# Teaching Assistant Handbook

## Congratulations, you have been chosen to be a Teaching Assistant

Your acceptance of a teaching assistantship at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing provides an opportunity to socialize with dedicated course faculty and develop critical teaching skills that will benefit your academic future. You will have the opportunity to collaborate with faculty on how a course is designed, managed, and closed. You will gain knowledge and skills through your work with students, learning how to manage and resolve their concerns. While duties vary depending on the needs of the course, the primary objective of this experience is to expand your knowledge of teaching while being supported by experienced course faculty.

Prior to the fall semester, you will receive your teaching assignment for the year from the Office of Student Services.  Occasionally, the needs of the University change or your schedule will interfere with the teaching assignment and your assignment will need to be changed. Please contact Kara Koch, Associate Director of Graduate Academic Affairs, in Suite M-18 of Fagin Hall with questions or concerns about your assignment. Kara can be reached at karamart@nursing.upenn.edu or 215-898-4150.

The Teaching Assistant work requirement is approximately 16 hours per week (8 hours per week for half-time Teaching Assistants). Please note that the number of hours in a given week may fluctuate depending on course needs.

## Before Your Assignment Begins

TAs in the School of Nursing are expected to contact course faculty several weeks prior to the first day of classes. This is necessary to discuss the duties of the teaching assistantship. The TA may need to assist with tasks, such as ordering books or scheduling speakers, which are necessary to complete before the semester begins. Time spent prior to the beginning of the semester will count toward total semester hours.

New TAs must attend Teaching Assistant Training coordinated by the Center for Teaching and Learning.  This three-day workshop occurs before the beginning of the Fall semester and focuses on teaching and learning.  Workshop topics include presenting yourself as a TA, leading discussions, grading, and challenges facing TAs.  For more information, visit:
http://www.ctl.sas.upenn.edu/services/TA.html

## Memorandum of Understanding (required)

The **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is a document used to discuss course duties and expectations between the TA and course faculty.  The MOU is one method for helping the TA understand expectations and allows the TA a vehicle for discussing questions, ideas, and concerns with course faculty. **It is required that the TA initiate the MOU with the course faculty and provide copies of the completed MOU to the course faculty, the TA's academic advisor and the Office of Student Services.** The MOU form is provided in this handbook and on the Student Services website.

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## Concerns that Arise During Your Assignment

Misunderstandings and disagreements can occur during teaching assignments. TAs and course faculty deserve to have their concerns heard so that a course can run smoothly. If a concern arises that creates conflict for the involved parties, the process for resolution includes: 1) course faculty or the TA should make an appointment to meet with the Graduate Group Chair or Associate Dean for Academic Programs to voice concerns; 2) if the concern is not resolved after discussion with the Graduate Group Chair or Associate Dean for Academic Programs, the respective Division Chair should be contacted and brought into the discussion. Completion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before the teaching assignment begins is strongly suggested to minimize misunderstandings of expectations.

## End of Course Evaluation (strongly recommended)

An **End of Course Evaluation** provides the TA with constructive feedback. The form, included in this handbook, can be customized and copied. Course faculty complete the form; the TA is encouraged to meet to discuss the evaluation and any additional feedback regarding the course. The End of Course Evaluation form should be copied and given to the TA's academic advisor as well as to the course faculty. Additional course feedback may be obtained by course faculty requesting that students evaluate the TA work at the same time course evaluations are completed. Any feedback received should be reviewed with the course faculty and the TA's doctoral advisors for developmental purposes.

## University Resources

### Center for Teaching and Learning
http://www.upenn.edu/ctl/
Graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania are eligible for the full range of teaching resources offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

http://www.upenn.edu/ctl//resources/general_guidance/
The CTL TA Handbook can be a helpful reference for managing the TA assignment.

### The Weingarten Learning Resource Center
www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/

The Weingarten Learning Resources Center, comprising of the Office of Learning Resources and Student Disabilities Services, supports and enhances the academic experiences of Penn's undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. By assessing the strengths and needs of individual students, and by providing professional services and programs that promote the development of life-long skills, they further the University's commitment to academic excellence. They are also dedicated to fostering collaborative relationships with schools, academic departments, and programs and to enriching the teaching and learning dialogue across the University. The comprehensive services of the Learning Resources Center ensure equal academic opportunities and participation in University-sponsored programs. This website also contains a list of university resources, which may be helpful to students as well as to the TA.

## Canvas
**http://www.library.upenn.edu/courseware/canvas/canvaslogin.html**

Your course may utilize the Canvas learning management system (LMS). Ask the instructor for whom you are a TA to contact the Office of Student Information at osi@nursing.upenn.edu to obtain TA status for the course so that you can enter the course site at https://canvas.upenn.edu. This will allow you to post messages, grades, and send emails to students. You may also be asked to post articles which are formatted in the Biomedical Library.

A great resource for Canvas Training can be found here:
https://upenn.instructure.com/courses/1072709

## University of Pennsylvania Libraries
www.library.upenn.edu/

Contact the specific library to have books or readings put on reserve for your course. The library also offers a range of classes, which help to understand the library system and all it has to offer.

## WICshops
http://wic.library.upenn.edu/wicshops/

The David B. Weigle Information Commons in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center offers workshops and trainings to faculty, instructors, and graduate students on how to use Blackboard and other software programs.

## Bookstores and Copy Centers
You may be asked to place orders for textbooks or to have bulkpacks made for your course. Course faculty have a choice of several bookstores and copy centers to place orders for course materials. Be sure to ask the course faculty where they want the orders placed. There are a variety of sources:

**Penn Bookstore** has new and used textbooks plus a multitude of office supplies and supplementary material. 215-898-7595. 36th and Walnut Sts.  http://upenn.bkstore.com/.
**House of Our Own Books** has new and used books and some textbooks. 215-222-1576. 3920 Spruce St..
**The Penn Book Center** carries books of required readings and other books as well. 215-222-7600. 34th and Sansom Sts..
**Wharton Reprographics** makes and sells bulkpacks.  Located in the Wharton School, 3620 Locust Walk, Steinberg Hall- Dietrich Hall, Suite 400, and Ground Floor. https://reprographics.wharton.upenn.edu/index.cfm. Payment by PennCard only.
**Campus Copy Center** provides bulkpacks.  215-386-6410. 3907 Walnut St.


# School of Nursing Resources

**School of Nursing Structure and Governance- Research Departments**

The standing faculty, as well as other teaching faculty known as Academic Support Staff, are divided into two departments.

The **Department of Family and Community Health Department (FCH)**, led by Dr. Patricia D'Antonio, encompasses those faculty with a research and teaching mission focusing predominantly on the delivery of care and improving patient outcomes. The **Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences (BHS)**, led by Dr. Julie Fairman, focuses on the generation of new knowledge from both the biological and behavioral perspective, including research at the bench.

All Nursing courses fall under either the FCH or BHS departments based on the instructor of the course's "home" department.  If you are unsure which department your course falls under, please contact the course instructor or department managers listed below.

**Department Contacts**

TAs should contact the appropriate department manager with questions about department resources for TAs, department approval for requests for a course, Canvas and Scantron support, or general TA needs:

*Department of Family and Community Health (FCH) TAs should contact FCH Department Manager **Rachel Losinno** in room 409 or by email: rlosinno@nursing.upenn.edu.*
*Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences (BHS) TAs should contact BHS Department Manager **Mary Kononenko** in room 346 or by email: kononenm@nursing.upenn.edu.*

**In-House Copies & Scantron**

Copies for course syllabi can be obtained from the copy center (located on 1P) in the School of Nursing. Faculty and staff are encouraged to use Ricoh TRAC (see link for TRAC site https://nursingpenn.ikontrac.com/ ).  When necessary, requests can also be made by delivering hard copy requests to the Copy Center.  **All requests require department approval and must be submitted to the appropriate department representative before processing.  Please refer to the "Department Contacts" for contact information.**

Due to the busy nature of the copy center, it is recommended that the TA pick up copies for tests or class notes the day before they are needed. The Copy Center provides delivery requests twice a day, in the mornings and afternoons.  It is not guaranteed that someone will always be in the copy center, especially if you want to pick up tests before a 9 a.m. exam. You must store the exams in a secure location. Assistance with Scantron grading, supplies or other course related needs is available in both departments.  Please contact your appropriate department manager for more assistance.

## TA Work Space

*Family and Community Health (FCH):* Administrative Suite & Touchdown space is located on the 4th floor, room 403.
*Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences (BHS)*: Contact the BHS Department Manager to reserve Touchdown space for room 345.

TAs in the Department of Family & Community Health (FCH) should email Rachel Losinno, rlosinno@nursing.upenn.edu, and TAs in the Biobehavioral & Health Sciences (BHS) division should email Mary Kononenko, kononenm@nursing.upenn.edu, with any questions about resources for TAs, such as locations of space for Office Hours, printer use, copies, etc.

The Doctoral Student Lounge, located in Fagin Hall room 316, has work stations with computers, phones, and lockers.

TAs may also choose to hold Office Hours in the Arcadia Café in the Lobby of Fagin Hall.

## FCH Additional Resources

FCH offers additional resources and support in areas of Canvas and Scantron Support. More details on this and other helpful information can be found by visiting the FCH intranet site: https://share.nursing.upenn.edu/sites/fch/Division%20Resources%20for%20Faculty%20%20Staff/Forms/AllItems.aspx or contact FCH Manager for assistance.

## BHS Additional Resources

BHS offers additional resources and support. More details for Canvas support can be found on the BHS intranet site:
https://share.nursing.upenn.edu/sites/bhs/Resources%20for%20Faculty%20and%20Staff/Forms/AllItems.aspx

University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing
Teaching Assistantship
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Directions:  The TA should complete this form and provide copies to the course faculty, academic advisor, and Office of Student Services for placement in the student's file.

Student: _____   Semester/Year: _____

Course Faculty: _____   Course: _____

This MOU covers the _____ semester and addresses the following responsibilities to be completed by the teaching assistant (TA). The role of the TA will vary according to the needs of this course and the time commitment may vary each week. As stated by the Office of the Provost, a teaching assistantship is a commitment of approximately 16 hours per week (or 8 hours for half-time TAs) throughout the semester, although the number of hours in a given week may be more or less depending on course needs. In order to be considered a student in good academic standing within the university, satisfactory performance in this role is expected.

Brief Description of Responsibility after Discussion with Course Faculty
Before semester begins:



Beginning of semester:



During the semester:



End of the semester:



_____        _____
Faculty Signature                                                         Date

_____        _____
Teaching Assistant Signature                                         Date

_____        _____
Academic Advisor                                                        Date


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University of Pennsylvania
School of Nursing
Teaching Assistantship
End of Assignment Evaluation

Directions: The TA should complete this form and provide copies to the course faculty and academic advisor.

Student: _____     Course Assignment: _____

Course Faculty: _____     Semester/Year: _____

Please provide constructive feedback based upon this teaching assistant's performance in this course.

Completion of Responsibilities:

Communication with Faculty and Students in Course:

Examination and Grading Responsibilities:

Technology and Course Materials:

_____     _____
Faculty Signature                                                    Date

_____     _____
Teaching Assistant Signature                                     Date

_____     _____
Academic Advisor                                                   Date

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**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
SCHOOL OF NURSING
COURSE EVALUATION FORM**

TERM/YEAR _____ COURSE _____ TA _____      DATE _____

Please feel free to use the back of this form for any comments you may have.

| Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent |
|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

1. ☐ Overall quality of the teaching assistant

2. ☐ TA's ability to communicate the subject matter.

3. ☐ TA's ability to stimulate student interest.

4. ☐ TA's accessibility and willingness to discuss course content and any problems.

5. ☐ Value of TA meetings

Comments: _____