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Teaching Assistants (TAs) 101

A Quick reference for Undergraduate Courses TAs

This document can be found at
<http://www.ece.rutgers.edu> under Instructor Support Material

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1. Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide undergraduate course related information for Teaching Assistants (TAs) and detail TAs duties with respect to grading, office hours, labs and more. It also provides course support material needed for course management and handling undergraduate student's affairs.

2. Getting ready: Course assignment

Undergraduate courses in the ECE department are marked by course numbers in the form 14:332:XXX:XX (UNIT:SUB:CRSE: SECT), where CRSE represents the course number and SECT represent a section number unique to each lab/recitation, where applicable. TAs can be assigned for courses support or/and for labs.

Please make sure you know which course you are assigned to and who is the course instructor. For both courses and lab, the TAs report to the course instructors and should reach to them for guidance on specific TAs responsibilities and instructor expectations. Please contact the course instructor immediately after you get your TAs assignment and set time to meet and discuss the position requirements.

In case of any issues with reaching the course instructors please contact Ms. Christy Lafferty (room EE 134B; email: ecegradinfo@gmail.com) or Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (room EE124; email: ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) in the ECE department.

3. TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

TAs are responsible for coordinating with the course instructor and understanding the specific responsibilities he/she hold in the course. These may include:

- Assignment and exams grading
- Developing course support material
- Exam proctoring
- Management of course site
- Posting grades posting

- Students support (office hours, assignment solutions, exams solutions)
- TAs might be assigned to recitation classes
- TAs might be responsible for labs

In addition to these specific responsibilities, all TAs should:

1. Hold weekly office hours. Office hours should be posted to the students. Please coordinate with Mr. Kevin Wine (EE-118) (kevin.wine@rutgers.edu) the location of the office hours and times. Office hours should be held in a place that will enable private conversation with students, especially when it comes to discussions about grades.
2. Please protect grading and other confidential information you have on students in a secured way to protect students' privacy. You are accountable for handling student records in accordance with the law and University policy detailed at: <https://uec.rutgers.edu/programs/ferpa-student-privacy/for-faculty-and-staff/> .

Here are some highlights:

- a) **Posting Grades:** grades cannot be published publicly, either by the student's name, student identification number or social security number. Instructors can assign students unique numbers or codes that can be used to post grades. However, the order of the posting must not be alphabetic.
- b) **Returning Assignments:** Do not leaving personally identifiable, graded papers unattended for students to view. Any graded papers (exams, quizzes, and homework) should be handed only after student identity is properly identified (with student ID or other official ID). You may not give any educational records to anyone other than the student. Documents and grades cannot be released to a parent unless an appropriate release form has been signed that specifically identifies what information may be released. **Under no circumstances should students be allowed to search for their assignment in a pile of graded assignments.**
- c) **Student Correspondence:** instructors/TAs may notify students of their individual grades via email, provided the email is sent from a University email account, to a University email account. Notification of grades may also be made via the use of a

course management website. Students must access their grades after providing their RU NetID and password.

- d) Access to Other Student Records: Instructors/TAs are considered “school officials” and have access to class rosters and basic information for students enrolled in their classes. Instructors may not access other student academic records without demonstrating a “legitimate educational interest” in such information.

4. TAs responsibilities: Labs TAs

Each lab course has an instructor (faculty) who is responsible for the course. Please make sure to contact and meet with the course instructor to understand the course labs assignments and grading policies.

1. Lab assignments and grading policies should be clearly explained to the students in the first lab and given in writing. Additionally, the information should be posted on any course management platform used for the course, such as Sakai.
2. Please communicate with students as for lab location and requirements at the beginning of the semester via email. Class roster includes students’ emails. Access to the class Roster is available through: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/rosters/displayQuickSearch.htm> . You can access the roster using your RUID and password. If you cannot see your course please contact Mr. John Scafidi (scafidi@rutgers.edu).
3. Please make sure to open a Sakai site for the lab. Mr. John Scafidi (scafidi@rutgers.edu) could assist with it, if needed. Please provide the instructor access to the site and to Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu)
4. Please be in the lab 10 minutes prior to the starting time. You will need to get a key to the lab from Mr. Kevin Wine (EE-118) (kevin.wine@rutgers.edu). Please make sure to make all arrangements in advance. Students will not have access to the lab without the TAs present. Please respect the students by being there ahead of start time.
5. Make sure all required equipment for the experiment is available and in working conditions. All equipment should be securely stored and locked at the end of each lab. It is

the TA's responsibility to make sure that no equipment is missing at the end of the lab. In any case of missing equipment or issues with equipment operation please contact Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu).

6. TAs need to get to the lab well prepared and support questions from the students. Please use the first few weeks of the semester to do all labs.
7. All lab TAs have to go through lab safety training. Please contact Mr. Kevin Wine (EE-118) <kevin.wine@rutgers.edu> for details on how to register for a safety training session. You will not be able to teach the lab without passing the training session.
8. All reports handed in by students should include a standard cover page. Please contact Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (room EE124; email: ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) to get the template for the cover page.
9. Individual grades for labs should be posted promptly. Please coordinate with the course instructor the grading policy and grade submission requirements. In any case, grades should not be posted later than two weeks after lab report due date.
10. Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz will post periodic surveys for students on the lab site for anonymous feedback.
11. Rutgers ECE program is ABET accredited. There are some steps needed to document that the course objectives are being met. Please save sample reports for each lab that demonstrate low, medium and high performance. Please email digital copies of these lab reports to Ms. Pamela Heinold (pamela.heinold@rutgers.edu).
12. In case of TA planned absence (due to participation in conference or other reasons, known in advance) please make sure to let the course instructor and the Graduate Program Director, Prof. Zoran Gajic (gajic@ece.rutgers.edu) know as early as possible. You will need to coordinate with other TAs in your course to replace you on the day of absence. If you cannot make it to class in short notice please make sure to notify the students and the department by emailing Mr. Kevin Wine (kevin.wine@rutgers.edu) and Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu)

5. Grading Issues

It is important that grading policies are clearly explained to the students at the beginning of the semester and posted on the course management site (Sakai or other).

Here are some general guidelines:

1. Please make sure due dates are clear and policy for late submission is well known.
2. Please make sure that a fair grading strategy is applied. The grading strategy should be coordinated and approved by the course instructor. It should be detailed in the syllabus and reviewed with students frequently during the course
3. In a multiple section course please make sure to coordinate the grading policy with all other TAs. Grading should be consistent across all sections
4. Please provide students with feedback for their work.

5.1 Reporting Grades

All TAs are expected to submit assignment, quizzes and exams grades no later than two weeks after dues dates. Please coordinate with the course instructor for any other required deadlines.

1. Mid- semester grades: Please post these grades to the students on the course management system, such as Sakai.
2. Final grades: finals grades submission due date in the fall semester is around the beginning of January and for the spring semester it around mid-May. Please check with Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) for grade submission deadline. Grades can be submitted directly through the Roster or through Sakai.

5.2 Undergraduate grade appeal

Students should be given an opportunity for appeal for a grade on any assignment and final grade. Please make sure you are available during office hours to address any appeal within a week or two.

5.3 Policies on absence and missed assignments

Course policy should detail make-up policies for assignments. If a student has a verified excused absence, he/she should be allowed to make up for an assignment. Students should inform you within the first two week of any absences and reason for absence. You should refer them to Dean of Student office (<http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/>) for an Absence Verification letter.

If the absence of a student is repeated, chronic, or lengthy such that the student cannot make up the missed work in a timely manner, then the student should see a dean in the Office of Academic Services (EN B100; <http://soe.rutgers.edu/oas/contactus>) to discuss options of withdrawing from one or more classes.

Absences longer than 2 weeks or for chronic health conditions, students should be referred to the ECE department Undergraduate Program Director, [Prof. Wade Trappe](mailto:Prof.WadeTrappe) (ECEUndergradDirector@soe.rutgers.edu) for advising on available options.

6. Students' Academic Integrity Issues

If you believe that an undergraduate student has committed a non-separable violation of academic integrity, please follow the instruction available on:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-instructors/>.

Please make sure to contact the ECE department Undergraduate Program Director, [Prof. Wade Trappe](mailto:Prof.WadeTrappe) (ECEUndergradDirector@soe.rutgers.edu) with the details and CC Dean Ilene Rosen (ilrosen@soe.rutgers.edu). We will guide you through the process. Please do so before you speak with the student.

Additional information on Academic integrity and detecting plagiarism can be found at:
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-instructors/>.

7. Students with Disabilities

The Office of students with Disabilities (ODS) handles any special accommodations needed for students with disabilities. Federal legislation mandates that the University provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal opportunity for all students.

A few important guidelines:

1. Verification of Disability: confirmation of the student's disability for a qualified student will be given by ODS. The office will provide the student with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) verifying his or her disability, and detailing options for accommodations needed in class and/or in testing situations. The student may then share this letter with the instructor/TA during office hours and discuss how accommodations will be implemented.
2. Confidentiality: It is essential that disability information be kept confidential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability, except at the student's request. All information that shared with a faculty/TA member is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. At that time, arrangement of accommodations can be discussed in private.
3. Receiving a Request for Accommodations: The LOA will be signed by the student's coordinator in the Office of Disability Services and detail the required arrangement for the student. The accommodations in these letters are not meant to give students with disabilities an unfair advantage, but rather to give them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course content. Although a student may request an academic adjustment at any time, the student should request this as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. The student should follow established procedures to ensure that the University has enough time to review the request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment. Also, ODS does not ask that instructors modify essential course requirements for the sake of the

student. Any faculty member considering denying an accommodation because it modifies an essential course requirement should consult with ODS. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the LOA, please contact the student's coordinator.

More details can be found at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/faculty/ways>.