

Checklist for Getting Started as a GSI

I. Things to Do

- Read over appointment letter and finalize hiring process
- 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
- Set a time and location for regular meetings of faculty member and GSIs during the semester
- Enroll in your department's 300-level course (or, if you're teaching in a different department, the 300-level course in the teaching department)
- Enroll in and take the online course, Professional Standards and Ethics for GSIs (you have until the third week to finish it, but it's best to take it before classes begin)
- Review course material
- Set office hours
- Create a section syllabus (see online Teaching Guide for information and samples)
- Visit the classroom or lab you will be teaching in
- Get a copy of the roster for your section and practice saying students' names
- Create first-day lesson plan (see online Teaching Guide)
- 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?
- How do you get office supplies needed for teaching (paper, index cards, envelopes)? Where?
- 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 have office hours and not disturb other GSIs or do you need to find another location for office hours?
- Where is the computer you will have access to for the purpose of teaching?

Instructional Technology

- Where do you acquire IT equipment to use in sections—department, ETS, other?
- Does your classroom or lab have IT equipment installed, or do you need to contact ETS to check equipment out?
- If you use department equipment, do you have to sign it out? With whom?

Teaching Resources

- Is there a teaching resource center in your department or another central location where teaching materials are kept? If so, where is it and how do you access it? What resources does it provide?
- Is there a binder or compendium of previous teaching plans and exercises?

Other GSIs

- Who were the GSIs for the class last time? What is their contact information?
- Can you get copies of past section lesson plans for the course?
- Of the GSIs teaching the course now, is there a “head GSI”? What does that mean?

Go-to People for Addressing Concerns

- Who is the Faculty Adviser for GSI Affairs? (each department is required to 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? (generally responsible for pedagogical training of GSIs in the department)

Course Information

Enrollment Information

- Are there prerequisites?
- Is the course closed / 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 bSpace instructional team so that you can stay current on the enrollment status of students?

Course Materials and Section Logistics

- Where are the books and / or readers available?
- Where do you get your desk copy?
- Will the faculty member use the course bSpace site or another type of course Web site?
- Will there be readings on reserve in the library? If so, where and when will they be available?
- Will ASUC Lecture Notes be available for the course? (transcripts of lectures sold to students for some courses) 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

- Will students have in-class exams, take-home exams, and / or papers?
- What format will the tests be — short answer questions, essay, multiple choice?
- Will students have additional assignments that are worth points?
- How many exams / papers / assignments will there be? When are they 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?

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 accommodations a student needs (for instance extra time or alternative space), who will oversee the provision of the accommodation?

Grading

- Will GSIs be responsible for grading?
- What are the procedures if you think a student has plagiarized or cheated?
- What are the policies for late exams / papers / assignments?
- 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?
- 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, lecture, or bSpace?

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 picking up and setting up AV equipment or materials? Regularly or occasionally?
- Will GSIs be responsible for operating IT equipment during lectures? How will this work out in practice?
- Will GSIs be responsible for creating, copying, and / or distributing lecture handouts?
- Who is responsible for the extra handouts after lecture?
- Will GSIs be responsible for maintaining the course bSpace or other course Web site?

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