



COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE

Administrative Topic of the Month

Graduate Assistants 102: TA Workloads and TA Performance Management

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Welcome



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College of Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Reminders

- Please stay muted throughout the presentation
- This session will be recorded
- Questions may be submitted via Chat throughout the session
- We will have a Q&A at the end of each section
- All materials are found here:
<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/internal/25131>



Agenda

I. Recap - Last Month's Admin Topic of the Month Meeting

- Thank you for your participation and feedback
- What did we learn?
 - Topics you are most interested in



II. TA Workloads

- Writing TA workloads: duties and hours
- Communicating workloads
- Reviewing and updating workloads

III. TA Performance Management

- What does GAPP say?
- Best Practices & Process



Recap from last month: Sick Leave

How Paid Sick Leave works

- amount of paid sick leave awarded to grad assistants
- who is eligible for paid sick leave
- how sick leave carryover works
- using the tracking spreadsheet “Student Assistant Leave Report”
- Reference sheet: “Paid Leave Summary”

How to respond to a sick TA

Creative strategies for covering for absent TA's

See last month's materials here: <https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/internal/25131>



Recap from last month: Topics You Were Most Interested In

- 67% GAPP overview
 - 64% TA Workloads
 - 49% TA Performance Issues
-
- L(SA) professional development plans are another area you'd like to know more about

L(SA) Appointment Challenges

- Must be hired to align with academic staff lecturers
 - Typically 33.4%
 - Creates inequities between L(SA)s and TAs

L&S L(SA) Appointment Policy

- L(SA)s are hired at 33.4% but departments may choose to supplement the appointment % with a professional development plan
- Supplement % is up to departmental discretion (up to total of 50%)
- **The department pays the professional development stipend as well as the base stipend**
 - Can come from STS account or other fund (gift funds, etc)

L(SA) PD Plans

- Must be approved by Lynne Prost
- Example activities:
 - Teaching observations & discussion
 - Regular meetings and teaching discussions with a mentor
 - Attending campus teaching workshops/programs
 - Create a teaching journal for reflection and self-review
 - Create new teaching and learning materials; not for direct instruction, but for long-term application by the department
 - Exit interview with mentor



Questions on L(SA) Professional Development



TA Workloads



What is a workload?

Writing a workload:

- Duties

- Hours

Communicating workloads to TAs

Reviewing and updating workloads

How Comfortable Are You with Writing, Reviewing and Managing TA Workloads?

Self-Assessment Poll

Rank each on a scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”:

- When my department teaches a new course, I know how to put together a realistic workload.
- My department provides all TAs with workloads prior to the start of each semester.
- When my department changes the structure of a TA position (i.e. changes in appt%, number of sections taught, etc.) I know how to get the new workload approved.

Workload: Documentation of Expected TA Duties and Hours

Roles of workloads:

- Compliance with GAPP (Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures)
- Protection for students
- Setting expectations and managing performance

Workloads are Required by GAPP

Teaching Assistant and Project Assistant Duties

In assigning duties to Teaching Assistants or Project Assistants:

The department and supervising staff member shall establish the required duties of the employee and the supervising staff member shall discuss these duties with the employee at the beginning of the appointment period.

In the case of Teaching Assistants, each department shall provide the employee and their supervisor with an appointment worksheet with the appointment letter at least three (3) days before signed workload sheets are to be returned by the employee, prior to each term of appointment (Fall, Spring and Summer). Copies of these estimates shall be provided to course supervisors.

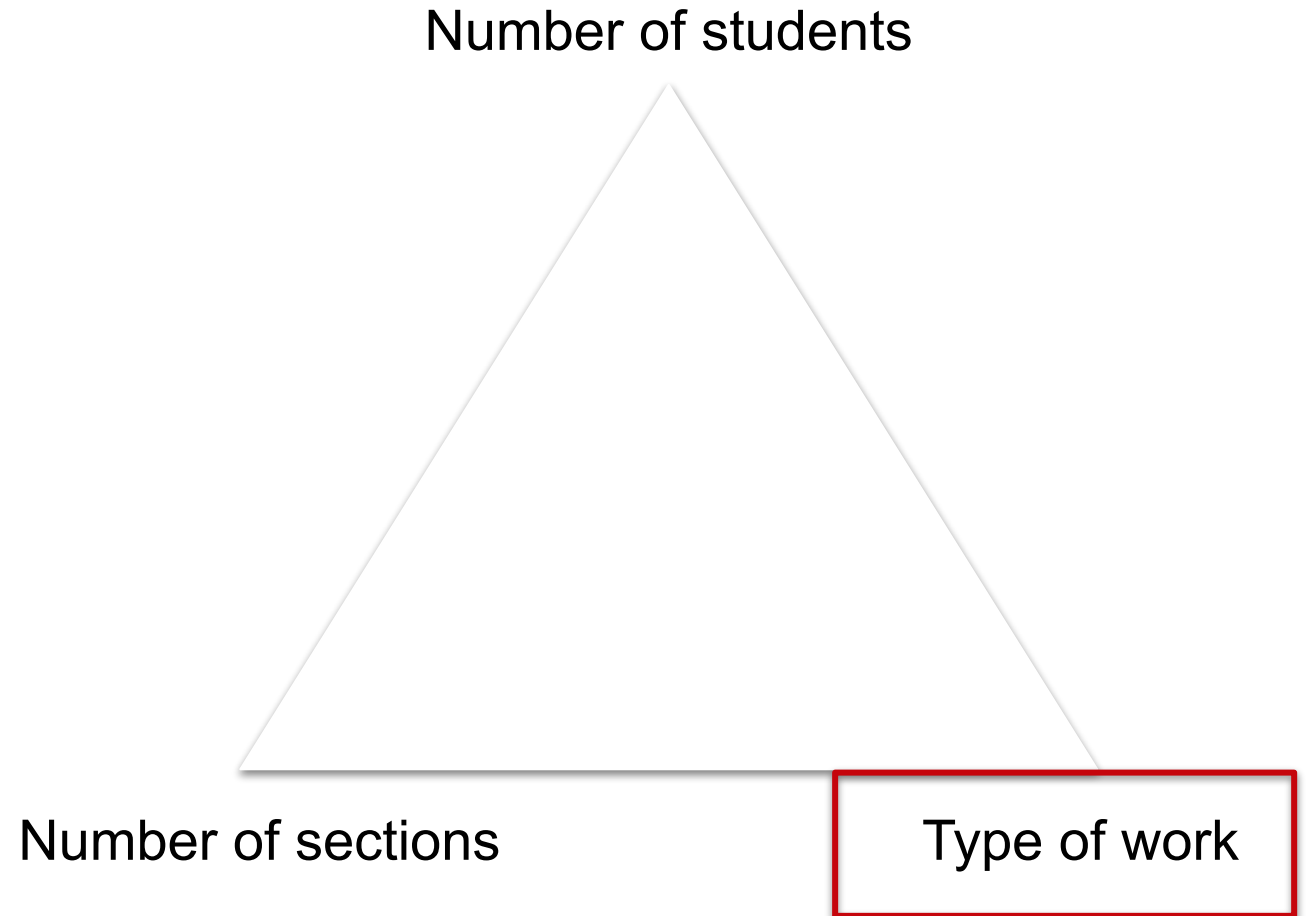
Writing a Workload: Appointment %

Appt %	Hours worked per semester appointment
33.4%	240
40%	288
50%	360

- Please try for 50% appointments
- Appointments less than 33.4% require approval

Writing a Workload: Appointment %

Appt %	Hours worked per semester appointment
33.4%	240
40%	288
50%	360



Typical Workload Duties: What is a TA?

- Teaching responsibilities
- Under supervision of academic staff or faculty

A TA is NOT:

- A lecturer
- A reader/grader

Instructor Duties

- Lecture
- Office Hours
- Some grading

TA or Reader/Grader?

- There can be TA positions that support lecture without teaching a discussion or lab section
- Is a TA spending most of their time grading?
- Reach out to discuss!

Writing a Workload, Step 1: Duties

Please share in chat any common duties your department uses that aren't listed here.

Training & orientation

Preparation for teaching

Lab/discussion teaching time

Office hours

Attending lecture

Grading

Teaching staff meetings

Course administration

Responding to student emails

Online discussion boards

Proctoring exams

Sick leave coverage

Training for TAs is Required per GAPP

Teaching and Project Assistant Orientation and Training

Colleges, Schools and Divisions that employ Teaching Assistants or Project Assistants are encouraged to hold training sessions before the fall semester.

Each department that employs new Teaching Assistants in the fall and spring semesters shall provide training for them, either alone or in combination with other departments. The training shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) required hours designed to aid them in their teaching duties. At least two (2) of these hours of training must come during the semester. The content, design and emphasis of the training shall be determined by the department chair or designee(s). For the fall semester training, a written description of the program

In addition, the employee and their supervisor will have an opportunity to review that worksheet at the commencement of the Teaching Assistant's employment and throughout the semester. The worksheet shall indicate the approximate distribution of hours to be spent on the various duties required by the appointment and shall include hours for -mandated training time and for any training required by the University and deemed necessary for the performance of the employee's duties.

Training for TAs is Required per GAPP



L&S offers TA training every semester!

Thursday before the start of classes

Fall 2022: Thursday Sept 1

Sample Workload: Duties

Duties
Training
Prep for teaching
Teach discussions
Attend lecture
Office hours
Grading
Course admin/emails
Sick leave coverage

Writing a Workload, Step 2: Hours

50% TA teaching 3 discussion sections

Duties	Hours
Training	
Prep for teaching	
Teach discussions	
Attend lecture	
Office hours	
Grading	
Course admin/emails	
Sick leave coverage	

Hours **per appointment**, not per week or per semester

TA appointments: 18 weeks

Semester: 15 weeks

How **NOT TO** Write a Workload

50% TA teaching 3 discussion sections

Duties	Hours/wk
Prep for teaching	5
Teach discussions	3
Attend lecture	2
Office hours	2
Grading	9
Course admin/emails	3
Total:	24

24 hrs/wk x
15 wk semester =
360 hours

Writing a Workload, Step 2: Hours

50% TA teaching 3 discussion sections

Duties	Hrs/wk	Workload Hours
Training		10
Prep for teaching	5 (+ 10 pre-semester)	85
Teach discussions	3	45
Attend lecture	2	30
Office hours	2	30
Grading		110
Course admin/emails	3	45
Sick leave coverage		5

Writing a Workload, Step 2: Hours

50% TA teaching 3 discussion sections

Duties	Hrs/wk	Workload Hours
Training		10
Prep for teaching	~3-5 (+ 10 pre-semester)	85
Teach discussions	3	45
Attend lecture	2	30
Office hours	2	30
Grading		110
Course admin/emails	~2-4	45
Sick leave coverage		5

Estimating Grading Hours

To consider:

- Number of students
- Number/frequency of assignments
- Grading support (rubrics, Speedgrader, etc.)
- Type of assignment(s)

Example:

4 quizzes x 10 minutes x 60 students = 40 hours

Paper draft x 40 minutes x 60 students = 40 hours

Final paper x 30 minutes x 60 students = 30 hours

Total: 110 hours

Estimating Grading Hours

To consider:

- Number of students
- Number/frequency of assignments
- Grading support (rubrics, Speedgrader, etc.)
- Type of assignment(s)

Example:

11 homeworks x 10 minutes x 60 students = 110 hours

Estimating Grading Hours: Process Suggestions

- Instructors should do some grading to help gauge hours
- Committee of TAs and instructors
- Surveys
- Departmental norms/common standards

Writing a Workload, Step 2: Hours

50% TA teaching 3 discussion sections

Duties	Hrs/wk	Workload Hours
Training		10
Prep for teaching	~3-5 (+ 10 pre-semester)	85
Teach discussions	3	45
Attend lecture	2	30
Office hours	2	30
Grading	~5-9	110
Course admin/emails	~2-4	45
Sick leave coverage		5

Writing a Workload, Step 3: Approval

If you:

- create a new TA appointment, or
- alter the structure of a TA appointment,

the workload must be approved by Lynne Prost

Writing a Workload, Step 4: Communicating

	Recommended	Required
Duties	Hrs/wk	Workload Hours
Training		10
Prep for teaching	~3-5 (+ 10 pre-semester)	85
Teach discussions	3	45
Attend lecture	2	30
Office hours	2	30
Grading	~5-9	110
Course admin/emails	~2-4	45
Sick leave coverage		5

How does your department communicate workloads to TAs?

Please share in chat or unmute.

Workload Process

- Write the workload
 - Duties
 - Hours
 - Get approval, when necessary
- Communicate to TAs
- Review and update

Reviewing & Updating Workloads

Poll

My department reviews and updates workloads:

- Every semester
- Every year
- Only if there is a concern
- I'm not sure

Reviewing & Updating Workloads: Departmental Practices

Please share in chat or unmute.

Workloads are Important and Valuable

Roles of workloads:

- Compliance with GAPP
- Protection for students
- Setting expectations and managing performance

Workload Resources

- KB: Teaching Assistant Workloads in L&S
 - Outline of the process for writing a workload
 - How to get approval
 - Sample workloads
- TA Workloads Reference Sheet (posted on Topic of the Month KB)
 - Walks through the process
 - Highlights suggestions and best practices



Questions on TA Workloads



TA Performance Management



Do you know what to do when a TA is not meeting job expectations?

Self-Assessment Poll

Rank each on a scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”:

- I have a good idea of proactive best practices for ensuring TA's performance.
- If a TA is not meeting expectations in their job, I am comfortable with how to address that.
- I know how long a TA probationary period lasts, what options we have during the probationary period, and that it can be extended if needed.

Just Cause

The basic elements of just cause have been reduced by arbitrator Carroll R. Daugherty to seven tests outlined below:

- **NOTICE:** Did the Employer give to the employee forewarning or foreknowledge of the possible or probable consequences of the employee's disciplinary conduct?
- **REASONABLE RULE OR ORDER:** Was the Employer's rules or managerial order reasonably related to (a) the orderly, efficient, and safe operation of the Employer's business, and (b) the performance that the Employer might properly expect of the employee?
- **INVESTIGATION:** Did the Employer, before administering the discipline to an employee, make an effort to discover whether the employee did in fact violate or disobey a rule or order of management?
- **FAIR INVESTIGATION:** Was the Employer's investigation conducted fairly and objectively?
- **PROOF:** At the investigation, did the "judge" obtain substantial evidence or proof that the employee was guilty as charged?
- **EQUAL TREATMENT:** Has the Employer applied its rules, orders and penalties evenhandedly and without discrimination to all employees?
- **PENALTY:** Was the degree of discipline administered by the Employer in a particular case reasonably related to (a) the seriousness of the employee's proven offense, and (b) the record of the employee in his service of the Employer?

GAPP

1.

Grad
students are
entitled to
"Just Cause"

<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-steps>

GAPP

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any Employee who discusses, inquires about, or participates in the grievance procedure may do so openly and shall not be subject to intimidation, discipline, or retaliation because of such activity.

Definition and Procedure

A grievance is defined as, and limited to, a written complaint identifying an alleged violation of a specific employment provision(s) of the Graduate Assistant Policies and Procedures and remedy sought. Grievances may be filed by a Teaching, Project or Research Assistant. Academic-related grievances are pursued through processes described in graduate program handbooks with subsequent appeals following Graduate School policy. An employee who files a grievance is referred to as the grievant. A grievant is encouraged to discuss the complaint with their immediate supervisor as well as other campus resources (e.g. department chair, dean/director, human resources representative, etc.) prior to filing a grievance. The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure equitable solutions to the grievance(s) at the most immediate level possible.

2.

Grad
Students can
grieve
employment
actions
(after initial
probationary
period).

This includes
disciplinary
actions up to
termination of
employment.

TA Initial Probationary Period in a department

- 1 academic semester for an academic semester or academic year appointment; or
- 2 separate, 2-month summer session appointments; or
- 6 months

3.

Initial Probationary Periods are limited, but can be extended.

Actions L&S can take, during the initial TA Probationary Period:

- terminate the employee without recourse to the grievance procedure; and
- establish a remedial program; and
- extend the probation (to no more than double the original length; ie extending Fall appointment through Spring or extending Spring appointment through Fall).

TA Performance Mgmt - Best Practices

Before the Appointment begins

- Provide detailed, clear expectations
 - attending and/or participating in lectures, holding/leading discussion sections and office hours; completing grading assignments; notifying others if unable to work; etc
- Provide an appointment letter
- Provide a TA Workload plan
- Encourage attendance at TA Training
- Follow an evaluation process: <https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#performance-evaluation>

TA Performance Mgmt - Best Practices

After the Appointment begins

- If not meeting expectations, discuss this with the TA directly as soon as possible.
 - Describe the expectations, describe how they're not meeting expectations, and check for understanding. Ask them if they need anything in order to meet the expectations.
 - If the TA mentions health/medical issues, refer them to Laura Fisk.
- If the TA continues to not meet expectations, contact Laura Fisk. Laura will guide you through preparing for a more formal meeting including following up with a “Letter of Expectations” to document the concerns and establish a performance plan.

Letter of Expectations

- The “Letter of Expectations” (Letter) is typically the first stage in a process that may lead to discipline or termination, but it is **NOT** discipline.
- The Letter serves several purposes:
 - 1) it helps the supervisor prepare for the discussion, by providing an outline;
 - 2) it clarifies the expectations in case the employee was not aware of them;
 - 3) it documents that the supervisor and TA met to discuss those expectations.
- NOTE: The Letter is given to the employee by the supervisor after the issues are discussed **directly**. The only time it should be given before a meeting is if the employee fails or refuses to attend a meeting.
- Contact Laura Fisk to get a copy of the letter and discuss the process.
- See <https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/internal/25131>



Questions on TA Performance Management



Interactive Q&A



Please rate how much you gained from this session

Poll

I gained a lot because I didn't know any (or much) of this

I knew some things, but it was helpful to learn some more

I didn't gain anything because I already know this material



Of what we covered today, what has been most helpful?

Poll

- Discussion of TA Workloads
- Discussion of TA Performance best practices
- Discussion of TA “Letter of Expectations”
- References to GAPP - Graduate Assistant Policies and Procedures
- Reference documents provided



What topics would interest you in a future session?

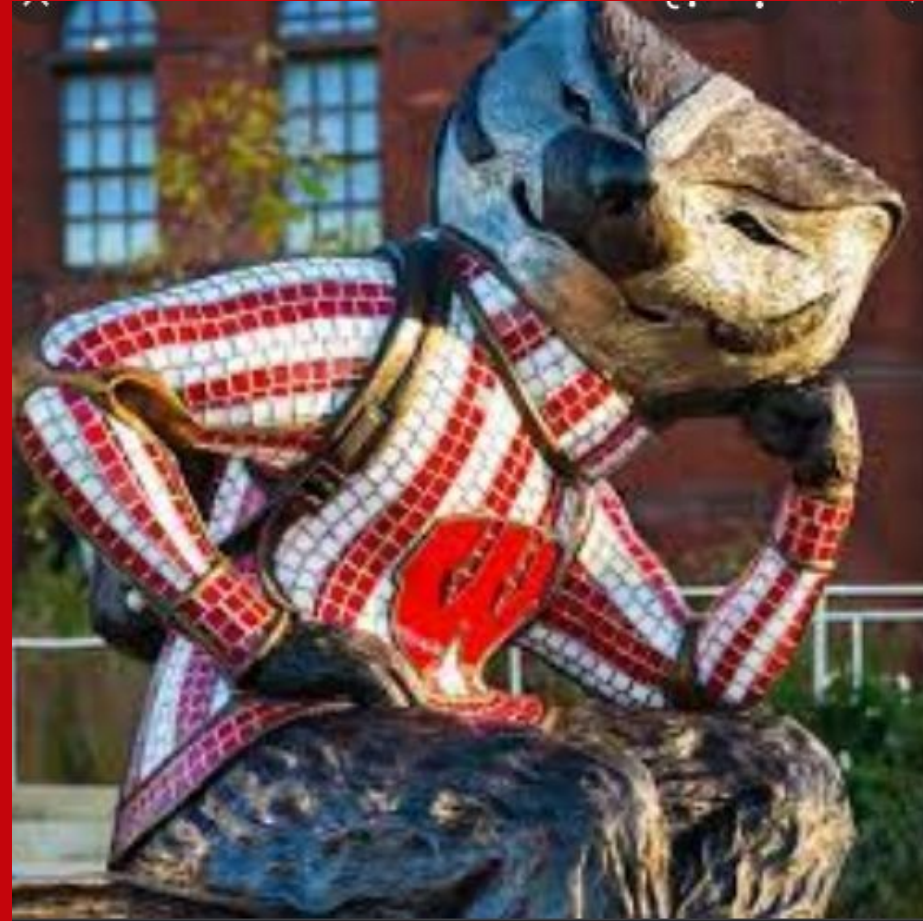
Poll

- TA training
- Other grad appointments: Undergrad Assistants, Grader/Reader, LSA
- Overview of GAPP: Graduate Assistant Policies and Procedures
- Sick Leave - advanced topics
- Other: share in chat





Questions?





Thank you for attending

All materials are found here:

<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/internal/25131>

Reference documents include:

- TA Workloads
- TA Letter of Expectations



Please contact us:

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