

Statement of Mutual Expectations For Graduate Assistants and Supervisors

Graduate assistantships can be an integral part of the education of graduate students, who learn from the professional experience and mentorship. A Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) is a written document that outlines the nature of an assistantship and its supervision. It is not a formal contract, but rather a structured conversation to ensure that a graduate student and their supervisor have a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. The Graduate School requires that supervisors will meet with the student at the start of their assistantship and at least once a year going forward, and we encourage supervisors to use this template to structure this meeting and to record the understanding. Given the wide variety of research, administrative, and teaching assistantships, this template is provided as an editable document that supervisors can customize as needed.

Student Name
Student ID Number
Supervisor Name
Supervisor Title

Assistantship Title
Avg. hours/week
Start Date
End Date

<p>Responsibilities of Assistant: Include the most important duties of the assistantship. Potential topics include specific responsibilities, goals, deliverables (if any) and how they are to be submitted. For teaching assistantships (whether serving as the instructor of record or in a support role), include the course(s) and section(s).</p>

<p>Responsibilities of Supervisor: Specify the responsibilities of the supervisor. Potential topics include information on how the graduate assistant will receive continuing guidance and support, times when the supervisor will be available to meet, training schedule, supplies to be made available, etc.</p>

<p>Scheduling: When the assistantship is to be performed, including work hours, regularly scheduled meetings, degree of flexibility in work schedule, and personal and sick leave procedures.</p>

Worksites: Locations where the assistantship is to be performed. If a significant portion of the responsibilities will be satisfied remotely, supervisors should provide guidance on expectations and limitations.

Health & Safety: If there are in-person meetings, what procedures are required to ensure the health and safety of everyone? See gradschool.umd.edu/GA-COVID-health-safety-guidance for details.

Procedures and Best Practices: Required training, standard methods, required record-keeping, security protocols, and/or procedures for ordering supplies. For teaching assistantships, see Appendix A.

Professional Development and Individual Development Plan: Topics include skills to be learned during appointment (if any), training resources other than those provided directly by the supervisor, whether publications will result from the student's work and, if so, expectations for authorship, and/or expectations for travel.

Organizational Culture: Considerations such as office space, workspace, dress codes, appropriate titles and means of address, and/or team norms.

Other comments:

Please note that all graduate assistantships are subject to University of Maryland policies and procedures as set forth in the Graduate Catalog, and nothing in the SME may contradict them:

academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships

We have met in person or synchronously online to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The graduate assistant was given an opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions about the assistantship:

Student Signature
Date

Supervisor Signature
Date

If meeting online, you can save the document as a PDF and then add your digital signatures. For instructions visit helpx.adobe.com/reader/using/sign-pdfs.html

Appendix A

Graduate Teaching Assistantship Guidance

Some teaching assistants serve as the instructor of record, while most support a course by leading discussion or lab meetings, grading student work, and assisting with course logistics. This list provides additional topics for the teaching assistant and supervising faculty member to discuss.

- What are expectations about TA presence in class meetings?
- How can the TA and instructor work together to create and contribute to a positive and inclusive climate for the students?
- If the TA will be grading student work...
 - What are the grading deadlines?
 - What standards (e.g., rubrics) and procedures will be used to ensure transparency, accuracy, and consistency?
- Student communication...
 - How should the students contact the TA?
 - What are expectations for TA response times to student emails, phone messages, etc.?
- University policies for undergraduate courses – see go.umd.edu/ug-policy
 - How will students be made aware of these policies?
 - How will academic integrity be ensured?
 - What conduct is prohibited and what conduct is allowed when using UMD computing resources?
 - How will student information covered by the Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) be protected?
 - What are the expectations for student conduct?
 - What are the policies related to sexual misconduct, discrimination, civility, and safety?
 - How will we ensure that course materials meet standard accessibility standards?
 - What is the process for identifying and offering academic accommodations for students?
 - What constitutes an excused absence and how will they be accommodated?
 - What other rights are guaranteed for students in the course?
- What are the expectations related to professional conduct?
- What resources might the TA refer students to? See ltc.umd.edu/supporting-whole-student for guidance.
- To whom should the TA report concerns about student conduct or wellbeing?

- How should the TA communicate with their supervisor if an illness or other unavoidable absence conflicts with their duties?
- What training or support is recommended or required? See tlc.umd.edu for upcoming workshops.