

March 2024

Teaching Assistant (TA) and Graduate Assistant (GA) Appointment Guidelinesⁱ

Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition, College of Applied Health Sciences

Policies and Procedures

1. The Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition does not guarantee a TA or GA position, or any other type of funding, for any student enrolled in its graduate programs.
2. Students enrolled in any of the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition graduate programs are eligible to apply for TA and GA positions. These programs include the PhD in Kinesiology and Nutrition, the MS in Kinesiology and the MS in Nutrition.
3. The Department may occasionally offer TA/GA position to students enrolled in Graduate programs outside of the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition. However, this is strictly limited to Departmental needs and is only used if/when suitable candidates from Graduate programs inside the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition are not available.
4. Typical degree completion time is 3-6 years for the PhD in Kinesiology and Nutrition and 1.5-2.5 years for the MS in Kinesiology and the MS in Nutrition. However, actual completion time depends on a student's progress and may be shorter or longer than the typical time indicated above.
5. When TA and GA appointments are offered, they are typically either 25% or 50% appointments for either one or two semesters (Fall and Spring). Whenever possible and taking into consideration student's preferences and expected graduation date as well the needs of the Department, the Department prefers to offer two-semester appointments over one-semester. Occasionally, TA or GA appointments are available for the Summer term.
6. Students in the MS program can receive a TA/GA appointment for a maximum of 2 years.
7. The pay rate contracted by UIC GEO serves as the base rate for appointments.
8. During the Spring semester of the year preceding the appointment, both continuing and incoming students receive a form where they indicate their preference for TA appointments: <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/7281361>
9. Each TA must contact the instructor(s) for each assigned course at least two weeks before the course begins.
10. For TA appointments, the course instructor provides assignments and expectations for each course in writing. The agreement must be signed by both the instructor and the TA and a copy provided to the Director of Graduate Studies.ⁱⁱ
11. For GA appointments, the department will communicate, in writing, expectations and/or flexibility regarding scheduling and work site(s) (e.g., on campus/onsite vs. off campus/remote), including considerations for accessibility, if any.
12. For Summer TA/GA assignments, the department will communicate in writing the tentative nature of that assignment if minimum enrollment has not yet been met. Summer appointments are only guaranteed after an appointment letter is received and signed.

Factors considered for TA appointments/assignments. These factors are not presented in order of importance and each factor may carry a different weight on the final decision in each individual case.

1. **Applicant's preferences.** Graduate students complete a survey to indicate their preferences <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/7281361>
2. **PhD vs. MS students; continuing vs. first-year students.** Preference for TA and GA appointments is given to students enrolled in the PhD program vs. students enrolled in either of the MS programs. Continuing MS students are given priority versus first-year MS students.
3. **Relevance of academic and/or professional expertise.** Students' academic and/or professional background contributes to determination of the most appropriate course assignments.
4. **Scheduling availability/timeframes.** Students will not be scheduled to assist in courses that have TA requirements that conflict with their own class schedule. Once a student accepts a TA assignment, it is the student's obligation to give priority to their TA assignments in the case of a scheduling conflict and immediately notify the department.
5. **Relevance of previous job performance as a TA.** Students who fail to complete their TA responsibilities – e.g. incomplete grading, lack of expected attendance, lack of communication with students/instructor, unprofessional behavior – will have lowest priority for future TA assignments.
6. **Academic record.** Students' whose quality and timeliness of work are meeting expectations will have higher priority for a TA assignment than those whose work is not meeting expectations. Students not in good academic standing as defined by their specific program will have lowest priority for receiving a TA or GA appointment.
7. **Academic mission of the department.** All TAs are expected to provide an inclusive, supportive environment for learners.

Appointments of TAs as Instructors of Record

Students are sometimes given the opportunity to be the Instructor of Record (also known as Primary Instructor) for a course. The following factors are considered when making such appointments:

1. Student is in good academic standing as defined by their program of enrollment.
2. Faculty mentor is supportive of student teaching the course.
3. Student has the necessary minimum qualifications to teach the specific course(s).ⁱⁱⁱ

Only students who receive specific assignments from the Department Head to be Instructors of Record may be asked to act as the main instructor for a course. A faculty course instructor may not ask a TA to be the main instructor without prior agreement by the Department Head.

Whenever appropriate and feasible, TAs who are appointed as Instructors of Record will be provided with the latest available syllabus for the course.

ⁱ Please note that this policy does not apply to graduate hourly appointments or research assistantships funded by investigator grants.

ⁱⁱ Examples of TA assignments are provided upon request.

ⁱⁱⁱ The minimum instructor qualifications for each program offered in the Department are provided upon request.