

Department of Geosciences
Performance Expectations for the Position of Graduate Teaching
Assistant (GTA)

Listed below are minimum performance expectations required for successful continuation in the position of graduate teaching assistant (GTA) in the Department of Geosciences at Virginia Tech.

1. Attend the 3-half day Graduate School GTA workshop convened the week prior to the beginning of fall term. If you are admitted for spring term, you will need to attend the workshop the following fall term.
2. Attend the 2-half day departmental GTA workshop convened the week prior to the beginning of fall term. If you are admitted for spring term, you will need to attend the workshop the following fall term.

Be present in the department during the week prior to the first week of classes.

3. Prepare a syllabus for sections of the laboratory course that you are teaching prior to the first day of classes. Submit either electronic or paper copies of that syllabus to the appropriate faculty lecturer, faculty liaison or student coordinator for the course. Distribute your syllabus during your first class meeting. Your syllabus must include the following: course objectives, topical outlines, attendance policy, performance expectations that are the basis for grades and a provision for students with disabilities provision. It also should include a statement on the application of the honor system to the course and provide contact information during normal working hours (e.g., your name, office hours, office number, office phone number and e-mail address).
4. Meet regularly with faculty and instructors teaching the same or related courses. If you are teaching sections of GEOS 1104 (Physical Geology), 1014 (Earth & Life Through Time), 1124 (Resources & the Environment), or 2104 (Elements of Geology), attend scheduled meetings with the coordinator of your course. If you are teaching advanced sections of courses in Geosciences, communicate regularly with the faculty teaching the lecture portion of the course.
5. Meet your classes on time and be well prepared. If you cannot attend a class meeting, it is your responsibility to find a qualified substitute willing and able to teach the material scheduled on your syllabus. Inform the student coordinator, faculty liaison or faculty lecturer about this substitution prior to the class meeting.
6. Maintain a positive learning environment in the classroom. Endeavor to create a classroom environment in which there is active participation on the part of the students. Do not tolerate disruptive classroom conduct. If there are difficulties, seek the advice of an appropriate faculty liaison immediately.
7. Know the university's strict rules regarding sexual harassment. "Sexual harassment is

reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university." Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct has the purpose of interfering with academic work. <http://www.policies.vt.edu/1025.html>

8. Leave your classrooms and associated materials organized and in good condition. Report problems to the faculty lecturer, faculty liaison or student coordinator for the course in a timely manner. If there are problems with hardware (slide or overhead projectors, computers), report those problems to Mark Lemon or Linda Bland. If the problem is simple such as a burned out bulb, fix it.

9. Grade fairly. Treat students equally and with respect. Communicate your basis for evaluating performance clearly. Return graded work in a timely manner. Provide sufficient time after feedback for the student to improve performance.

10. Respect student privacy especially grades and student identification numbers. Post grades on Hokie Spa or Blackboard and not on office doors or in classrooms. Return graded papers in class only to those who are officially enrolled. Graded papers should not be left in the hallway for students to pick up. Class lists and graded papers are confidential documents because they can contain social security numbers. Please do not share the list with students.

11. Conduct evaluations of your teaching during the appropriate week of the term. This is usually the week prior to the last week of laboratory class meetings. Evaluation forms and instructions for administering these are available in the departmental office.

12. Submit final grades according to the policy and format of the course and section you are teaching in a timely manner and with appropriate documentation to both support those grades and to clarify any issues that may arise at a later date.

13. Keep all documentation that supports the grades in the courses you instructed for up to two years following the end of the course that you instructed even though you may have left Virginia Tech in the interim.

14. You may be asked to assist the faculty who instruct the lecture sections for the courses in which you are teaching the laboratory sections.

15. These criteria will be used to evaluate job performance of graduate teaching assistants. Should a GTA fail to meet these expectations, an appointment can be terminated prior to the number of years of support awarded by the Department of Geosciences at Virginia Tech.