

**Teaching Assistant
Handbook**

Integrative Biology

2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Preface.....	3
Coronavirus (COVID-19) USF Phase II - Return to Campus	5
What is a TA?	5
Being a teacher.....	6
Hierarchy of responsibility	7
You are a student too	8
Responsibilities of teaching assistants	9
TA Office hours.....	10
Working with faculty	11
Laboratory sections.....	12
Lecture sections	14
Policies for TAs regarding “I” and withdrawals	15
Creating a positive classroom climate	16
FAQ.....	17
Plagiarism	20
Teaching evaluation	22
Resignation, leave, and absence.....	23
Missing TA responsibilities.....	24
E-mail.....	25
Proctoring assignments	26
Unexcused absences of TAs for proctoring assignments	27
Guidelines for the use of proctors	28
Collective bargaining agreement	29

Preface

- Welcome to the "Teaching Team" of the Department of Integrative Biology. We congratulate you on obtaining a teaching assistantship. Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are awarded to students with excellent academic performance. Please do not consider it as "just-a-job" to help you through Graduate Studies but rather as a privilege. Teaching is an important complement to your training. Not only is teaching an excellent opportunity for learning, but also an experience of great value for future employment. Teaching reinforces your own knowledge base. Additionally, teaching offers an opportunity to develop leadership, self-confidence and interpersonal relationship skills.
- Synergistic interactions between research and teaching are recognized widely, and especially promoted in the IB Graduate Program. By recruiting you as a Teaching Assistant, the Department has entrusted in you our confidence in your abilities to contribute to the continued success of our research and teaching program. As a Teaching Assistant you are in the unique position of being a link between faculty and students, and your performance has a great impact on undergraduate students, and consequently, on the advancement of biological sciences, and the reputation of the Integrative Biology Department and the University of South Florida.
- Established rules and regulations, set by the College of Arts and Sciences and/or Department of Integrative Biology, exist to guide teaching assistants. To help you understand your new responsibilities as a Teaching Assistant, we have compiled the main points in this handbook. Additional information for TAs may be found on the following websites: Graduate Catalog <http://www.grad.usf.edu> ; Integrative Biology (IB) Graduate Program on IB Grad Organization on CANVAS at <https://webauth.usf.edu/login>
- We will make every effort to keep you informed of any changes in rules and regulations, and to assist you in your development as a researcher and a teacher. Please contact the IB Graduate Office for any questions that may arise. By working together, by letting us help you, we believe that you will have a rewarding, challenging and enjoyable experience as a Teaching Assistant.

IB Graduate Office

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Coronavirus (COVID – 19) UPDATES

Return to Campus

- **From the USF Coronavirus (COVID-19) website available at** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/>.
- **Returning to Campus** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/mitigation.aspx>
- **Face coverings** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/face-coverings.aspx>
- **Vaccination Information** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/vaccinations.aspx>
- **Hand Hygiene** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/vaccinations.aspx>
- **Disinfecting, Cleaning & PPE** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/enhanced-cleaning-disinfection.aspx>
- **Mitigation (Testing, Incident Reporting, Isolation and Quarantine Protocols)** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/mitigation.aspx>
- **Meetings and Events** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/meetings-and-events.aspx>
- **Travel** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/returning-to-campus/travel.aspx>
- **Frequently Asked Questions** <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/faq.aspx>

Failure to comply with the rules above will face consequences starting with removal from class, workspace or activity until university guidance is followed.

What is a TA?

- Committed to becoming a professional biologist, researcher and teacher.
- A member of a large team of teachers.
- An interface between faculty and undergraduates.
- An employed representative of the Department, College, and University.
- Developing from student to professional.

Being a teacher

- Be prepared.
- Be organized, succinct.
- Be logical and let students witness your thought process.
- Know the points you need to drive home.
- Know your expectations and make these expectations clear your students.
- Proof read all class materials.
- Grade and return assignments promptly.
- Don't tolerate insubordination.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be positive.
- Be confident.
- Be fair.
- Use humor when possible.
- Get your students involved, but don't forget that students have the right to fail.
- Be friendly with your students, but not their friend.
- Be prepared, know what, how, and why you are doing an exercise.
- Be attentive to your student's needs; not all students learn via the same channels
- Help your students "discover" the essence of the lab exercise.
- Be consistent with level of presentations, expectations, questions, and grading.
- Begin the course with the highest possible standards.
- Be stern, especially through the first major assignment.
- Show no favoritism.
- Be friendly - not confrontational.
- Make a strong, lasting first impression.
- Always be on time, organized, and prepared.
- Be careful and anticipate problems.
- Provide no opportunities for sexual harassment
- Have no romantic relationships with your students.
- Be available during office hours.
- Tell your students how to study for exams.
- Be interactive, tell them about your research.

Hierarchy of responsibility

- TA must always defer to the faculty member or other individual in charge of the course or labs.
- TA cannot negotiate an “I” grade.
- All change of grade forms are co-signed by TA and person in charge.
- Late withdrawal must be co-signed.
- If in doubt, check with supervisor or graduate director.

You are a student too

- Pursuit of your degree is your TOP priority.
- Invest time in your students, but invest more in your own research and classes.
- Limit yourself to 20 hours weekly on TA tasks.
- Get help if you're having trouble getting everything done in 20 hours.

Responsibilities of teaching assistants

As Teaching Assistants, you represent the IB Grad Program and the University of South Florida; therefore, you are expected to perform duties in an exemplary fashion. The key to your success is to perform the following tasks:

Maintain communication with the professor in charge of the laboratory or course.

- Although our policy is to encourage TAs to develop their independence and creativity, the faculty or course coordinator assigned to oversee the laboratory is always available to help you in the understanding and performance of your assignment. Those individuals will also monitor your class and evaluate your teaching performance. Please do not hesitate to go to them for any questions that you may have regarding your teaching and proctoring responsibilities.

Be well prepared to teach

- Take time to ensure that the course organization and requirements are clear to students. This way you will have enough time to correct any problems that may occur. Your syllabus must be compatible with those of others teaching the same course.
- In addition to understanding the laboratory experiments assigned to you and making the appropriate preparations, you should organize your presentations or lectures so that they will be effective. Provide students with an opportunity to get clarification on points covered in the lecture. Students will know when you are ill prepared for the material you are to cover in a given lab. Save yourself the embarrassment and NEVER go to class under prepared.

Keep the laboratory organized, clean and safe

- Good organization and maintenance of a tidy laboratory will save you both time and headaches. Good organization promotes safety, a major concern for all.

Supervise the use of equipment and laboratory materials

- Because of a lack of experience, students may not use the equipment and laboratory materials in a proper way and damage them. Thus, your supervision is essential regarding this matter.

Learn your students' names

- By no later than the third class meeting, you should have learned your students' names. Taking attendance or passing back assignments can help you to get to know your students. Or, if you have a hard time memorizing names, you might have the students make name cards that can sit on their desk.

Dress appropriately

- Proper dress is applicable to both you and the students. Shorts and sandals are not acceptable for the laboratory, and a violation of USF lab safety rules, because these cannot protect you against accidental spills.

Compose and Grade Exams and Laboratory Notebooks

- You have to make every effort to compose reasonably challenging exams, give clear directions for the recording of laboratory notes, and grade them fairly.

Maintain office hours in which you provide one-on-one support for students.

- All TAs are required to hold 1 hour of office hours for each lab taught. (If you teach 2 labs you are required to have 2 hours of office hours.)
- If you are in BSC 1005 you are required to hold 1 office hour for every 2 sections that are taught. (If you teach 4 labs, you are required to hold 2 hours of office hours. If you teach 2 sections of BSC 1005, you are required to hold 1 hour of office hours.)
- If your Supervisor approves, you can have 1 set hour of office hours and the other hour by appointment. Please ask your Supervisor for approval before doing so.
- Have set office hours each week in the same location. TA Offices are located in SCA 224.
- Be flexible if students cannot make it to your office hours.

Ask for help with teaching

- Don't be afraid to ask for assistance.
- Many individuals are here to help you, so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Be friendly, but not a friend.

- You are not a TA to win a popularity contest, but rather to effectively transmit information and help students learn. Be forceful, rigorous, and fair to ALL students.

Other responsibilities

- Be honest at all times: "I don't know" is a valid answer.
- Attend lectures, if required.
- Teach labs.
- Prepare assignments.
- Go to lab meetings.
- Proctor lecture exams (severe penalty for no-shows).
- Help grade exams.

Working with faculty

Develop a good relationship with faculty

- Most faculty/TA relationships are cordial, but some difficulties can arise. Here are some pointers that can help to encourage a healthy faculty/TA relationship. At the beginning of each semester, you will meet with the lab coordinator so that you can ask these and other questions.
- Discuss all the faculty's expectations at the beginning of the semester.
 - When supervising the lab, will you be responsible for obtaining supplies and materials, keeping track of materials, designing, and revising experiments, giving demonstrations?
 - Will you be evaluating papers, lab reports, quizzes, student participation? Are the criteria for grading clear? Will the instructor review disputed grades?
 - Will you have a chance to try new things and present new ideas?
 - How many office hours per week?
 - If your TA work is taking more than 20 hours per week, what should you do so as not to create conflict?
 - Get tension out in the open; the IB Graduate Director is available, if needed, for consultation.
 - Communicate frequently with your faculty research advisor and/or your lab coordinator.
- Take initiative. Remember you are building your own teaching portfolio. Remember to clear everything with the instructor of record.

Laboratory sections

Although labs are run differently and TA responsibilities may vary, there are some general guidelines to follow.

What are lab sections?

- Lab exercises and experiments are to supplement the theory that students will get from lectures. Remember that some labs are not explained during the lectures or may not be discussed coincidentally with the lab. Consequently, as the lab TA you will be expected link the lab and lecture material and connect hands-on activities with materials students use to prepare for or understand the material.

Be prepared

- Read the experiment before going to the lab and, if possible, make arrangements to actually perform the experiment. Students can lose respect for the course, TA and themselves when a capable and prepared TA does not ease uncertainties and problems.
- Perform the entire experiment in advance and look for possible problems. It is frustrating to all when the experiment fails.
- Be ready for student comments and questions. Read and study the background for the lab.
- You are encouraged to attend the lecture part of the course, doing so will greatly help prepare you with the background materials needed to be an effective TA.
- Be prepared to assist with beginning and ending inventories of class materials

Check equipment and materials

- Arrive early for class to make sure all equipment is working correctly and all the materials required are there.

Observe all safety precautions.

- You should locate the first aid kits, safety showers and fire extinguishers.
- Know where the supply room is located and your lab coordinator's office & phone number, so you can take care of those emergencies.
- TAs should know the safety regulations and policies of the Department, University and State. Most safety issues will involve mishandling of equipment, chemicals and specimens. An alert TA moving around the lab will prevent many potential problems from occurring.

Clarify objectives

- Begin each lab with an overview of the lab session. This will include background information as well as helping students with information required for lab reports. In some classes, students are expected to complete exercises before class so they are prepared to begin experiments immediately upon arrival in the lab. In such cases, your efforts should be directed at facilitating their hands-on efforts and understanding as they work.
- Students can be frustrated if the objectives of the lab are not straightforward. You are important in clarifying these objectives and helping students understand the goals of the lab.

Return graded reports and quizzes as soon as possible

- During the first lab you should inform the students of your grading policy and criteria used. Students should get corrected reports back before the next one is due so that mistakes are not repeated. Respect students' confidentiality when posting grades and returning graded assignments.

Managing students during a lab

- A lab is different to a lecture classroom. In addition to instructing a group of students, you will often be involved with one-on-one situations, which are highly interactive. Learn the names of your students and respect your students. Mutual respect will help you to guide the class and facilitate learning. Move around the lab looking for problems before they occur, interact with the students and be approachable. For most TA assignments, the most student learning will come from these interactions

Evaluation of lab reports

- Check with your Lab Coordinator for expected depth and content of lab reports. Often, where there are many small lab sections, grading will be somewhat standardized. Read through a selection of reports to get an overall sense of understanding.

Lecture sections

Lecture TAs are assigned to help professors who teach large-enrollment lecture courses.

The specific duties the Lecture TA should expect to perform include, but are not limited to the following.

- Attend all lectures to be prepared to assist the professor as needed.
- Help write and proof exams.
- Grade exams.
- Maintain regular office hours to respond to student questions. Depending upon the nature of the course, as many as six-eight hours per week may need to be scheduled office hours. Lecture TAs may be responsible for organized discussion groups for selected courses.
- Consult with the professor as needed to assure the accuracy of information being provided to students.
- Help create visual aids for the professor to use in class.
- Proctor all exams given in the course.
- Help manage the grade book and compute final grades.
- Manage and troubleshoot electronic student interface technologies such as iClickers, McGraw Hill Connect assignments, and the like

Policies for TAs regarding “I” and withdrawals

- Teaching Assistants should NOT negotiate an "I" (Incomplete) grade without explicit approval from the TA supervisor and/or the professor in charge of the course. When an "I" grade is assigned, an "I" grade contract form must be completed and co-signed by the TA and the professor in charge of the course.
- ALL change of grade forms MUST be co-signed by the professor in charge of the course. None will be approved without the co-signature.
- NO late withdrawals will be approved unless they are co-signed by the professor in charge of the course.

Creating a positive classroom climate

How to get your students prepared for the lab

- In some classes, you might organize “pop quizzes”, pre-lab outlines, and group discussions of predicted results. Your lab TA supervisor or Lab coordinator might require a particular approach, and you’re expected to take that one to maximize consistency across sections.
- Remember that students are more likely to prepare better if you as the TA are enthusiastic and supportive.
- Be sensitive to individual differences. Try to accommodate all students in your section and be prepared to incorporate a variety of approaches to teach your class.
- Tell the students what your expectations are. This is critical.
- Be there early and stay late if need be.
- Never ridicule a student! Always encourage.
- Ask for feedback during the semester.

What else?

- Know your resources when things go wrong.
- Talk to TAs who have taught the lab before.
- Realize you are qualified to teach effectively.
- You know more than your students do.

FAQ

How does a TA write a quiz/test/handout?

- Exams should reflect the depth and breadth of the materials covered in the lab and reflect the amount of time spent on a given topic. Your Lab Coordinator will provide more specific guidelines, and you can consult with prior TAs of the course for advice

Do I really need to reiterate the instructions even though they are in the lab manual?

- YES, especially for Bio 1 & 2 during the first part of the semester. Sometimes the instructions are unclear, but usually the students don't bother to read them. It's also helpful to point out where things are in the lab as you go through the directions. Try to wean them off this as the semester goes.

How should grades be posted to protect privacy?

- Students are assigned a student ID number that you can use. In addition, you can use CANVAS <https://webauth.usf.edu/login> if you have access.

What is the policy for canceling classes?

- Usually, classes are only canceled in cases where the entire University is closed. This would happen during a weather emergency (e.g. hurricane or tropical storm) or a security emergency. You and your students can get this information from the USF Hurricane Information website (<http://www.pplant.usf.edu/hurricane/default.htm>) or the USF Hurricane Info Line: 1-800-992-4231. You can also call the University Police: 974-2628. An exception to this, however, is loss of electricity. Because of liability, we are not allowed to have classes in a room where there is no power.

Do I really need to shadow an experienced TA the first time I teach?

- It depends on your confidence level. If you've never done any teaching before and are nervous, do it for the first week or two

Should I tell students the class will be curved?

- It depends...go by the syllabus, always! If you know that there won't be a curve, make sure you're very clear about that from the beginning, even though your students will ask you again as they get desperate for better grades. If you're not sure, and it's not indicated in your syllabus, don't tell them there will be. Go to the faculty member in charge of the lab and find out

What should a TA do if a student has a medical problem or hurts themselves while in the lab?

- It depends on the severity of the situation. Most common lab injuries can be taken care of in the classroom (i.e. cuts, something splashed in the eye). All labs have first aid kits. Technically, you're not supposed to treat the student, but you can tell them how to take care of it themselves. Always get help if you're not sure. Usually, your prep-TA will go over this in the first lab meeting. One of the most important things you can do is stay calm, as you

don't want to set the class into a panic. If the person in charge of the class is freaking out, then the rest of the class will take that cue.

What constitutes an excuse for missing class/quiz/exam?

- This topic should be outlined explicitly in your syllabus. Medical, funeral, and court appearances are excused, but only when documented. Insist on getting a phone number with the documented excuse and call to verify the excuse. Sometimes students will give fake notes and phone numbers; calling the number solves this problem. Trouble with parking, waking up late, etc. are not excused. For parking excuses, they'll argue until they're blue in the face, but stay firm and tell them that they know the parking situation on campus and should have planned to arrive early.

How do I maintain control of my class?

- Start off on the right foot on Day 1. You're not there to be their buddy. You're their instructor. This separation is especially hard if you're not much older than your students, but you need to establish boundaries immediately. Failing to do so will result in an unruly class. It's much easier to start off hard as nails and back off later in the semester, than to start soft and try to toughen up later. The latter never works.

What constitutes sexual harassment or harassment of any kind? How does a TA protect himself/herself from such an accusation?

- The definition changes all the time. The easiest way to protect yourself is to remain professional at all times. Establish boundaries from day one. Don't meet students for coffee or drinks to discuss anything. Meet students in your office and if it looks like there may be a problem, make sure someone else is with you. It's tempting to be friendly with students and joke around; the students seem more relaxed and to be enjoying themselves. However, you ultimately will have problems with grade mongering and begging, and a joke could be taken the wrong way.

How should a TA handle a grade dispute?

- If a student says that you've marked an assignment too low, have them bring you the original with the disputed grade to check against your records. About 75% of the students will never bother you with the problem again (or bring the disputed paper), because there was no mistake. Especially be wary if this "grade problem" will move their final grade up a letter. Always check your math before you turn in grades. Did you transfer all the grades in your written gradebook to the electronic one correctly? If in the end there is an error that involves a grade change, it's very easy to fill out a grade change form in the main office.

What should I do when parents try to get involved?

- Unless the student in question is a minor, it's a violation of privacy to disclose any information about a student's grade to their parents. If they continue to seek information, get either your lab coordinator or Dr. Bell involved.

What if I have problems with my duties or lab equipment?

- If you have problems with teaching or with any other assigned duties (preparation, proctoring, lecturing, composing and grading exams and laboratory notebooks, etc.), or if you have questions about procedures and operation of equipment, contact the Lab Coordinator or TA Supervisor and/or the Graduate Director. We will do everything we can to help you perform your responsibilities well.

Plagiarism

What it is, how they do it, how to deal with it. What is it?

- Plagiarism is defined as **any** uncredited use of another person's information or ideas, whether intentional or not. This includes copying someone else's words or interpretations without acknowledgement, copying or purchasing a paper and turning it in under your own name, or even accidentally forgetting to put quotation marks around a source in order to distinguish that source's words from your own. The most common type of plagiarism, however, is paraphrasing by only changing a word here and there and then failing to credit the source.

How do students do it?

- Students are now very familiar with the internet, so it's very convenient for them to plagiarize. And they will. The key to detecting plagiarism is to think like the student. One of the best things you can do before grading a lab report or paper is to "Google" the subject of the assignment and examine the first 10 useful websites.

How does a TA prevent/identify plagiarism?

- The best prevention is explain the consequences of plagiarism. Usually, they don't realize (a) what plagiarism actually is, or (b) how serious of an offense it is. This situation can be fixed through class activities or homework on plagiarism. Your syllabus should outline exactly what happens if a student is caught plagiarizing. The penalties can range from a deduction on the assignment to a FF for the course (failure for academic dishonesty, which cannot be erased via grade forgiveness). See the following pages for more plagiarism and cheating information.

Some dead give-aways to look for

- Sentences or paragraphs not in the same style as the rest of the paper. - Writing style does not fit the student's abilities or normal writing style. References to figures, lab partners that don't exist. - Changes in font, type size, etc. throughout the paper. The occasional bold-faced term is especially indicative of educational websites that are giving definitions of terms. - Repeats of groups of sentences. If they're using the copy and paste functions on the computer, they'll sometimes accidentally hit "paste" twice, resulting in a repeat. Because the work is essentially done for them, they usually won't proofread it to see if it makes sense.- References to old books on their works cited page. Most students will not go to the library to find sources. The craftier ones will copy passages from websites and insert false citations. Typically, they choose the old books that they found in the electronic card catalog as these references. There is also a service called TurnItIn-that automatically looks for plagiarism. This service is integrated into the CANVAS system <https://webauth.usf.edu/login>, so that all papers submitted electronically through CANVAS <https://webauth.usf.edu/login> are automatically checked. For legal reasons, put a statement in your syllabus that says you're planning to use the service. It should read something like "I reserve the right to submit all assignments to TurnItIn or other plagiarism detection services."

How to deal with plagiarism

- Some courses forgive the first offense of plagiarism, in others it results in an automatic F. Regardless of whether you choose to take action or not (and you probably won't every time...use your judgment and pick your battles wisely), there are steps that you need to take:
 - Make a copy of the student's paper for your records. You may need this later if a student fights an accusation and you end up in front of the dean.
 - Gather evidence of plagiarism. Print out the websites or other sources the student copied from. Indicate which passages were copied on both the student's paper and the source. Often, plagiarism services such as TurnItIn will help you with this. Regardless, this is to cover yourself if this issue gets dragged out.
 - Alert your lab coordinator immediately to determine which, if any, course of action will be taken. If you feel the Lab Coordinator is not taking proper action, then see Dr. Bell for guidance. The consequences for plagiarizing vary with the course. If it is decided to give the student a warning or a zero on the assignment, simply write "See Me" on the paper (instead of a grade) and talk with them in private, either in the hallway or during office hours. Explain what they did wrong and what grade they will receive, be sure they understand what they did wrong, and explain the consequences if they're caught again. Don't confront a student in front of the entire class. However, if you end up with several people in one section with this problem, it may be useful to address the class as a whole.
- Failing the student for the course is much more serious matter, and you need to work closely with either your lab coordinator or Dr. Bell on this. There are two options: F and FF. F is failure for the course and is subject to grade forgiveness. FF is failure for the course for academic dishonesty and is not subject to grade forgiveness. The FF serves as an internal mark on their record, and thus will appear on any transcript that goes out of the university. The steps for this are the following:
 - Gather all evidence of plagiarism, as stated above. Clearly indicate passages of plagiarism on the sources and assignment. Give these to your lab coordinator or whoever you're working with on this matter.
 - Either you or your lab coordinator will need to draft a letter outlining the course policy on plagiarism, a written description of your evidence, the student's current grade, and the grade he/she will be receiving due to his academic dishonesty.
 - Make 6 copies of the unsigned letter, student's paper & evidence of plagiarism, course syllabus, and any handouts you gave about plagiarism. Each copy of the letter must have original signatures on it. 6 people will receive this packet in the end: you, the student, the lab coordinator, Dr. Bell, Dr. Harwood and Dr. Potter (the Associate Dean).

Teaching evaluation

- Near the end of each semester, the students and the individual in charge of the course will evaluate the teaching assistant. The Graduate Director will perform an objective analysis of these evaluations. The purpose of this tri-level evaluation is to provide you with an adequate feedback of your teaching
- You are expected to obtain an evaluation of "good" or better, based on an evaluation scale of: poor, fair, good, above average, excellent. Failure to obtain a satisfactory evaluation or to perform the duties listed above in an adequate fashion will constitute grounds for dismissal as a Teaching Assistant.
- *You must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 to retain your Teaching Assistant position.*

Resignation, leave, and absence

Resignation, leaves of absence or switching from teaching to research assistant

- Graduate assistantships and contracts usually cover the academic year, and are renewable, up to the time limit provided by financial support by the Department, provided the student receives satisfactory evaluation for duties and academic progress and maintains a GPA of 3.0 or above. If a teaching assistant wishes to resign the assistantship, take a leave of absence or switch to a research assistantship, the Graduate Director should be notified before the 10th week of the semester so that an orderly transition may be initiated. Request for changes after the 10th week will not be granted unless there are extenuating circumstances of an unusual nature.

Sick leave (inability to serve)

- Circumstances often do arise in which a TA is unable to meet one or more of his or her sections. Such absences may be due to illness and other unexpected circumstances, which are addressed in the official University sick leave policy (see below). Others involve conflicts with other commitments of the TA, usually attendance at scientific meetings. In either case, it is essential that someone else be identified to take his or her place. In these cases, you should follow the procedures below:
 - Illness: In the case of illness, notify the faculty member or lab coordinator in charge of the course immediately. He or she will work with you to make sure your section is covered. If at all possible, you should reciprocate by taking one of your substitute's classes at another time during the semester. *You must also notify the Graduate Director of your absence.*
 - Time conflict with other important educational activities: In a case of a conflict with a scientific meeting, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for a substitute TA. These arrangements should be made as soon as possible, preferably before the beginning of the semester. You must notify the faculty member or lab coordinator of these arrangements and receive his or her approval as soon as possible. *The Integrative Biology Graduate Office must have something in writing (email is fine) that permission has been granted.*
- *At no time is it acceptable to miss two consecutive labs.*

Missing TA responsibilities

There are a number of circumstances that are *not* justified for missing your teaching responsibilities.

- Needing time to prepare for exams.
- Personal commitments not related to your studies.
- Changes in research schedules that arise after class assignments have been agreed to.
- In the event that a TA and a course coordinator cannot agree on either the legitimacy of an absence, or on arrangements for a substitute, the Graduate Director shall review and resolve the situation.

E-mail

- TAs must check their USF email at least once a day.
- All Integrative Biology graduate students are required to have email on a USF server.
- IB TAs must have an email account before classes begin.
- USF e-mail is automatically generated when you register for classes. If you have any issues with your e-mail please contact USF IT at 813-974-1222 or help@usf.edu.

Proctoring assignments

- The Department requires that Teaching Assistants proctor examinations in non-major courses and courses for which there are no assistants. The IB Undergraduate Program Assistant, Ann Greene, makes these proctoring assignments.
- The Undergraduate Program Assistant shall make all proctoring assignments.
- If you are scheduled to proctor, it is your responsibility to be there or to tell the Undergraduate Program Assistant (well in advance) of your inability to make that assignment, at which time another proctoring assignment will be given to you.
- Acceptable excuses for not proctoring are class or teaching responsibilities at the same time; illness; attendance at a meeting of a scientific society. *Your own decision that you do not want to do it is not acceptable.*
- Proctors ARE REQUIRED to contact the instructor they have been assigned to proctor for at least two days prior to the exam to receive any specific instructions. Please contact instructor via email, voice mail, or in person.
- Complaints should be addressed to the IB Graduate Director
- NOTE: Proctoring assignments will be sent via email to assigned TAs usually for the whole semester during the first 2 weeks of the semester.
- Ann Greene, Undergraduate Program Assistant phone number is 974-9639 and e-mail is alg4@usf.edu, SCA 112 front desk.

Unexcused absences of TAs for proctoring assignments

Unexcused absences are penalized as follows:

- First - a letter advising the student of the seriousness of this error will be sent to the student. Copies will be placed in the student's file and sent to the major professor. The IB graduate director will talk with the teaching assistant.
- Second - the TA will receive a mandatory, one-semester suspension from financial support, i.e., the next semester (not summer) the student will not be supported with a TA.
- Third - the TA will be dismissed immediately.
- Note: these misses (first, second, third) are over the time limits of continued support (6 or 10 semesters for MS and PhD Students, respectively), not per semester.

Guidelines for the use of proctors

- Proctors are appointed to assist faculty members in the supervision of students during examinations. Student assistants are not to be used for other purposes (teaching, class monitoring, etc.). Instructors must be available at the examination to provide direction.
- Professors must make requests for proctors at least one week in advance of the examination. This will allow the Undergraduate Program Assistant to make the proctor assignments and to deal with conflicts well in advance of the exam. Faculty making late requests will have to find other sources (not TAs) of proctors.
- Examinations should be scheduled for the same room in which lectures are presented. This will keep required numbers of proctors to a minimum. No proctors are assigned to laboratory exams without unusual circumstances.
- Because of the large variation, among faculty, in numbers of proctors requested, the Integrative Biology Graduate Faculty adopted the following guidelines. Deviations require approval of the Department Chair.

Room Size	Number of Proctors	Number of Students
Small room (LIF 260), class size	0	less than 30 students
Large room (LIF 272)	0 - 1* proctor	30-55 students
Small auditorium (CHM 105)	1 - 2* proctors	55-100 students
Large auditorium (CHM 111)	2	100-200 students
Giant auditorium (ENA 105)	3	more than 200 students

*only for situations where the instructor must move between classrooms

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Please be aware of the following information, which is Article 10 of the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Regents and the Graduate Assistants Union.

- An employee shall not be required to perform assigned duties when disabled or otherwise unable to perform them because of injury, illness, jury duty, required U.S. military service, or when unable to so perform because the employee's presence is required elsewhere because of injury, illness, or death in the immediate family. Immediate family shall consist of mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, child, or other relative living in the employee's household.
- The employee shall notify the supervisor in advance of each leave. Leave under this Article shall be with pay for up to five days per semester appointment. Each employee shall be credited with such five days at the beginning of each semester and shall use leave in increments of not less than one day. For example, an employee scheduled to work six hours on Monday and three hours on Tuesday, who is unable to perform assigned duties on these days for any of the reasons described above, would be charged with two days of leave, regardless of FTE appointment, or number of work hours scheduled. The leave provided under this article shall not be cumulative.
- The employee's department is responsible for recording sick leave used; therefore please inform the IB Graduate Secretary should you ever have to take leave.