

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT [GTA]

GUIDELINES

This document is specifically for MFA students as well as [faculty members requesting](#) a student from the MFA program as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) for their class.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Position Description:

This Graduate Assistant will attend the class sessions for their assigned course (this counts towards their total weekly hours - typically anywhere from 2.5 to 5 hours per week). They will assist the instructor of the assigned course as directed. They will observe, take notes, and ask questions of the instructor as appropriate. The instructor will observe the graduate teaching assistant and determine what class tasks are most appropriate for their distinct skill sets and when during the semester they will use these skills. The position could include leading an activity for the class, participating in critiques/discussions, and so on - all dependent on the skill level of the assistant.

Faculty may ask GTAs to hold office hours, or do other class-prep tasks outside of class. Total hours per week **will not exceed 13 hours per week**.

It is important for GTAs to be flexible in regard to the format of the class (which may change unexpectedly due to any number of circumstances), and flexible in regard to shifting responsibilities (as a result of evolving class dynamics - which is always a part of the teaching experience). Faculty members may have to change critique structures and projects during the semester to best accommodate the class, and GTAs should be ready to help support that process.

Faculty Benefits

- Assistance with classroom management (both in-person and online) through critiques, small group work, demos, chat-monitor, note-taker, etc. For example, the GTA can monitor the larger class while the professor holds one-on-one meetings with students.

- Your GTA can manage attendance and check-in/check-out of class sessions.
- GTAs can hold extra office hours to create greater access to help and assistance in your course.
- A GTA can form slightly different personal connections with your students that can help you tailor the class to their needs. Sometimes students will share information with GTAs that they wouldn't otherwise share.
- Grading help (when appropriate)
- You can assign a GTA to create some lesson plans or give an artist/designer talk, if it seems appropriate.
- GTAs can help with Canvas maintenance - posting, updating, providing student interaction, etc.
- GTAs can poll your class throughout the semester and manage feedback for you.
- Your GTA can help with scanning and OCR text-recognition on your readings. They can also help with captioning videos.
- GTAs can engage with a number of course-related tasks - [see this document of potential tasks.](#)

Graduate Teaching Assistant Career Goals:

This position is specifically aimed at grad students who want to pursue a teaching career in higher education.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Qualifications:

- Strong interpersonal, organizational and communications skills
- Must take initiative, must have the ability to learn quickly and execute deadlines/requests promptly
- Ability to work independently and with others
- Attention to detail, handle multiple tasks at a time

GTA Responsibilities:

- Before the term starts:
 - Complete the "[LX Design Lab](#)" workshop through Online Learning before starting the position

- Discuss work hours with your faculty member. The max per week is 13 hours. Some faculty will want your assistance for only 5 hours of in-class time, while others may want more hours outside of class (up to a maximum of 10). Some students may split their time between a GTA position and another GA position elsewhere on campus.
- Communicate any scheduling conflicts as soon as possible (Example: if you need to attend a Professional Practices event that conflicts with class, alert your faculty member as soon as possible).
- Communicate career goals to the faculty member (What would you like experience with? Course prep? Assessment? Do you need student work samples? etc.)
- Attend a meeting for all GTAs for 1 hour during the week before classes start to go over these guidelines and answer questions.
- During the academic term:
 - GTAs enter hours into our payroll system ([Paylocity](#)) each week, and the MFA Program Director approves them. This includes any time spent on the course: in-class time, out of class time spent on preparing materials, office hours, etc.
 - Reach out to college resources: avoid approaching faculty with issues that are better resolved with IT/help desk, public safety, library, etc.
 - Observe, take notes, and reflect on a weekly basis
 - Be on time, willing to help in any way, engaged throughout each class period, and keep ahead of course material like readings
 - Establish office hours as required for the course - these can be online for open Q&A (check with your faculty member if this is appropriate in your case).
 - Engage with course related tasks - [see this document of potential tasks.](#)

Faculty Responsibilities:

- Consider the GTA and their skills/strengths/class schedule in planning the semester (for example: what activity they might be able to lead; if you want the student to present their work to the class as an artist talk, etc.).

- If appropriate, early in the course communicate to the students that the GTA is a resource, and students can feel comfortable asking for their assistance.
- Provide feedback as you would for any paid assistant.
- All grad assistants (GTA or otherwise) work 10-13 hours per week. Please talk about how many hours you're planning to engage your GTA. Some students may split their time between a GTA position and another position elsewhere on campus.
- Optional: Meet with the GTA individually before the semester begins (virtually or in-person) to assess what their goals are and what you as the faculty member expect of them in the GTA experience.
- Optional: Attend a meeting during faculty prep week to cover this document, answer questions, and talk to other faculty with GTAs.
- The faculty member is not required to submit an evaluation or grade of the GTA - this is not a graded experience; it is a part of their paid graduate assistantship work-study hours. They are your paid assistant.
- Please do not enter into any outside employment agreements with your GTA while you are their faculty supervisor. MCAD has both a conflict of interest policy and a faculty/staff employment policy that prohibits employment of a current student by a faculty/staff member who oversees that student. If you have questions, please contact the MFA Director.

MFA Program Responsibilities:

- The MFA Director will act as the supervisor in [Paylocity](#) - faculty members and Department Chairs do not have to track hours worked.
- We will relay any programmatic conflicts as early as possible to help support course planning and GTA engagement (trips, large events like Fall Show, MFA Public Research Presentations, Mid-Program Reviews, Thesis Reviews/Exhibition).
- We will communicate with records to have the GTA added to your course on Canvas as a GTA (not an auditor) before the semester begins.
- We will be available to help with any advising and problem solving that may arise.