CHECKLIST FOR GETTING STARTED AS A GSI

I. Things to Do

– Read over appointment letter and finalize hiring process.
– For first-time GSIs:
  o Enroll in your department's 300-level course (most go by the number 375).
  o Go to the GSI Teaching & Resource Center website (http://gsi.berkeley.edu) and enroll in and take the GSI Professional Standards and Ethics in Teaching Online Course. You have until the end of the second week of classes to finish it, but it's best to take it before classes begin.
– Have a pre-semester meeting with the faculty member teaching the course to discuss the course and your responsibilities.
– Get a copy of the course syllabus and review it.
– Obtain the course readings and other materials, and begin familiarizing yourself with them.
– Find out from the faculty member what the regular faculty/GSI meeting time and location will be for the semester.
– Familiarize yourself with the Gold Folder (http://uhs.berkeley.edu/goldfolder/index.shtml), a guide to helping students in distress find appropriate campus resources.
– Set your office hours (the time and location).
– Create a section syllabus (see online Teaching Guide for GSIs for information and examples).
– Visit the classroom or lab you will be teaching in.
– Get a copy of the roster for your section and practice saying students' names. See if the faculty member can give you access to BearFacts and bCourses so you can also see the students' photos.
– Create your firstc-day lesson plan (see online Teaching Guide, "Pre-semester Preparation").
– Copy handouts for first day (e.g., section syllabus, student information sheet).

II. Questions to Address: Departmental Resources

Copying and Office Supplies

– Where is the copier? What code do you need? Is there a limit to quantity of copies you can make during the semester?
– How do you get office supplies needed for teaching (paper, index cards, envelopes)?
– Where is your mailbox located?

Office Space

– Where is your office?
– Do you have your own desk or share one?
– Where do you get the office key?
– Is this an office in which you can hold office hours without disturbing other GSIs, or do you need to find another location for office hours?
– Where are the computer and printer in your teaching department that you will have access to for the purpose of teaching?

Teaching Resources

– In addition to the resources provided by the GSI Center, does the department have a teaching resource center or electronic repository or wiki where teaching materials are kept?
– Is there one for GSIs of the course you are working in? If so, where is it and how do you access it? What resources does it provide?

Other GSIs

- Who are the other GSIs in your course? What is their contact information?
- Can you get copies of past GSI lesson plans for the course? The faculty member may be able to give you access or put you in contact with former GSIs for the course.
- Of the GSIs teaching the course now, is there a "head GSI"? What is that GSI's role?

Go-To People for Addressing Concerns

- Who is the Faculty Adviser for GSI Affairs? (Each department must have a Faculty Adviser for GSI Affairs who can advise you on all matters pertaining to GSI appointments.)
- Does your department have a Professional Developer of GSIs? (This is the faculty member generally responsible for pedagogical training of GSIs in the department, often the instructor of the pedagogy course.)

III. Course Information

Enrollment Information

- Are there prerequisites?
- Is the course closed or full?
- What is the policy for letting students in from the waitlist or dropping them from the course? When will decisions be made?
- What is the policy for letting people into their preferred sections? When will decisions be made?
- Will the GSIs or the professor be in charge of enrollment decisions?
- Will the faculty member add you to the bCourses instructional team so that you can stay current on the enrollment status of students?

Course Materials and Section Logistics

- Where are the books or readers available?
- Where do you get your desk copy?
- Will the faculty member use the course bCourses site or another type of course website? Who will be maintaining it? How will it be used?
- Will the course have an online discussion forum other than bCourses?
- Will there be readings on reserve in the library? If so, where and when will they be available?
- Will lecture notes or slides be available for the course? Will you have access to them?
- Do sections meet the first week of the semester, or do they start later?
- Whom do you speak with if you need a room change?

Student Assessment

- What in-class exams, take-home exams, or papers will students have?
- What format will the tests be: short answer questions, essay, multiple choice?
- Will students have any additional assignments that are part of the course grade?
- How many and when are the exams/papers/assignments due?
- When is the final exam, and what format will it take? (Make holiday travel plans accordingly.)
- What is the professor's policy for make-up exams or late papers?

Preparation for Exams and Papers

- Will there be a review session before each exam/paper/assignment?
- If so, who will be responsible for running the review session? What format? When?
- Will there be a review sheet for each exam? A guideline sheet for papers?

- Will GSIs be responsible for creating, copying, and/or distributing the review sheets?
- Will GSIs and/or the professor come up with questions for the exams/papers?
- Will the GSIs be responsible for typing, copying, and/or distributing exams/assignments?
- If the Disabled Students Program has provided a letter indicating an academic accommodation that a student needs (for instance extra time or alternative space for taking exams), who will oversee the provision of the accommodation?

Grading

- Will GSIs be responsible for grading?
- What are the faculty member's procedures if you think a student has plagiarized, cheated, or engaged in another form of academic misconduct?
- How will grading be distributed among GSIs?
- How much time do GSIs have to grade papers or exams? How quickly should papers or exams be returned to students?
- Who will be responsible for responding to requests for re-grades, the GSIs or the professor? What is the procedure for re-grades?
- Who will record and keep grades: will there be a course list or separate lists for each GSI?
- How will students receive their grades: in section, in lecture, or in bCourses?

IV. Other Responsibilities

- How many office hours do you need to hold?
- What will your responsibilities be during lectures?
- Are GSIs responsible for attending all lectures throughout the semester?
- Will GSIs be responsible for creating, copying, and/or distributing lecture handouts?
- Who is responsible for the extra handouts after lecture?

Instructional Technology

- Will GSIs be responsible for picking up and setting up equipment or materials? Regularly, or occasionally?
- Does your classroom or lab have the necessary IT equipment installed, or do you need to check equipment out? From where?
- If you use department equipment, do you have to sign it out? Where, and from whom?
- Will GSIs be responsible for operating equipment during lectures? How will this work in practice?
- Will GSIs need to operate any unfamiliar equipment? Consider making an appointment to consult with a technology specialist in ETS or your department.

Adapted with permission from a handout by K. Blount---Matthews, Former GSI, Department of Psychology