you need to check at the beginning of the semester, after late registration, before the semester midpoint, and after the semester midpoint. You will also need to verify your roll in GoSolar; you will be notified of the date.

7 Withdrawals

- Voluntary withdrawals can be initiated by the student from the second week of classes to the midpoint of the term.
- Involuntary withdrawal: Students can be withdrawn for disrupting class or violating course policies. This is not a routine procedure. Talk to the coordinator and undergraduate director first.
- Withdrawal for nonpayment: Handled by the registrar. Students withdrawn for nonpayment are typically added back by the registrar. If that happens after the semester ends, you will be asked to provide a grade. In some cases, it can make sense to let the student do work in the class while the issue is resolved. But please consult with both the undergraduate director and the course coordinator before making a decision to allow this.
- Emergency withdrawal and military withdrawal: available to students under exceptional circumstances.

8 Grading Scales

For coordinated courses check with coordinator for grading policies. They should be on a sample syllabus. **Do not change any grading policies. Under no circumstances ever give a C- to a student unless you are teaching Math 0999, which uses a different grading system..**

For courses that are not coordinated, The department scale is:

97% - 100%	A+	[97, 100)	A+
93% - 96%	A	[93, 97)	A
90% - 92%	A-	[90, 93)	A-
87% - 89%	B+	[87, 90)	B+
83% - 86%	B	[83, 87)	B
80% - 82%	B-	[80, 83)	B-
77% - 79%	C+	[77, 80)	C+
70% - 76%	C	[70, 77)	C
60% - 69%	D	[60, 70)	D
0% - 59%	F	[0, 60)	F

9 Grade Submission

- Enter the grades in GoSolar before the deadline.
- **Always give copies of your grade book and the grades submitted on Gosolar to Katina Akins.** If you don't give grades to Katina, you will get repeated reminders from me.
- If you are a GTA, in a visiting position, or leaving GSU give your final exams to Katina Akins.
- For coordinated courses, the coordinator might want the final exams.
- Otherwise keep the final exams yourself. **Do not give final exams back to the students.** You should hold the final exams for at least two years.
- Make sure to double check grades. If you end up submitting an incorrect grade and have to change it you should **notify both the student and the coordinator of the course.**

10 Incompletes

As a GTA you will sooner or later be asked by a student for an incomplete. You don't have to give incompletes if you don't want to. And in most cases, it is a bad idea to give an incomplete. But if you are willing to give an incomplete, you need to know the following rules:

- If a student is unable to complete the assignments or exams of a course for an **unavoidable nonacademic** reason, an incomplete may be given at the discretion of the instructor if
 - Most of the major assignments have been completed. (Typically all but one assignment.)
 - The student is passing.

Do not ever give an incomplete unless these conditions are satisfied.

- No student ever has a right to an incomplete. You can always say no if you don't want to give the incomplete for whatever reason.
- Deadline: At the end of the second term after the incomplete was assigned it will turn into an F. **You can (and should) set an earlier deadline; only in exceptional circumstances should an incomplete take longer than 2 weeks to resolve.**
- For coordinated courses: the course coordinator needs to approve your plan for having the student make up the assignments.
- Do not under any circumstances give an incomplete unless you personally can and will take steps to resolve the incomplete promptly. **Giving an incomplete in spring when you plan to be traveling and away from GSU during summer is unacceptable.**

11 FERPA

Student records are confidential under federal law.

- FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- Don't disclose anything about a student's education records to anyone other than a GSU employee with a legitimate educational interest in the records. **This now includes student email addresses; if you communicate with your class using email you need to use bcc: to hide student emails from the other students in the class.**
- This includes talking to a student's parent. GSU policy is that the university's primary relation is with the student, not the parent. You should not be in a position of discussing a student's grades with a parent.

12 Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, unauthorized collaboration, falsification, multiple submissions. The standard of proof for a charge of academic dishonesty is a preponderance of the evidence. That is, the evidence for is more compelling than the evidence against.

There is a very precisely specified procedure for academic dishonesty. You should talk to your coordinator and/or the undergraduate director about any charges of academic dishonesty in order to make sure you follow the correct procedure. A summary is:

- Make and keep copies of any evidence.
- Discuss the matter with the student in a confidential manner.
- Determine a penalty. (This should already be stated in your syllabus).
- Complete a notice of academic dishonesty form:

<http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/Notice-of-Academic-Dishonesty-Form-May-13-2014.pdf>

The Undergraduate Director signs on behalf of the department chair.

- Notify the student of the charge and deliver a copy of the notice to the student.
- Forward a copy to the college dean's office pending possible appeal.
- Relax. It's out of your hands. If the student appeals, you will be asked to present your case before a college committee.

13 Attendance

Whether or not your course includes attendance as part of the grade, it is critical that you maintain perfectly accurate attendance records. During the roll verification process you will need to know the last day of attendance for students who stop attending. You will also need to know the last date of attendance if you give any student a grade of F at the end of the semester. Finally, if your syllabus includes a policy of withdrawing students who never attend, you will need proof that the student never attended the class.

14 Academic Complaints and Grade Appeals

A clear syllabus protects you from student complaints. Everything should be spelled out in the syllabus and you should stick to enforcing the policies there.

If you get a complaint we first try to resolve it informally:

- Students can discuss final grades with the instructor. Politely showing a student his or her grades and how the final grade was computed can prevent a formal complaint.
- If that doesn't work the student can be referred to a course coordinator.
- If that doesn't work, the student can be referred to the undergraduate director.
- If that doesn't work the student can talk to the associate chair.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, a student has a right to a formal grade appeal:

- A student can file an appeal on the basis that the grade was arbitrary, discriminatory, or inequitable.
- A student can file a formal appeal of a course grade in writing to the chair.
- The department chair notifies the student of a decision within ten days.
- The student can appeal the chair's decision.

If there are no grading errors and your grade is based on reasonable policies that were in the syllabus, you are almost certain to be supported on appeal. In general, to avoid complaints and appeals:

- Put all policies that can affect the student's grade in the syllabus.
- Avoid doing things that are not in the syllabus.
- Be polite and patient in explaining how a student got the grade and how it follows from the policies in the syllabus.
- If a formal complaint is filed you want to be able to say that the grading exactly follows policies that were in the syllabus since the beginning of the semester.

Substitute Instructor Form

If you are unable to teach one of your courses, you need to find a substitute. Fill in the following with information about the reason for missing the course, the name and contact information of the substitute, and the dates and times for which the substitute will cover your class. Leave the form in the front office or in the departmental mailbox of the director of undergraduate studies. **Only instructors within the department can substitute for you in teaching your courses.**

Your name: _____ Your Email: _____

Substitute's Name: _____ Substitute's Email: _____

Courses substituted (Name of the course(s), CRN(s), dates and times):

Reason for Substitution:

Acknowledgement of Teaching Policies

Please read the attached policies, read the following statement, sign this form, and return it to the front office of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in order to verify that you have read and understood the departmental teaching policies and will follow them. Please pay particular attention to the policies on covering classes, your responsibilities regarding office hours, using the full class time, coming to class on time, verifying the class roll, and leaving your grades and final exams with the department. These are all very important and failure to follow the policies may result in loss of an assistantship.

I certify that I have read the attached policies and will follow them in the course of serving as a GTA or GLA for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Name: _____ Signature: _____