



Penn Nursing Science

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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 Andrea Allmayer, Associate Director of Graduate Academic Affairs, in Suite M-18 of Fagin Hall with questions or concerns about your assignment. Andrea can be reached at allmayer@nursing.upenn.edu or 215-898-4150.

The Teaching Assistant work requirement is 16 hours per week.

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://wwwctl.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 the TA's responsibility to initiate the MOU. **The TA should provide a copy of the MOU to the course faculty, the TA's academic advisor, and the Office of Student Services for placement in the student's file.** The MOU form is provided in this handbook.

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.

End of Course Evaluation (required)

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.

Helpful Website Links

Center for Teaching and Learning

<http://www.ctl.sas.upenn.edu/index.html>

Graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania are eligible for the full range of services offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), including individual consultations and videotaping.

The CTL TA handbook (<http://www.ctl.sas.upenn.edu/grad/TAHandbook.htm>) can be downloaded and 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 the TA.

Blackboard Website

<https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu/>

Your course may utilize the Blackboard website. 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 control panel at <https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu>. The control panel 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.

University of Pennsylvania Libraries

www.library.upenn.edu/

Contact the specific library to have books or a course pack 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.

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/>.

Dolbey's Medical Books carries textbooks and other nursing and medical supplies and handbooks. 215-222-6020. 3734 Spruce Street.

<http://www.webmedbooks.com/dolbeys/default.aspx>

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.

<http://reprographics.wharton.upenn.edu/> . Payment by PennCard only.

Campus Copy Center provides bulkpacks. 215-386-6410. 3907 Walnut St.

Other Resources Available to TAs

In House Copies

Copies for course syllabi can be obtained from the copy center (located on 1P) in the School of Nursing. You must fill out a requisition form with a center copy number (obtained from course faculty). 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. 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. Scantron forms and #2 pencils can be picked up from Division Support Services located in Fagin Hall, 3rd or 4th floors.

TA Work Space

The Doctoral Student Lounge in Fagin Hall, 3rd floor, has work stations with computers, phones, and lockers. TAs in the Family & Community Health (FCH) division should email askfch@nursing.upenn.edu and TAs in the Biobehavioral & Health Sciences (BHS) division should email askbhs@nursing.upenn.edu with any questions about resources for TAs, such as locations of space for Office Hours, printer use, copies, etc. TAs may also choose to hold Office Hours in the Arcadia Café on the Mezzanine of Fagin Hall.

Scantron

The Scantron is a machine that will read forms that have small circles filled in by students. TAs should contact their divisions for the location of the Scantron and for assistance with it. TAs in the Family & Community Health (FCH) division should email askfch@nursing.upenn.edu and TAs in the Biobehavioral & Health Sciences (BHS) division should email askbhs@nursing.upenn.edu.

To run the Scantron, you must log into the computer as if it is your desktop (check the domain under your login if you have any problems) and open the **QUIKSCORE** program on the desktop. Change the printer to the one located in the area in the section behind the Scantron area. There is a red notebook with a description of how to run the machine, which will help with paper jams and other specific questions about the Scantron machine. Make up an answer key and scan it. Be sure to color in the Test Letter. After you have scanned the forms, run the statistics that your professor requests. Go to “print test results.” Do this right then on that computer and save the results with the course name, semester, and year. You will not be able to open QUIKSCORE from any other computer. A saved file is necessary for grading the exams of students that missed the earlier exam or rescanning the tests for errors or changes in the key. Remember to jot down the file path so you can find it again. Never run the individual student response sheets unless your course faculty requests it. This runs each student’s responses to each question and is a huge pile of papers.

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 _____ 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 throughout the semester. 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

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, academic advisor, and Office of Student Services for placement in the student's file.

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

**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 0	Fair 1	Good 2	Very Good 3	Excellent 4
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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:
