



EEES Graduate Program
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TA responsibilities for EEES Graduate Students

Below is a description of typical TA responsibilities; however, note that every course professor has different expectations for how TAs will participate. We recommend that you touch base with faculty members well before the term starts to get a sense for your responsibilities.

General expectations for EEES TAs:

- 1) Your commitment for teaching is about 20 hours / week on average for the 10-week quarter. However, you should anticipate that this will include pulses of work – usually associated with grading. So you will need to work more than 20 hours in some weeks.
- 2) You are expected to be on-campus no later than the day the class you are TAing starts and through the grading of the final exam. Course calendars are posted at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/calendar/> - look particularly for the Term Calendars and the Final Examination Schedules. When terms start on a Monday, labs often start on that same day, so you may need to be back to campus late the following week in order to prepare adequately for the first lab.
- 3) Many of the introductory classes and some of the advanced classes require that you attend all of the lectures. Please assume that you are required to attend all lectures as a TA, and if that isn't the case, the professor will tell you otherwise.
- 4) As a TA, you are expected to know all of the material in the course so that you can answer questions at lab and during office hours about the lectures and labs (hence one of the reasons you may need to attend the lectures). In most courses, you will be asked to schedule one or more "office hours" each week (separate from your lab time) to meet with students.
- 5) In most classes, your primary responsibility will be TAing one or more lab sections. This may include any of the following (as well as other activities as directed by the professor): presenting introductory material at the beginning of lab with handouts, visual aids, etc., as appropriate for the material; being available during lab to help students with questions, working through assignments, leading/informing discussion, driving students to field sites, ensuring a safe learning environment; doing preparatory work prior to the lab such as doing a trial run of new activities, making solutions, ordering supplies/materials, reserving VOX vehicles, etc.; helping students with independent class/lab projects and data analyses; and grading all laboratory assignments in a timely fashion and providing the grades to the instructor and/or lab coordinator in an organized spreadsheet database.
- 6) As a TA, you may also be expected to run in-class active-learning activities, help with in-class or x-hour discussions, or other sorts of in-class tutorials.

- 7) Most classes also require TAs to help grade exams, papers, or problem sets. Thus, you should be available after each examination and assignment for grading, including the final exam.
- 8) Take care with social interactions with students outside of a professional setting. From Policy on Consensual Relationships and Conflict of Interest: "*The fundamental relationship between a graduate student and any student or employee he or she supervises or evaluates must be kept on a professional basis.*" Please read this policy in its entirety [here](#).

Specific TA responsibilities and expectations vary from class-to-class and the degree to which the lab coordinator is involved. It is always a good idea to be proactive and email/speak with professors whom you are TAing for to clarify responsibilities if it is unclear to you. We fully realize that sometimes you may hope to go to a conference or have some other event/field trip during a term that may conflict with TA responsibilities; while we cannot guarantee that professors can accommodate all circumstances, often accommodations can be made for you to attend events if you plan ahead and work with the professor to make sure your absence does not affect the learning environment of the course.

Being able to actively participate in undergraduate education at Dartmouth is an exceptional professional opportunity for you. Ask any of our alumni and they will uniformly report that they were professionally empowered in many ways by their experiences as a TA at Dartmouth. Seize your opportunities to teach at Dartmouth and make the most of them. For example, seek to understand and appreciate the tactics and pedagogy of the professors and instructors that you work with. Never hesitate to ask your professor questions. Part of the point is for you to gain world class skills in contemporary science education. More mundanely, TAing is part of your job as a graduate student and member of the EEES program. Your performance as a TA is crucial to the experience of our undergraduate students. All TAs are given a grade for their TA assignment, ranging from High Pass to Fail. Failure to satisfactorily meet TA responsibilities can result in termination of your graduate program.

Finally, we would like to emphasize five steps to responsible teaching that we hope will be helpful for you as a TA and beyond:

- 1) Forethought - think about the topics, concepts and skills to be covered and how well the planned activities are likely to teach and/or reinforce them
- 2) Preparation - know the material and how to introduce it
- 3) Engagement - be invested mentally as well as present physically
- 4) Facilitation - know how to explain and reinforce concepts, procedures, analyses and interpretations
- 5) Feedback - provide positive reinforcement to students verbally in lab and with helpful comments on assignments
- 6) Reflection - ask yourself how well you did all of the steps and actively solicit suggestions and critical input from your professor, lab coordinator, colleagues, and students.