

# Teaching/Teaching Resources

## 4.1 Graduate Assistantships (RA/TA) Orientation and Overview

Jeanne Mullen, Room 202, is responsible for the coordination of teaching and research assistantship appointments. The terms and conditions of employment for graduate assistant employees are spelled out in the agreement between the Iowa State Board of Regents and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Local 896-COGS, as well as in your offer letter.

### 4.1.1 Research Assistantship Appointments

Research assistantship appointments are awarded by faculty members and are funded from various research grants and contracts. Students are encouraged to identify areas of interest and begin to talk with faculty members as their course work progresses so that individual research projects may begin as soon as possible.

Every professor within the Department is contacted early during the Spring Semester to identify students they will be supporting through RA appointments during the following academic year. Currently funded students are discussed as well as funding availability. Also, many of the students are individually contacted. You are encouraged to maintain consistent contact with Heather ([jeanne-mullen@uiowa.edu](mailto:jeanne-mullen@uiowa.edu)) so that those in the administrative offices remain fully informed of the funding needs and academic progress of each graduate student.

### 4.1.2 Teaching Assistantship Appointments

The Department has recently averaged 28 teaching assistantships per year. The number of assistantships is determined by the enrollment size of the undergraduate courses and staff needed for grading and assisting in the tutorial room.

The departmental criteria for awarding a teaching assistantship appointment are as follows:

#### Evaluations

Evaluations of the teaching assistants are done by the instructors of the courses, the laboratory coordinator, and the undergraduate students through the Assessing the Classroom Environment (ACE) form and TA Performance Evaluations. The instructors' and the laboratory coordinator's evaluations are ongoing, whereas the students' evaluations are done at the end of every semester. These evaluations are reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies and assist in the determination of successive appointments.

#### Progress

It is expected that a teaching assistant will maintain steady and reasonable progress toward a degree. This is measured by taking into account both the grade point average as described by the

Graduate College (2.75 for an M.S. degree objective and 3.0 for a Ph.D.) and adequate progress in course work and/or an individual research project (Section 2.3). Students with assistantships are required to take a minimum of six hours during each semester of the academic year; course schedules should be worked out with a faculty advisor, and the departmental office staff will monitor and report each student's status.

### **Language Requirement**

- Each teaching assistant must also meet the language requirements of the University. For those students for whom English is a second language, a rating by the ESL Program is required.\*

If this is your first appointment as a teaching assistant and English is not your first language, you are required to demonstrate your effectiveness in English speaking and comprehension skills for teaching undergraduates in a United States university classroom situation before you are assigned teaching assistantship responsibilities. The English as a Second Language Programs Office will evaluate your language skills for this purpose. You will first take a test to evaluate your general spoken English proficiency (ESPA test) that is given in a language laboratory setting and recorded on audiotape. If you score at least 50 on the ESPA test, you will take the ELPT test to assess your language in the context of a teaching assistant. For the ELPT test, which is recorded on videotape, you will present a brief lecture on a topic in your discipline. You will also be asked questions related to your lecture. Pre-registration is required. The registration will be submitted by from Jeanne Mullen in 202 Van Allen Hall. The results of these evaluations will determine whether you are assigned full responsibility for teaching a course, or whether you are conditionally certified to teach discussion or lab sections, or to grade papers. Those who are conditionally certified must take appropriate English language courses (TAPE program) or be evaluated further to be unconditionally certified.

- The Iowa Board of Regents has adopted a policy on oral communication competence, designed to ensure that all instructors have "the ability to communicate appropriately in the language of instruction to students attending Regents institutions." All new teaching assistants will be evaluated by the middle of the first semester of teaching, and all teaching assistants will be evaluated at the end of every semester. A question on oral communication competence will be included in the form the department uses for student evaluation of teaching.
- *Teaching assistants whose first language is not English are expected by the end of your first year as a teaching assistant to have attained a B certification from the English as a Second Language (ESL) office. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will not approve any appointments for second year teaching assistants who have not met this criterion.*

\*For more information about the TAPE program administered by ESL see Section 4.8 below or go to the URL: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/esl/tape>.

## **Departmental Teaching Assistant Orientation**

The objectives of the orientation workshop are to ensure the highest possible quality of instruction in the labs by:

- Providing new TAs with introductory pedagogical training
- Providing opportunities for experienced TAs to continue to develop their professional skills and to share them with their new colleagues
- Providing information about new materials and approaches in labs
- Fostering collegial spirit and a sense of professional identity among the teaching staff
- Providing information related to resources available to TAs at the University of Iowa and in the Department.

## **Staff meetings by course**

In addition to the training workshop, all TAs must attend weekly TA training meetings throughout the academic year specific to the course they are teaching. These meetings include training and demonstration for labs, lessons, teaching strategies, etc. Failure to attend weekly sessions and completion of lab results can result in disciplinary action. See Dr. Anthony Moeller (physics) or Dr. Caroline Roberts (astronomy) for details.

## **Teaching Assistant Performance Evaluations**

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences requires that all TAs receive an evaluation of their teaching performance. All TAs will be observed twice each semester. The first observation will take place before the end of the first eight weeks of classes; the second one-on-one consultation will take place before the end of the semester. TAs will receive a copy of their observation evaluation forms which they must sign and return. The goals of such evaluations are to continue to improve teaching skills and use appropriate methodologies. These evaluation instruments include completion of the two observations per semester and online ACE evaluations each semester.

## **Teaching Assistant Expectations**

### **Physics**

#### **TAs assigned to lab sections**

Physics TAs perform under the supervision of the Laboratory Coordinator (Dr. Anthony Moeller) and the faculty member responsible for the course to which you are assigned. Any or all of the following are activities that TAs typically perform:

- a) Preparing for lab activities (including attending training, preparing sample lab write-up) and teaching the assigned lab and/or discussion sections
- b) Attending weekly TA lab meetings (usually Fridays) and turning in lab results on Mondays

- c) Administering and grading examinations and other written assignments as needed
- d) Returning all graded assignments promptly (as per faculty member's instructions)
- e) Holding a minimum of 2 hours of office hours and meeting with students individually as needed
- f) Arranging for a substitute in case of absence and seeking approval from Heather Mineart in advance if possible, or in the case of emergency or sudden illness, soon afterwards
- g) Participating in the Orientation Workshop
- h) Participating in departmental TA evaluation procedures (online ACE evaluations). NB: All TAs who are assigned a lab section are responsible for having students complete the online ACE evaluations related to their experience in the lab.
- i) Ensuring that students attending your lab are registered for your section
- j) Conducting all lab sections in accordance with assigned syllabi and methodology
- k) Creating and maintaining a syllabus with specific requirements
- l) Behaving at all times in a manner consistent with university policies on sexual harassment, consensual relationships, and human rights
- m) Sharing ideas and concerns with other TAs and supervisors
- n) Be on time for your assigned lab sections, office hours and/or Physics Help Center hours
- o) Establish an effective relationship with the course instructor.

Promptness and preparedness are vital to the understanding and administration of a lab course. The students' comprehension of lab procedures and experiments is essential to succeeding in these courses. Therefore, the teaching assistants' responsibility for clarifications and explanations is important. Safety is an important responsibility for the TA. Strictly enforce safety regulations. You must be present in the laboratory at all times even if you only have one student. **DO NOT LEAVE THE LABORATORY FOR ANY REASON WHILE STUDENTS ARE PRESENT.**

## **Astronomy**

Astronomy TAs perform under the supervision of the Laboratory Coordinator (Dr. Caroline Roberts) and the faculty member responsible for the course to which you are assigned. Any or all of the following are activities that TAs typically perform:

- a) Preparing lab activities and teaching the assigned lab and/or discussion sections
- b) Familiarize yourself with all software packages
- c) Administering and grading examinations and other written assignments as needed
- d) Returning all graded assignments promptly (as per faculty member's instructions)
- e) Holding office hours (2-3 hours/week) and meeting with students individually as needed
- f) Arranging for a substitute in case of absence and seeking approval from Jane Nachtman in advance if possible, or in the case of emergency or sudden illness, soon afterwards
- g) Attending weekly astronomy laboratory meetings
- h) Participating in the Departmental Teaching Orientation Workshop
- i) Participating in departmental TA evaluation procedures (online ACE evaluations). NB: All TAs who are assigned a lab section are responsible for having students complete ACE forms related to their experience in the lab.
- j) Ensuring that students attending your lab are registered for your section

- k) Conducting all lab sections in accordance with assigned syllabi and methodology
- l) Creating and maintaining a syllabus with specific requirements
- m) Behaving at all times in a manner consistent with university policies on sexual harassment, consensual relationships, and human rights
- n) Sharing ideas and concerns with other TAs and supervisors
- o) Be on time for your assigned lab sections and office hours
- p) Establish an effective relationship with the course instructor
- q) Take out and return astronomy lab equipment neatly and promptly after using each lab session (note: do not leave any telescopes on the roof, in the hallways or in the lab rooms; these must be returned to the storage room in VAN 655A).
- r) TAs are expected to proctor exams for courses they are TAs (both lab TA and grader) for.

Promptness and preparedness are vital to the understanding and administration of a lab course. The students' comprehension of lab procedures and experiments is essential to succeeding in these courses. Therefore, the teaching assistants' responsibility for clarifications and explanations is important. Safety is an important responsibility for the TA. Strictly enforce safety regulations. You must be present in the laboratory at all times even if you only have one student. **DO NOT LEAVE THE LABORATORY FOR ANY REASON WHILE STUDENTS ARE PRESENT.**

### **Physics Help Center Expectations (formerly "Tutorial")**

The Physics Help Center is located in room 310 Van Allen Hall (alternate room is 54 VAN should 310 be unavailable).

The Physics Help Center will be staffed by TAs who are assigned help students learn strategies for solving homework assignments and help students prepare for quizzes and exams. TAs will be assigned one of the following courses (see list below) and should meet the instructor of the course and ask to be added to the course ICON site so that the TA can keep up with the weekly topics and homework assignments.

Students who typically use the Physics Help Center are those enrolled in

- Basic Physics (PHYS:1400)
- College Physics I (PHYS:1511) or College Physics II (PHYS:1512)
- Intro Physics I (PHYS:1611) or Intro Physics II (PHYS:1612)
- Physics I (PHYS:1701) through Physics IV (PHYS:2704)

How to help students in the Physics Help Center:

- Be friendly and helpful to students.
- Help students develop the methods to solve homework problems.
- Physics Help Center TAs are not expected to, nor should they, solve homework problems for students.
- Work with the students on their level, i.e., talk in a manner that is easily understood. Remember, many of these students are taking the physics course as a requirement for their major or program of study, which may not have anything to do with physics. The students may be very stressed about taking a physics course.

- Introduce yourself to the course instructor, have the instructor add you to the ICON site for the course.
- Request the textbook for the course you are working with from the front desk in 203 VAN.

You are expected to be on time and present for your scheduled tutorial room hours. If you are unable to attend, it's your responsibility to find a substitute. If an emergency arises that requires your absence, please contact Heather Mineart (335-1688 or [heather-mineart@uiowa.edu](mailto:heather-mineart@uiowa.edu)). Failure to cover your hours can result in disciplinary action.

## Graders

You are assigned a specific amount of grading hours per week for an individual class. This is the average number of hours per week that you are expected to work for this class; the load will likely vary from week to week. In either the week before class or early in the first week of class, you will need to meet with the faculty member in charge of that course to determine how the grading for the class will occur. You may be asked to provide solutions for the problems to be graded or these solutions may be provided to you depending on the individual faculty member.

The faculty member will give you specific expectations related to:

- a) which problems to grade and the date they are due back to the faculty member
- b) how grades are to be recorded and when these should be provided to the faculty member (you are responsible for recording the homework grades)
- c) if you are providing solutions – when solutions need to be made available to the class via web posting, library notebook, etc. – please indicate when the solutions will be available.

The assignment will vary to meet the specific faculty member's needs for the class. It is your responsibility to work with the faculty member to ensure that grading is completed in a timely manner. If the average amount of time you spend on grading responsibilities exceeds the amount assigned, you should inform the faculty member to find a way to accomplish the grading in the assigned amount of time. As with any work situation, you are required to perform your assigned grading tasks regardless of other commitments such as course work or personal time. If an emergency arises that requires your absence, please contact Heather Mineart (335-1688 or [heather-mineart@uiowa.edu](mailto:heather-mineart@uiowa.edu)) as soon as possible.

## Teaching Load

The TA assignments are designed to account for an average of 20 hours of work per week over the course of the semester. The 20 hours includes preparation time, laboratory sections, grading and tutorial room hours. Not all TAs will have identical assignments, however, our goal is for each TA to have a 20 hour per week coverage commitment for the TA appointment. Fractional appointments have the 20 hours commitment adjusted proportionately. Graders are also expected to proctor exams for courses they are graders for.

Assignments are determined by Heather Mineart, the Departmental Administrator, in consultation with the faculty and the Laboratory Coordinator (Anthony Moeller or Caroline

Roberts). If the TA appointment requires more than 20 hours per week on average a TA should notify Heather Mineart.

### **Summer School Teaching Assistants**

A very limited amount of teaching assistantships are usually available in the summer for TAs at a stipend equal to 2/9<sup>th</sup>s of the academic year salary. Eligibility is restricted to continuing students. In addition to strong academic and teaching credentials, appointments made in previous summers are taken into account, in an effort to reward eligible students not previously supported during a summer session. Summer school teaching appointments are made by the Director of Graduate Studies, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the Departmental Administrator.

### **University Policies**

**The Council of Graduate Schools Resolution Regarding Graduate Students, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants**, to which the University of Iowa is a signatory, states that “acceptance of an offer of financial support for the next academic year by a prospective or enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both the student and the graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.” Further, “students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violates the intent of the Resolution. In those instances, in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on the presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer.”

### **Harassment Prevention**

The purpose of this policy is to prevent harassment within The University of Iowa community and to provide a process for addressing all forms of harassment if and when it occurs. The University of Iowa is committed to maintaining an environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and that fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect. This commitment requires that the highest value be placed on the use of reason and that any harassment in the University community be renounced as repugnant and inimical to its goals. Harassment destroys the mutual trust that binds members of the community in their pursuit of truth.

The University also is committed strongly to academic freedom and freedom of expression. In upholding these ideals, the University will be guided by the following principles:

- a. The primary function of the University of Iowa is the discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge by means of research, teaching, discussion, and debate. To fulfill this function, the University of Iowa must strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression allowed under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.
- b. It is not the proper role of the University of Iowa to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which may include ideas and opinions an individual finds unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive.
- c. It is the proper role of the University of Iowa to encourage diversity of thoughts, ideas, and opinions and to encourage, within the bounds of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the peaceful, respectful, and safe exercise of First Amendment rights.
- d. Faculty, staff, and students have the freedom to discuss any problem that presents itself, assemble, and engage in spontaneous expressive activity on campus, within the bounds of established principles of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, as defined in this Operations Manual, that are consistent with established First Amendment principles.

### **About Consensual Relationships (excerpts)**

The integrity of the University's educational mission is promoted by professionalism that derives from mutual trust and respect in instructor-student relationships. Similarly, the University is committed to the principle of protecting the integrity and objectivity of its staff members in the performance of their University duties. It is therefore fundamental to the University's overall mission that the professional responsibilities of its instructors be carried out in an atmosphere that is free of conflicts of interest that compromise these principles.

Romantic and/or sexual relationships where one member of the University community has supervisory or other evaluative responsibility for the other create conflicts of interest and perceptions of undue advantage. There are also special risks in any sexual or romantic relationship between individuals in inherently unequal positions of power (such as teacher and student, supervisor and employee). Such relationships may undermine the real or perceived integrity of the supervision and evaluation provided, and the trust inherent particularly in the instructor-student relationship. They may, moreover, be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power believes. The relationship is likely to be perceived in different ways by each of the parties to it, especially in retrospect.

Moreover, such relationships may harm or injure others in the academic or work environment. Relationships in which one party is in a position to review the work or influence the career of the other may provide grounds for complaint when that relationship gives, or creates the appearance of, undue access or advantage to the person involved in the relationship, or when it restricts opportunities or creates a hostile environment for others.

Such relationships also have the potential for other adverse consequences, including the filing of charges of sexual harassment and/or retaliation under [II-4 Sexual Harassment](#) if, for example, one party to the relationship wishes to terminate the relationship to the other party's objection. In those circumstances when sexual harassment is alleged as the result of a romantic and/or sexual relationship, the existence of the relationship is not a per se violation of the Policy on Sexual Harassment. However, the apparent consensual nature of the relationship is inherently suspect due to the fundamental asymmetry of power in the relationship and it thus may be difficult to establish consent as a defense to such a charge. Even when both parties consented at the outset to a romantic involvement, this past consent does not remove grounds for or preclude a charge or subsequent finding of sexual harassment based upon subsequent unwelcome conduct.

Sexual or romantic relationships between a student and a faculty or staff member who functions in an instructional context with the student are prohibited by this policy. Other relationships, such as a relationship between a faculty member and a student in the same department or college but where no instructional context exists, while not prohibited, may present the appearance of a conflict of interest or may run the risk of developing into an actual conflict of interest which would place the relationship in the prohibited category.

This policy applies to consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between individuals of the same sex or of the opposite sex. Regardless of who initiates the relationship, the instructor is responsible for complying with this policy.

## **University Policy on Human Rights**

The University of Iowa brings together in common pursuit of its educational goals persons of many nations, races, and creeds. The University is guided by the precepts that in no aspect of its programs shall there be differences in the treatment of persons because of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, associational preferences, or any other classification that deprives the person of consideration as an individual, and that equal opportunity and access to facilities shall be available to all. These principles are expected to be observed in the internal policies and practices of the University; specifically in the admission, housing, and education of students; in policies governing programs of extracurricular life and activities; and in the employment of faculty and staff personnel. Consistent with state and federal law, reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities and to accommodate religious practices. The University shall work cooperatively with the community in furthering these principles.

## **Student Disability Services**

The University of Iowa, as authorized by Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, shall take affirmative steps to employ and advance the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities and qualified disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam era at all levels of employment. The affirmative action policy applies to, but is not limited to, the following employment practices:

Hiring;

Upgrading;

Demotion;

Transfer;

Recruitment;

Recruitment advertising;

Layoff;

Termination;

Rates of pay/other forms of compensation; and

Selection for training (including apprenticeship).

The University of Iowa endeavors to make reasonable accommodations for the functional limitations of applicants, employees, and students with disabilities and disabled veterans pursuant to applicable federal and state law. Applicants and employees with disabilities seeking accommodations should contact Faculty and Staff Disability Services (<https://hr.uiowa.edu/fsds/>). Students with disabilities should contact Student Disability Services (<https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/students/>).

Applicants, employees, and students with disabilities at The University of Iowa are protected from coercion, retaliation, interferences, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation of a complaint under the aforementioned acts. Inquiries and complaints should be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity for a confidential investigation.

Disabled applicants/employees, disabled veterans, or veterans of the Vietnam Era desiring more information should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. To obtain a copy of the Affirmative Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, Disabled Veterans, and Veterans of the Vietnam Era, see <https://diversity.uiowa.edu/office/equal-opportunity-and-diversity>.

## 4.2 Sample Syllabi –

**Note that the Course Supervisor must approve your syllabus before it is copied for your students**

**\*\*EXAMPLE\*\***

### PHYS:1611 Introductory Physics I – LABORATORY Fall 2021

**TA:** John Smith  
**Office:** xxx Van Allen Hall  
**Office Hours:** Day and time  
(Additional hours by appt.)  
**Phone:** 5-xxxx  
**E-mail:** john-smith@uiowa.edu

**Lab Manual:** *Lab Manual Title*

Lab Manual Author(s) and edition year

**Lab Sections:** PHYS:1611:xxx Thursday 8:00-10:50 am xxx Van Allen Hall

**Laboratory:** Topics of this laboratory include (*insert brief list of major topics here, for example, classical mechanics and sound*). Attendance is required. A pre-lab and a lab report are required for each lab. Your work in lab is worth 15% of your final grade, so you should take it seriously. Misconduct in the lab will not be tolerated.

#### **What to Bring to Lab:**

1. The **entire** lab manual. Some experiments refer to previous experiments, the glossary of laboratory instruments, or the computer use glossary.
2. Your completed pre-lab questions. The pre-lab **must be completed** before coming to the lab.
3. A pencil. Please use a pencil, not a pen, to fill out your lab report.
4. A calculator. While a calculator is not required for lab, it is recommended.

[Continued on next page]

**Lab Schedule:**

Week of:	Sept 7	Sept 14	Sept 21	Sept 28	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19
<b>Lab</b>	M1: Intro to Lab Measurement	M2: Kinematics I, II, III	M3: Projectile Motion	NO LAB	M4: Acceleration Force & Newton II	M5: Ballistic Pendulum	M6: Collisions in 2D

Week of:	Oct 26	Nov 2	Nov 9	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7
<b>Lab</b>	M7: Moment of Inertia	NO LAB	M9: Simple Harmonic Motion	W1:Speed of Sound	NO LAB	NO LAB	NO LAB

**Laboratory Organization:**

Beginning of period: your answers to the pre-lab questions will be collected  
 First 10-20 minutes: discuss lab, explain apparatus and procedure  
 Rest of lab: perform lab and write lab report  
 End of period: turn in lab report

- Log off the computer at the end of lab, but do not shut it down.
- Turn off any lab equipment after you are done.
- Clean the lab bench before you leave. I will check your lab bench before I give you any credit for cleanup.

**Tutorial:** The Physics Help Center is located in room 310 VAN – the hours it is open are posted on the door or go to <http://physics.uiowa.edu/resources> and select “Physics Tutorial Schedule.”

**Makeup labs:** To attend a lab section you are not registered for (makeup labs) you must have permission from the professor, both TAs involved, and the laboratory coordinator (Anthony Moeller, 250 VAN). Permission must be requested at least one week in advance except in the case of an emergency. No student can go into a section that is already full.

Permission is not automatic and may be denied due to lack of equipment, experiments requiring close TA scrutiny, or other circumstances.

As stated in the University's Course Exam Schedule Conflict Policies: "When there is a conflict between an exam scheduled outside of class time and a regularly scheduled course, the regularly scheduled course will take precedence." It is up to the instructor of an exam scheduled outside regular class hours to arrange a makeup exam for the students who have a schedule conflict.

## **The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Important Policies and Procedures**

### **Administrative Home:**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook.

### **Electronic Communication:**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondence (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11).

### **Accommodations for Disabilities:**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [Student Disability Services | The University of Iowa \(uiowa.edu\)](http://www.uiowa.edu/~disability) for more information.

### **Academic Honesty:**

All students taking CLAS courses have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

### **Making a Suggestion or a Complaint:**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

### **Understanding Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather:**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety website.

## 4.3 Sample Performance Evaluation

**The University of Iowa  
Department of Physics and Astronomy  
TA Performance Evaluation**

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of \_\_\_\_\_

Review \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Courses: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The TA has effective teaching skills. (check one)  
*Standards*-The TA is able to communicate effectively and the students understand the physics concepts taught by the TA  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

2. The TA is adequately prepared to teach lab sections. (check one)  
*Standards*-The TA understands the material and is able to explain it. TA does the experiments in advance and prepares an explanation of the important parts.  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

3. The TA has familiarity with laboratory facilities and equipment. (check one)  
*Standards*-TA maintains laboratory equipment and informs the lab coordinator when equipment is broken and alerts the appropriate person about damaged or misplaced laboratory facilities.  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

4. The TA attends all training sessions (spring, fall, weekly).  
*Standards*-A 30-minute training session is mandatory for all lab TAs on Fridays before the week that they have labs. TA training also occurs at the beginning of fall and spring semester.  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

5. The TA conducts him/herself in a professional manner that is consistent with the University of Iowa Policy on Sexual Harassment and Consensual Relationships and the UI Policy on Human Rights. (check one)  
*Standards*-see University of Iowa policy  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

6. The TA is reliable. (check one)  
*Standards*- The TA reports to lab/class/tutorial room on time, maintains office hours, returns graded assignments promptly (lab reports, etc.), and assumes responsibility for coverage in the event of absence.  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

7. The TA has established effective working relationships with course instructor. (check one)  
*Standards*-The TA has the course syllabus, knows what course material has been covered in lecture, and follows the professor's instructions.  
Strongly agree:  
Agree:  
Disagree:  
Strongly disagree:  
No opinion:

Comments:

Administrative Associate comments: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Lab Coordinator comments: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty/instructor comments: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TA comments:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

TA signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4.4 Checklist of Techniques

### CHECKLIST OF CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES\*

1. General Classroom Environment
  - (a) Make sure the room is well lit.
  - (b) Shut the door if the hallway is noisy.
2. Speech
  - (a) Look at the students when you talk to them, not at the blackboard.
  - (b) Speak clearly and with sufficient volume.
  - (c) Speak more slowly than you think you need to.
  - (d) Don't be afraid to stop and think.
  - (e) Try to avoid phrases like "you know" and "like".
  - (f) Show enthusiasm and interest in the material.
3. The Blackboard
  - (a) Erase the blackboard completely before starting.
  - (b) Make sure your writing is large enough for everyone to see.
  - (c) Write legibly, even if it takes longer.
  - (d) Draw all diagrams clearly.
  - (e) Do not stand in front of your writing; make sure that all students can see what you have written.
  - (f) Never make partial erasures to manipulate equations.
  - (g) Allow students time to copy what you have written.
  - (h) Make sure that the symbols that you use are consistent with the text.
4. Content
  - (a) Present solutions to problems in an organized and coherent manner. However, first start with STEP 0 – how you figured out what kind of problem it is.
  - (b) Give references in the book for specific techniques.
  - (c) Do not quote the book verbatim. Students like to hear DIFFERENT approaches to the same problem.
  - (d) Try to give insights to different problem-solving techniques.
  - (e) Clearly explain all steps in the solution.
5. Student Interaction
  - (a) Ask the class questions. Allow sufficient time for answers. (Try counting to yourself slowly to 10.) Reduce the risk by asking the students what they GUESS the answer is.
  - (b) Never ridicule a student for giving a wrong answer; be supportive!
  - (c) Praise students for correct answers or correct parts of answers. Express confidence in the students' ability to learn.
  - (d) Be careful in your use of language. Avoid phrases that are profane, vulgar or suggestive. Remember that your behavior and language set the tone for the class and reflects on the field as a whole.
  - (e) Treat students with respect and caring and promote students' interest.
  - (f) Do not try to show off how smart you are in class.

\*From Notes and Suggestions for Teaching Assistants, by A. Bodek and P. Auchincloss, UR-1348 (August 1995.)

## 4.5 Assisting Students with Disabilities

### Helping Students with SDS Accommodations: Policy and Procedures

We want to remind you of key Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation policies and procedures.

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, instructors ***must*** provide reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities who present an official SDS letter to the instructor about such accommodations. A list of common accommodations is available [here](#).

Students without an official letter from SDS should be referred to that office for further help.

### [Student Disability Services](#)

3015 Burge Hall (located in the lower level)

Phone: 319-335-1462

[sds-info@uiowa.edu](mailto:sds-info@uiowa.edu)

Please review these key points about procedures and exam proctoring services for students with SDS accommodations.

1. A statement about SDS accommodations must be included on the course [syllabus](#). The statement below is recommended by the College and is included on the official CLAS syllabus [insert](#), available for any instructor to use. Many departments also provide this official insert for instructors.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities: Syllabus Statement**

The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services (SDS) and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See <http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/> for information.

Instructors should announce in class at the beginning of each semester the procedures for arranging for official accommodations as approved by SDS. Remind students **that they must present the official letter from SDS** that outlines the student's entitled accommodations before accommodations are arranged.

2. Accommodations and SDS status should be handled discreetly, keeping in mind the importance of a student's privacy as required under [FERPA](#). Remind students that

because of privacy concerns, you will meet with each student during your office hours rather than before or after class.

3. During this private meeting, the accommodations as well as the responsibilities of the student and instructor should be clarified. A student without the SDS letter should be referred to SDS for help.
4. Information on notetaking accommodations and how to provide them may be found on this [page](#) while attendance related accommodations may be found [here](#). Some students require [captioned films and online media](#) while others are allowed to use a calculator. Please see the SDS website for more information.
5. Students with accommodations allowing for **100% time or more for exams** and/or **very specialized services** (such as assisted technology, a scribe, or a reader or any accommodation marked by an asterisk\*) take proctored exams **at the SDS office**. According to the SDS policy, exams during the semester must be scheduled at least 7 days in advance of the exam date while final exams must be scheduled at least 21 days before the exam. SDS must receive exam materials at least 2 business days before the exam or the exam will be cancelled. Other guidelines are on [this page](#). The instructor and student should decide on the date and time of exams as soon as possible, with the instructor submitting this form: [Request Form for SDS to Proctor Exams](#). Remind students that SDS exam rooms fill quickly.
6. Exam Services in the Division of Continuing Education, located downtown on the upper floor of 30 S. Dubuque Street, provides exam proctoring for students **needing 50% more time for exams and/or reduced distractions accommodations. A form is available for instructors to use and to fill out during the student's visit to the office to discuss accommodations;** visit this [website](#). Please remember that students may not request this proctoring service themselves; the form must be submitted by the instructor. The instructor must also submit the exam materials in a timely fashion. See the detailed instructions on the page with the form for more information.

We appreciate your attention to these very important matters. As questions arise, please let us know since we are more than happy to discuss these policies and procedures.

#### 4.6 CLAS Classroom Procedures

*You **MUST** take roll frequently the first couple of weeks of class.*

If you have a student in your class who is not on your list find out why. If they are making up a lab, they should have followed the procedures for doing a makeup lab outlined below. If they say they are supposed to be in your lab, find out if they added it or if they are actually supposed to be in a different section that meets at the same time in a different room. Check with the list in room 203, if they have added, they will be on it. If they are supposed to be in a different section, have them attend the one they are registered for. If they are in yours because they want to add or

switch to your section, they need to come to room 203 and do a section change. (*See DROP/ADD SLIPS.*) If your section is full according to our records, we will put them on a waiting list and try to get them in. It is **not** your decision to let a student into your lab without checking with the General Office. We may have a waiting list for your section; these people would have priority.

If you have a student that keeps showing up on your class list that is not attending lab you should try the following: check in 203 to see if they have dropped or switched sections or check with other TAs of the same course to see if they are attending the wrong section. **Physics TAs only** - Check with the professor of the course to see if they have been excused from taking the lab due to a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade option, or check in 203 to see if they have a lab card from a previous semester. If there is a lab card on file for them but they have not contacted the professor to be excused, the student will need to be contacted. Being excused from the lab portion of the course is not automatic when doing a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade option.

### **DROP/ADD SLIPS:**

Students can change their schedule, drop or add classes online until 11:59 pm on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the semester. After that, drop/add slips are to be signed in the general office by Maureen O'Neill, Room 203 VAN, **only**. If a student comes to you for a signature on a drop/add slip send them to Misty in room 203 VAN. We sometimes have waiting lists for several sections and we keep track of the number of students enrolled in each lab section. Let us know if you feel that you have room in a lab that we show as being full and a student wants to add your section. We will consider the situation and may sign their add slip if there is not a waiting list.

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

You should post your office hours outside of your office and provide this information to the general office and course instructor.

### **ABSENT OR LATE:**

Call the general office at 335-1686 if you are going to be absent or late for your lab or tutorial hours.

### **MAKEUP LABS:**

Students are not allowed to attend sections they are not registered for (makeup labs) except under the following conditions.

1. The student must have permission from the professor, both TAs involved, and, for physics labs, the laboratory coordinator. Permission must be requested at least one week in advance except in the case of an emergency.
2. No student can go into a section that is already full.

Permission is not automatic and may be denied due to lack of equipment, experiments requiring close TA scrutiny, or other circumstances.

As stated in the University's Course Exam Schedule Conflict Policies: "When there is a conflict between an exam scheduled outside of class time and a regularly scheduled course, the regularly scheduled course will take precedence." It is up to the instructor of an exam scheduled outside regular class hours to arrange a makeup exam for the students who have a schedule conflict.

### **GRADES:**

Students sometimes take courses second grade option. When they do this, they do not always have to retake the lab if they did satisfactorily the first time. It is up to the professor of the course, unless they have passed this responsibility to the TAs, to determine whether the student will need to retake the lab in part or in full. If you have one of these students in your lab, you or the professor needs to come to room 203 VAN and get their old lab card. (The student should inform you of this at the beginning of the semester, or you may want to check to see if this is the case if you have a student who never comes to lab yet remains on your class list.) You should check their card early in the semester. This gives us time to track down their previous TA if we cannot find a lab card. This also gives them an opportunity to find out if they need to redo any of the labs. Make a copy of the card and return the original to room 203. Turn these grades in to the professor at the end of the semester. You do not need to fill out a new lab card for these people unless they redo labs or complete ones they previously missed. Please inform the general office if you have any students enrolled in your sections who have been excused from the lab. This is especially important if we have a waiting list for that particular section.

### **TUTORIAL (PHYSICS HELP CENTER) EXPECTATIONS:**

The Physics Help Center is located in room 310 Van Allen Hall.

TAs who are assigned to the tutorial room are expected to help students who are having problems with homework assignments and help students prepare for exams. Students who typically use the physics tutorial room are those enrolled in Basic Physics (PHYS:008), College Physics I (PHYS:1511), College Physics II (PHYS:1512), Intro Physics I (PHYS:1611), Intro Physics II (PHYS:1612), Physics I (PHYS:1701), Physics II (PHYS:1702), Physics III (PHYS:2703), and Physics IV (PHYS:2704).

How to help students:

- Be friendly and helpful to students.
- Help students develop steps to solve homework problems. **Physics Help Center TAs are not expected to nor should they solve homework problems for students.**
- Work with the students on their level - talk in a manner that is easily understood by students.
- Familiarize yourself with the textbooks of these courses.

To review these books please see the front desk in 203 Van Allen.

You are expected to be available during your scheduled tutorial room hours. If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to find a substitute. If an emergency arises that requires your absence, please contact Heather Mineart (335-1688 or [heather-mineart@uiowa.edu](mailto:heather-mineart@uiowa.edu)) or Misty Lyon (335-3238 or [misty-lyon@uiowa.edu](mailto:misty-lyon@uiowa.edu)). Failure to cover your hours can result in disciplinary actions.

### **GRADERS:**

You are assigned a specific amount of grading hours per week for an individual class. This is the average number of hours per week that you are expected to work for this class; the load will very likely vary from week to week. Either in the week before class or early in the first week of class, you will need to meet with the faculty member in charge of that course to determine how the grading for the class will occur. You may be asked to provide solutions for the problems to be graded or these solutions may be provided to you depending on the individual faculty member. The faculty member will give you specific expectations related to:

- a. which problems to grade and the date that they are due back to faculty member
- b. how grades are to be recorded and when these should be provided to the faculty member (you are responsible for recording the grades of the homework that you grade)
- c. if you are providing solutions, when solutions need to be made available to the class via web page, library notebook, and/or posting and by what date the solutions are to be made available.

This assignment will vary to meet the specific faculty member's needs for the class. It is your responsibility to work with faculty member to ensure that grading is completed in a timely manner. If the average amount of time you spend on grading responsibilities exceeds the amount assigned, you should inform the faculty member to find a way to accomplish the grading in the assigned amount of time. As with any work situation, you are required to perform you assigned grading tasks regardless of other commitments such as course work or personal time. If an emergency arises that requires your absence, please contact the faculty member in charge of the class and Heather Mineart (335-1688 or [heather-mineart@uiowa.edu](mailto:heather-mineart@uiowa.edu)) as soon as possible.

### **4.7 TA Certification for Students Whose First Language is not English**

<http://clas.uiowa.edu/esl/esl-credit-classes/english-proficiency-requirement>

#### **English Proficiency Requirement**

If you are an international student and your first language is not English and your TOEFL score is below 600 on the paper-based test, or 100 on the internet-based test, you are subject to this requirement.

The English Proficiency Requirement ensures that speakers whose first language is not English know English well enough to

- study without being hindered by language problems,
- understand class lectures and discussions, and
- participate successfully in class discussions.

All international students with a TOEFL iBT score of less than 100 (600 paper-based) are required to take the English Proficiency Evaluation (EPE) prior to their first registration. Some graduate departments require all students to take the exam, regardless of TOEFL score. If you took the IELTS instead of the TOEFL, contact the Admissions Office for information about acceptable score ranges. Students are not allowed to register until this evaluation has been taken. The University charges students' accounts \$120 for the EPE.

The components of the requirement are:

- the completion of an on-campus English Proficiency Evaluation (EPE) before initial registration for classes at the University
- all students are required to satisfactorily complete any course(s) specified as a result of the evaluation
- undergraduate students are required to complete their English as a Second Language (ESL) courses during their first year and before registering for Rhetoric. Students are required to enroll in classes each semester until they are completed. Completion of English as a Second Language courses is a requirement for graduation.
- graduate students are required to register for at least one English as a Second Language course during their first semester. Students who fail to do so will not be allowed to register for the following session.

### **How to Fulfill the English Proficiency Requirement**

Complete the English Proficiency Evaluation (EPE) before your first registration for classes at the University. An appointment will be made by International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for you to take the EPE. In some rare situations, a student will not be required to check in at ISSS. If this is the case, make arrangements to take the EPE with the ESL Programs Office by sending an e-mail to [esl-program@uiowa.edu](mailto:esl-program@uiowa.edu). Be sure to include in your message that you are not required to check in at ISSS.

The EPE takes two hours and comprises an oral interview (15 minutes), a writing sample (30 minutes), a multiple-choice reading test (45 minutes), and a listening and note-taking test (30 minutes). Based on the results of the evaluation, you may

- be allowed to take a full academic course load excluding ESL courses;
- be required to enroll in one or more of the following ESL courses:

- ESL:4100 Academic Oral Skills (3 semester hours)
  - ESL:4130 Academic Listening Skills (3 semester hours)
  - ESL:4160 Grammar (3 semester hours)
  - ESL:4190 Academic Writing for Undergraduate Students (3 semester hours)
  - ESL:4200 Academic Reading Skills (3 semester hours)
  - ESL:6000 Writing Skills for Graduate Students (3 semester hours); or
- be required to enroll in one or more non-credit ESL Transitional courses or Iowa Intensive English Program (IIEP) courses until desired proficiency is met. These courses require separate tuition costs beyond the base University of Iowa tuition. Enrollment in these courses may impact scholarships. Please contact the Office of Admissions ([admissions@uiowa.edu](mailto:admissions@uiowa.edu)) with any questions.

If the EPE indicates that coursework is necessary, the courses are required for graduation. For more information on ESL credit courses, including course policies and descriptions, see [ESL Credit Courses](#).

Questions about the English Proficiency Requirement should be directed to the Office of Admissions at 1-800-553-IOWA or 319-335-1549.

## **ESL Course Descriptions**

### **ESL:4130 Listening Skills, 3 s.h.**

This course focuses on developing listening skills necessary for success in a U.S. academic setting. Students learn strategies for listening to academic lectures, practice note-taking skills, and participate in fast-paced classroom discussions.

### **ESL:4100 Academic Oral Skills, 3 s.h.**

This course provides a structured opportunity to develop fluency in spoken English. Class members study and practice speaking skills needed to function appropriately in a U.S. academic setting as well as in U.S. society in general. Students also study and practice pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary related to the goal of communicative competence.

### **ESL:4160 Grammar, 3 s.h.**

This class studies the structures of English with particular focus on patterns of grammar which are frequently troublesome for nonnative speakers of English. Students practice applying these structures through extensive speaking and writing, and by completing a variety of exercises and writing brief essays.

### **ESL:4190 Academic Writing Skills, 3 s.h. (for undergraduate students)**

The emphasis of this course is on discourse considerations, more complex grammatical constructions, and the usage of formal vocabulary of the type expected of university students. Students practice various styles of organization, types of argumentation, and methods of analysis used in academic writing.

**ESL:4200 Reading Skills, 3 s.h.**

This course focuses on increasing reading speed and comprehension of the sort of writing and vocabulary encountered by university students. Exercises, discussion, and note-taking assignments are used to develop skills of critical analysis.

**ESL:6000 Academic Writing Skills, 3 s.h. (for graduate students)**

This course focuses on discourse considerations and styles of organization in academic writing at the graduate level. Students identify and practice different types of argumentation and methods of analysis expected of graduate students with respect to general academic work and their specific area of study.

ESL credit courses are offered only in the summer, spring, and fall semesters. Up-to-date schedule information is also available on MyUI.