

UK Department of Hispanic Studies

Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook

This document outlines work load, expectations, responsibilities, and support available for Graduate Teaching Assistants in the University of Kentucky Department of Hispanic Studies. For matters pertaining to Graduate Student academic planning and progress, please see the departmental Graduate Student Handbook (*currently under revision as of November 2024*). This handbook is not meant to be exhaustive and students are encouraged to visit the following website for additional details regarding university policies pertaining to TAs: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>.

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Role of Graduate Teaching Assistants within the Department of Hispanic Studies

In the Department of Hispanic Studies, Graduate Teaching Assistants are viewed as an integral part of the instructional staff. They are, in most cases, the instructor of record in charge of the entire course. This carries a great deal of responsibility, but it also is a unique opportunity for professional development. In your CV, you can list your teaching experience as professional academic teaching experience, not just as work experience. The role of TAs will vary in terms of pedagogy and producing course content. If you have any concerns about your position, especially as you develop expertise about what is and is not working during classes, be sure to contact your Course Leader, Primary Instructor, the DELI, the DGS or Chair.

Faculty and Staff Contacts for Graduate Teaching Assistants

- Department Chair: Yanira Paz, yanira.paz@uky.edu
- Director of Elementary Language Instruction (DELI): Ruth Brown, 1137 POT, ruth.brown@uky.edu
- Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Alan Brown, 1127 POT, alan.brown@uky.edu
- Department Manager (DM): Brent Sebastian, 1153 POT, brent.sebastian@uky.edu
- Elementary Language Instruction Committee: DELI, two other faculty members, and a graduate representative.

- Course Leaders: vary by semester
- Faculty observers for all TA and PTI classes assigned by the DELI every semester
- International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS): John Honeycutt, Student Immigration Specialist for Arts & Sciences, john.honeycutt@uky.edu

Employment Contract and Renewal

Teaching Assistant contracts are awarded and renewed annually and cover the period from 8/15 to 5/15 (or the two weeks after the last day of classes for the semester in which you hold a TA position, as per the UKY Academic Calendar). Assuming satisfactory performance as an instructor and progress toward degree, the Department of Hispanic Studies and Graduate School may renew graduate teaching assistant contracts annually for up to three years for MA students and five for PhD students. Extensions for additional years of assistantship must be approved following a formal process set by the College and/or Graduate School. TAs will be notified of assistantship renewals following Graduate School guidance outlined on <https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>.

The Department of Hispanic Studies, the Graduate School, and the College of Arts & Sciences share the expectation that students remain in good standing in both teaching and academic work and will not tolerate a student's failure to make expected progress toward the degree or to meet standards for the assistantship if outside employment is compromising the student's performance in either area. A student whose academic progress is deemed unsatisfactory for two consecutive semesters risks the Graduate School's refusal to renew the student's assistantship. For more information, please review the following sections of the "Assistantships" website (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>): Assistantship Duration, Satisfactory Progress and Performance, Evaluation, Termination of Appointment.

Teaching Assistants must follow and complete all steps for employment as directed by Human Resources prior to the first day of classes of each Academic Year. Until cleared by HR, TAs may not enter the classroom, be listed as the instructor of their course(s), or access their course(s) on Canvas. Once cleared by HR, the Department Manager oversees questions regarding payroll and benefits for Teaching Assistants.

Additional and Outside Employment

TAs are expected to make their UK assistantships their first employment priority, to be familiar with and meet all expectations outlined in this document, and to understand that their UK teaching experience is a fundamental part of their professional training. The Department of Hispanic Studies strongly advises against the adoption of any outside employment that could delay or jeopardize the student's assistantship and/or academic work toward the degree. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to determine their eligibility for additional and/or outside employment.

In order to preserve the academic focus of graduate student trainees who are on full-time assistantships and have their tuition paid by the University, the Graduate School does not allow for additional UK employment. Please see the "Additional Employment" section of the Assistantships website for more information on these limitations: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships#Additional%20Employment>

International students are also bound by the terms of their visas and work authorizations from seeking other employment while holding a UK assistantship. Any questions about the rules and regulations governing the employment of international students should be directed to International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS).

Supervision

- The Chair, DGS, and DELI supervise all graduate teaching assistantships, which encompass both the academic and instructional responsibilities of graduate students. They are supported in this work by the members of the Elementary Language Instruction and Graduate Studies committees.
 - The Chair oversees all teaching departmentally.
 - The DELI oversees all teaching at the Elementary levels (101-205)
 - The DUS oversees all teaching at the undergraduate level (210-400 level courses)
 - The DGS oversees issues involving TAs and students' own coursework, degree requirements, and progress to graduation.
- If you are the Primary Instructor for any coordinated course at the elementary levels (101-203), the DELI will provide you with a syllabus, supplementary materials, guidance, and support.
- In the case of other courses at the 200 or 300 levels that you might teach, you will be assigned a faculty supervisor who will either provide you with materials or support you in creating a syllabus for your course.
- Students working as graders will work with a Primary Instructor (a faculty member) who is responsible for syllabus design and day-to-day supervision related to the specific course tasks.

Required Orientation, Coursework, and Meetings

As a condition of their contract, all TAs must participate in the following classes, meetings, and orientations. Please take these requirements into consideration when making travel plans to arrive in or leave Lexington.

I. New Teaching Assistants (whether they are students in the Department of Hispanic Studies or not)

- **Graduate School English language screening** (international students only), typically conducted in mid July via Zoom. The DGS, DELI, or another volunteer faculty member will represent the Department of Hispanic Studies on these exams.
- **UK University-wide new student orientation**, typically scheduled on three days over the course of a week, two weeks before classes start.
- **New International Graduate Student Orientation** (international students only), typically held on a single day one week before classes start.
- **Hispanic Studies New TA Orientation.** All TAs are required to attend Hispanic studies orientation sessions, which are held during the two weeks prior to the beginning of classes during each fall semester. Sessions are combined with UK-Wide Orientation so that there is not a conflict between both orientations.
- **Enroll in SPA 553 *Teaching of Spanish* their first semester**, or in their first Fall semester of study if they begin teaching for the program in Spring. This course is included in the academic requirements for all graduate students in Hispanic Studies. Teaching Assistants who have taken an equivalent course at another institution before enrolling at UK can request an exemption for this requirement. Their request will be reviewed by the DELI and DGS, who will determine if the previous course is an acceptable equivalency for SPA 553.

II. All TAs (incoming and returning)

- **Department of Hispanic Studies General Fall Orientation**, typically held on the Friday before classes start in the Fall semester.

- **Department of Hispanic Studies General Spring Orientation**, typically held during the first two weeks of classes in the Spring semester.
- **Any other required teaching-specific meetings** scheduled prior to the start of classes or during the regular semester.

Workload, Availability, and Absences

TAs are first and foremost full-time graduate students. You will be assigned responsibilities requiring no more than 50 percent of your time/not more than an average of 20 hours per week, with an understanding that you might work less or more than this average some weeks due to grading, etc. TA responsibilities, at minimum, include class preparation, classroom teaching, grading assignments, email correspondence, Primary Instructor and student meetings, and maintaining at least one weekly office hour per class taught each semester (Please consult the "Policies Relative to Teaching and Research Assistants", Univ. Administrative Regulation [AR] 5.2, link below).

I. Contract

TA contracts cover the period from 8/15 to 5/15 (or the two weeks after the last day of classes for the semester in which you hold a TA position, as per the UKY Academic Calendar). This means that your obligation to the course as Primary Instructor does not end when final grades are submitted. It is expected that TAs be reachable and available to their students and the DELI through the entirety of their contract period, and attentive to any possible issues with their courses (such as grade appeals, incompletes, etc.) until such matters are resolved.

II. Office Hours

Each semester Teaching Assistants should establish regular office hours during which times they will be available to students, faculty, and peers. TAs are expected to hold 1 hour of in-person office hours per week for each in-person course that they teach. When teaching online courses, TAs are expected to hold 2 hours of online office hours per week for each online course. TA should share these times with their students and the Department Manager at the start of the semester.

III. Absences and Scheduling Conflicts

You must inform the DELI via email of any days/times during the week when you are not available for any TA-related matters because of (1) your own schedule related to graduate seminars, proposals, qualifying exams, etc and (2) personal responsibilities related to your own health and wellness or that of family members in your immediate household. Students facing any unexpected circumstances that affect their ability to perform their duties as a teaching assistant should also contact the DELI as soon as possible.

Once the teaching schedule for the semester has been finalized, TAs are expected to attend all scheduled in-person or virtual class sessions, posted office hours, and required departmental meetings. You should always prioritize being present for your class meetings and maintaining instruction in the approved course modality.

If you must miss a class meeting, the following protocol applies:

1. **Planned absences:** If you plan to be absent from the classes that you teach because of academic obligations (conferences, qualifying exams, oral defenses) or personal matters (related to your own health and wellness or that of family members in your immediate household), adhere to the following two guidelines:
 - a. Find a substitute according to the TA sub list (organized by HIGSA at the start of each semester) or by asking other TAs or faculty members for help.

- b. Email the DELI with the dates of your absence, who will be covering your section(s) and a phone number where you can be reached in case of questions.

2. **Unplanned absences:** If you are sick or in an emergency situation, and are unable to teach your classes, **contact the DELI as soon as possible. If time allows, reach out to your sub as listed on the TA sub list.** If you are unable to find a sub and must cancel your class, be sure to communicate the cancellation to your students via Canvas as soon as possible.
3. **Long term absences:** If you anticipate needing to miss classes for an extended period of time for illness or personal emergency contact the DELI or Chair immediately. They will work with you to identify what benefits are available to you as an employee and graduate student and help arrange for a substitute if needed. For questions about Parent Leave, please see the “Assistantships” (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>).

TA sub list: Each semester, HIGSA organizes a TA sublist. Each TA will sign up for times when they are available to substitute for another TA based on the number of classes they teach. This number will be decided on by HIGSA each semester.

- Be sure to notify the DELI if you miss class, even if you have been able to arrange for a substitute.
- You should not ask another TA to substitute for you more than three times per semester.
- If you anticipate missing (or due to unexpected circumstances must miss) more than three class meetings in a semester you should contact the DELI to provide justification for the repeated absences and to discuss finding a different substitute than the person allotted on the TA sub list.

TA obligation to substitute for other instructors: TAs are encouraged to help each other cover classes when they are available. Faculty may also request that TAs cover their classes. It is important, however, that this assistance be reciprocated and not taken advantage of. If you feel that you are being asked to substitute too much, or by those who are unable or unwilling to reciprocate this assistance (for example, if you are asked more than three times a semester by your subbuddy, or if the time you are asked to substitute will take you over 20 hours of work for that particular week) please speak with your HIGSA representatives, DELI, or the DGS.

Delivering in-person classes via other modalities: Scheduled in-person class meetings should always be delivered in-person unless permission is granted by the DELI, Chair, A&S college deans, or other university administrator.

- In the case of inclement weather, TAs will be notified if we have permission to move our classes to Zoom or teach asynchronously. If you are concerned about traveling to campus due to weather conditions but have not been notified yet that you can teach on Zoom, please contact the DELI or Chair for approval.
- In the case of a planned or unexpected absence, TAs must receive permission from the DELI or Chair before announcing to students that they are moving an in-person class to Zoom or converting an in-person meeting to an asynchronous class day.

Teaching Assignment Protocol for Courses Taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants

Teaching opportunities are available and guaranteed for all graduate students throughout the fall and spring semesters as outlined in the annual offer letter. However, we cannot guarantee that there will be positions for all who wish to teach in the summer. Since the department of Hispanic Studies has a fixed amount of TA lines, teaching positions will be assigned based on departmental needs in accordance with the criteria listed below and final enrollment numbers for each course.

Each semester the DELI will request TA input regarding teaching assignments for the following semester. While every effort will be made by the DELI to accommodate scheduling requests when creating teaching assignments, not all requests can be granted. It is important that you express your preferences regarding courses and include any possible scheduling conflicts in your response to this request. However, please understand that because of the size of our department, sometimes it is impossible to assign first preferences to everyone; therefore, please include a second option in your request. All teaching assignments depend on final enrollment numbers for each semester. Thus, the department reserves the right to change assignments and cancel classes as needed.

Assignments will be made according to the following criteria:

- **Fall and Spring Semester Courses.** Positions will be assigned by the DELI in consultation with the Department Chair, and based on the following criteria:
 - Teaching performance and effectiveness (based on class observations, TCE reports, and other evaluative measures outlined below under “Observations and Teaching Evaluations);
 - Academic performance (based on GPA, academic awards, academic recognitions, and progress to graduation);
 - Seniority (number of years in the department);
 - When assigning courses either (a) beyond the basic language requirements (203 and above) or (b) taught via asynchronous online modality, preference is given to students who have passed their doctoral qualifying exam, provided they have a demonstrated record of good teaching performance and progress to graduation. The DELI, DGS, and Chair will make the final decision on these course assignments.
 - In the case of courses that are taught primarily by a faculty member and in which the TA acts as grader and/or recitation leader (for example, UK Core film courses), the selection of the recitation leader is left to the sole discretion of the faculty member who considers the student’s pedagogical ability and knowledge of the course’s content, among other things.
- **Summer Courses.** Teaching assignments for summer are limited, competitive, and **not guaranteed** as a condition of your employment. The University requires instructors to be in residence in the US while teaching, despite the online modality of a course. The Elementary Language Committee has established the following priorities in assigning summer teaching:
 - **First priority:** Students who are taking qualifying exams (MA or PhD) in that year.
 - **Second priority:** Students in their second year and above who have not taught a summer course before.
 - **Remaining assignments:** Remaining candidates will be ranked by average of TCE scores from the previous 3 semesters, assignments will be made following this ranking from highest-lowest TCE scores. If there are identical scores, the DELI, DGS, and Chair will make the final decision.

Participation in Departmental Events Related to Teaching and Learning

The department and ELI program have a responsibility to participate in a variety of events that support our current undergraduate students and promote our program at both the university and community level. TAs are required to support these efforts in the following ways:

- **La Mesa de Español:** This weekly tutoring program is organized by the leadership of Sigma Delta Pi, who will set the schedule and assign dates for each TA to attend. Participation at La Mesa will depend on the number of weeks and instructors in each semester. The SDP committee will schedule the

instructors for the sessions and will be responsible for the distribution of the calendar and sending out reminders. For any questions or problems, you can always contact the committee.

- **World Language Day:** This one day event, held most years in October in collaboration with the department of Modern and Classical Languages Literatures and Cultures, brings high school students from across the state to UK in order to learn about studying languages at the university level. TAs may be asked to lead a mock class or to incorporate visiting high school students into their existing classes. When feasible, we will ask TAs to participate in *either* this or the KWLA Showcase each year, but not both.
- **KWLA Showcase:** This one day event, held most years on a Saturday in March, also provides an opportunity for high school students to visit UK. In this case TAs may be asked to lead a cultural activity or to serve as a judge for one of the language performance competitions hosted through the event. When feasible, we will ask TAs to participate in *either* this or World Language Day each year, but not both.
- **Kentucky World Language Association Annual Conference.** TAs in their first year of study who are enrolled in SPA 553 may be required to volunteer at this conference, which is held annually in mid-September. In this case the department will pay for the TAs registration at the conference, meaning that, when not directly volunteering, TAs can attend workshops that will count toward their annual professional development requirements.

TAs may be asked to participate in other departmental events related to teaching at other times, including but not limited to those listed below. In these situations, TAs are asked to participate as available. Participation is appreciated and welcome, and the experience contributes to TAs general professional development.

- Los Almuerzos, a weekly conversation event organized by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.
- Job talks or classes led by candidates for faculty positions related to elementary language courses.
- Visiting scholars who present or lead workshops related to Second Language Acquisition or other teaching topics pertinent to elementary language instruction.
- KFLC, an annual conference organized by the Departments of Hispanic Studies and MCLLC. Expectations for TA participation in this and other non teaching related events are outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Professional Development

In order to deepen and develop their knowledge of teaching pedagogy, practice, and strategies, TAs are **required to attend two professional development workshops related to teaching and learning each academic year.** These workshops can be those held by the department, such as those organized by the DELI each semester. Or, they can be hosted by an outside source such as the UK Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, UK Graduate School, or Kentucky World Language Association. If a TA attends a workshop that is not hosted or attended by the DELI they should submit a brief reflection (300-500 words in English or Spanish) of what they learned in order to earn credit for their attendance. Failure to attend the two required trainings will be noted by the DELI on the TA's end of semester evaluation and may be considered as part of the TA's teaching performance during the annual review.

Awards

TAs are eligible to be nominated for a variety of awards related to teaching and learning. The DELI and ELI committee manage nominations of TAs for the following awards each year: Wayne Award for Graduate

Student Teaching, Arts & Sciences Outstanding TA Awards, and Provost Outstanding Teaching Awards. A description of the requirements and nomination process for these awards is available at: <https://hs.as.uky.edu/awards-honors>

Course Leaders

The Course Leader serves as resource personnel for the TAs and the DELI. They are responsible for coordinating the preparation of exams and oral interview questions among the instructors at their level. They meet with all the instructors of a specific level and divide the work of creating exams among all the instructors teaching at that level. Then, the Course Leader edits the exam(s), presents and discusses the final version with all the instructors, and finally sends them to the DELI for revision and approval.

Course Leaders act as the liaisons between the TAs/PTIs, the DELI. If TAs/PTIs turn in material that is not adequate or is not in the appropriate format, the Course Leader will return that material to the TA originally assigned the task, so that she/he can work on the assignment again. The Course Leader will then follow up with that instructor, making sure that the material is resubmitted on time.

Classroom Management

I. Target Language Usage

As discussed in the TA orientation Canvas materials and workshops, our Elementary Language sequence courses should be taught using a communicative approach to language learning. A key component of this practice is the presence of comprehensible input in the target language. For this reason, TAs are expected to conduct the majority (with a goal of at least 90%) of each class meeting in Spanish. TAs are strongly encouraged to create opportunities for students to practice hearing and producing the Spanish language in class in meaningful ways and at a level appropriate to their level of study. TAs should also limit the amount of class time talking about grammar and other topics in English. That said, at the 100 and 200 level it is recommended that TAs conduct any discussions of policies or assignment expectations in English. It is also reasonable to give in class activity instructions in English, when needed to clarify, through the first $\frac{2}{3}$ of the semester in 101 and through the $\frac{1}{3}$ of the semester in 102 and 103.

TAs who need support in reaching this goal of target language usage are encouraged to speak with their peers, Course Leader, or the DELI for ideas and suggestions.

II. Syllabus Design and Textbook Selection

Courses in the Elementary Language sequence (101, 102, 103, 201, 202, and 203) are coordinated by the DELI, who are responsible for designing and managing the syllabi and supplementary materials such as composition prompts, grading rubrics, and oral interview questions. While TAs do have control over how they present information and manage individual class sessions, they are expected to follow the syllabus that is provided to them, observe the same course calendar that is being covered by other sections of their course, and to apply departmental policies as outlined in the syllabus. Given that the department runs between 35-45 sections of these courses each semester, it is important to maintain consistency and to standardize expectations for students at these levels. This standardization also helps to protect TAs; in the case of student complaints or grade disputes the DELI is better able to support and advocate for TAs who have followed departmental policies.

TAs are provided with regular opportunities to provide feedback and input on the syllabi and materials at the Elementary level. When the books for these courses are under review, the DELI will request TA participation in the review and selection process. The DELI may also seek informal feedback from TAs when they are revising syllabi for the coming semester and hold workshops to hear about TA experiences with the courses and brainstorm solutions. TAs can also communicate their concerns regarding class design directly to the DELI, their course leader, or their HIGSA representative on the Elementary Language Instruction committee, who will bring the issues up with the DELI and ELI Committee for review and discussion.

Courses above the Elementary Language sequence are coordinated by other faculty members. For courses such as 210, 211, 310, and 323, faculty coordinators are responsible for designing and managing the syllabus and choosing textbooks for the courses they coordinate. If TAs are assigned other advanced courses, such as 300-level literature and culture courses, they will be paired with a faculty mentor who will guide them in selecting the text and creating the syllabus for their course. If TAs have concerns regarding class design in any of these courses, they should speak first with the faculty supervisor and then, if needed, the DGS or Chair.

III. Canvas and Other Instructional Technologies

UK utilizes Canvas as its primary Learning Management System (LMS). As soon as a TA is assigned to a course section they will receive a corresponding course shell in Canvas. TAs are expected to post the course syllabus, their contact information, and office hours on Canvas no later than the first day of class. A basic orientation to Canvas is provided during the TA orientation, but TAs can receive further training from the Center for Teaching and Learning or from the DELI as needed.

Depending on the course, TAs may be required to use other instructional technologies, such as online textbook platforms and Zoom. Training and support for these platforms will also be provided by the department or via other campus resources.

IV. Responding to Student Concerns

If TAs encounter situations with individual students that cause them concern or disruption in the classroom, they are encouraged to contact the DELI or faculty course supervisor for guidance and to also **submit an Academic Alert or TRACS Get Help request** (<https://www.uky.edu/studentacademicsupport/ACT-alert>), depending on the type of problem encountered. Common reasons to send alerts include excessive absences, failure to submit assignments, poor performance on assignments or exams, mental health concerns, and social or behavioral issues. If students express an intent to harm themselves or others, TAs should immediately contact the TRACS program (<https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/tracs>) and follow their instructions regarding mandatory reporting to authorities.

Students who have concerns related to their course, instructor or grading are encouraged to contact the instructor first, but they may also contact the DELI directly. Information on how to do so is included in every ELI syllabus and on the homepage of ELI Canvas course templates. The DELI will communicate with both the student and instructor to get both sides of the story before making suggestions to help resolve the problem. Students may also go directly to the Office of the Ombud to request help in resolving problems. If this happens, the DELI will support the TA through the process of responding to the student's concerns.

Note that in the case of student concerns and disputed grades, communications between the TA and student, including messages and student Alerts, are often requested as supporting documents to make a determination on the case. For this reason it is important for TAs to communicate their expectations with students using UK

messaging such as email or Canvas, and to send Academic Alerts or TRACS Get Help requests on any student that causes concern or is falling behind in class.

V. Responding to Students with Accommodations

Students who have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations should provide their instructor with a letter outlining these accommodations from either the Disability Resource Center (DRC), the UK VIP Center, or another campus authority. These letters will outline the accommodation requirements for the student. The TA does not need to ask the student why the accommodation has been given, but they do need to make every effort to meet the accommodation as outlined in the letter. It is important to remember, and to remind students, that accommodations will take effect after this letter is provided and are not retroactive.

If a TA has any questions or concerns about meeting an accommodation, they should speak with the DELI, who can provide guidance on how to meet accommodations related to testing, classroom participation, and other topics. The DRC is also a good resource that can help determine if an accommodation is being properly met and the DELI may suggest that TAs contact the DRC directly for guidance.

Besides letters of accommodation, students may present their instructors a letter requesting **Flexibility with Attendance or a Modified Attendance Form**. Because we want all students in our classes to receive the same treatment, if a student presents their TA a Modified Attendance Form, the instructor of record should first consult the templates of these forms provided by the DELI in that semester's Instructor Materials Google Folder. If the template is not sufficient or the TA has further questions they should contact the DELI, who will help them navigate the situation.

Observations and Teaching Evaluations

TAs receive assistance and feedback/support to improve their classroom performance/techniques and, by doing so, to improve the learning experience for undergraduates in a variety of ways.

I. Classroom Observations

TAs receive one classroom observation by a faculty member once per semester. These observations form a part of the TAs teaching record and are used, in conjunction with TCE scores, by the faculty to evaluate TAs during their second-year review and are taken into consideration when making teaching assignments above the Elementary levels (210/211 and above). These faculty evaluations of graduate teaching are also used selectively to form part of dossiers for such competitions as the A&S Outstanding TA Award, as well as for the teaching portfolio in the professional job search.

Because of the size of Hispanic Studies graduate teaching staff and the need to observe all TAs every semester, class observations are shared by all faculty members. The schedule of class observations is organized by the DELI and then distributed to the rest of the faculty members after careful coordination of everyone's schedule of classes. After the observation, faculty complete an electronic observation report. TAs should receive an electronic copy of their observation from the Graduate School. The DELI saves copies of these reports as well.

Along with the distribution of observations, the DELI also sends each faculty member the deadline for their completion as well as the following recommendations and instructions on how to conduct these observations:

- Visits to the class should be unannounced. However, be sure to confirm with the instructor that you are the person responsible for observing his/her class and verify that the classroom you have is the correct one.

- Faculty are asked to complete your observation before midterm grades are due.
- Faculty observers should stay for the entire duration of the class. Observers should arrive on time and not leave the classroom before the class period is over.
- After observing the class, faculty can request that the instructor send them a copy of their lesson plan or the PowerPoint/Slides used in class that day.
- After the observation, set aside some minutes of your time to discuss your impressions/suggestions with the instructor. Try to have this meeting as close as possible to the date of the observation.
- If the faculty observes a class that goes terribly wrong, they are asked to either: (1) conduct an additional observation themselves or (2) notify the DELI for further follow-ups.

If a TA is not comfortable with their observation or has concerns about the process, they have multiple options. First, they can discuss the observations with either the DELI or Chair and request that they be re-observed. Usually this second observation is done by the DELI, but this can be altered based on student concerns. Second, TAs submit written comments that will be included in the DELI's record of classroom observations. Third, they can communicate their concerns to their HIGSA representatives or the graduate student representative on the ELI Committee, who can then help mediate and facilitate communication for the TA. In some cases, the DELI or Chair may request that additional in class observations of TAs be conducted. This decision will be communicated to the TA ahead of the observation.

A sample of the evaluation form is available on the Graduate School TA Supervision and Feedback page: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/ta-supervision-feedback-overview#End-of-Semester%20Evaluation%20of%20Overall%20Performance>

II. End of Semester Evaluation

The Graduate School requires that all TA supervisors submit an end-of-semester evaluation that rates TA performance in their teaching. Before submitting this form, the DELI will schedule brief individual meetings with each TA. These meetings are usually conducted during the last week of classes for each semester. TAs will receive an electronic copy of their observation from the Graduate School. The DELI saves copies of these reports as well.

The DELI's overall score and comments from these forms are required as part of the Hispanic Studies Graduate Student annual review; TAs are encouraged to keep a copy of their evaluation to facilitate completing this form in the Spring semester of each year.

A sample of the evaluation form is available on the Graduate School TA Supervision and Feedback page: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/ta-supervision-feedback-overview#End-of-Semester%20Evaluation%20of%20Overall%20Performance>

III. Teacher Course Evaluations

Each semester, students in our classes are asked to complete a Teacher Course Evaluation (TCE) using an online system during the last two weeks of the course session. More information about these evaluations and links to access past reports can be found at: <https://www.uky.edu/eval/> TAs who are assigned as a Primary Instructor for a course will receive a report during the following semester. The DELI is also sent a report of all TA TCEs. Note that classes with low enrollment or low TCE participation numbers may not receive a report.

TCE scores form a part of the TA teaching record and are used, along with classroom observation reports, by the faculty to evaluate TAs during their second-year review and are taken into consideration when making teaching assignments above the Elementary levels (210/211 and above). They are also used to assign summer classes.

Once a student advances to the professional job search, TCE numerical summary charts and, occasionally, summarized or full qualitative comment sections form an important part of the teaching portfolio.

TAs may also use these reports when applying to fellowships, for teaching awards, and in their job search.

IV. Reflection on Teaching

Each March, the DELI will request that TAs submit a reflection on their teaching from the previous semester. The DELI will share a template on which TAs can report a summary of TCE scores for quality of teaching and quality of course, and respond to a series of short answer prompts to encourage reflection on the past semester. TAs will also be asked to submit an example of a successful lesson plan or class activity. The deadline for this reflection is generally March 1st. The sample lesson plans/class activities may be shared with the ELI committee and included in their deliberations of candidates for annual departmental teaching awards.

V. Annual Graduate Student Evaluation

Each graduate student must be evaluated every year by their dissertation director—or in the case of Masters students and doctoral students who have yet to choose a director—by the Director of Graduate Studies. A uniform fillable PDF form is used for this evaluation and though the evaluation is primarily focused on students' academic performance, those who have been awarded a graduate teaching assistantship (TA) must complete the "TEACHING" section of the form. To complete this section, the student simply copies verbatim the DELI Comments that appear on the "End-of-semester Evaluation" form completed by the Director of Elementary Language Instruction. Students must also indicate the rating received for "Overall TA Performance" and the "Quality of Teaching" score on the Teacher-course Evaluations from the previous two semesters for which evaluations are available.

Office spaces and Resources

I. Offices

TAs share offices that are assigned to them by the Department Manager. Once you are assigned to an office,, the Department Manager will request office hours within the first week of classes and will post your name, email address, and office hours for you. TA's should also announce office hours on Canvas and on your online bio page. Please make sure that you are available during those times.

Please remember that you will be sharing your office with other fellow TAs. When more than one TA is present in the same office, try not to engage with students or other instructors in loud conversations. Remember that some of your colleagues might be trying to grade, study or tend to their own students. Conference rooms can be booked with the Department Manager for meeting with students, proctoring of exams, etc.

Instructors also share departmental computers. Be courteous. If you see that the computer is being used, make sure that your colleague has finished before you begin to work. Many TAs have lost important information due to the careless behavior of their colleagues.

At the end of the semester and if you are not coming back, you must return the office keys to the DM (Brent Sebastian) and teaching materials to the Coordinator.

II. Main Offices

Every semester, our mailboxes are moved to allow space for new teaching staff. Because of this, you should make sure that the materials you grab are in fact in the mailbox under your name. The departmental resources are for the benefit of all. In the copy room, there are some office supplies. Don't take them without the consent of the DM. Please ask. If you take any shared materials from the main office, be sure to return them on time.

III. Paper Copies and Copy Room Etiquette

TAs are encouraged to work digitally whenever possible, as paper and copy supplies are often limited by budget constraints. The Department Manager will meet with you to discuss departmental copy machine procedures, along with an allotted number of copies for each academic year. The copies/printed materials provided through this code are meant to be used for instructional purposes and are not intended for personal use. To save paper and make the most of your allotted copies, TAs are encouraged to (1) scan materials needed for graduate courses and research into PDF rather than printing and (2) provide digital copies of activities for their students via Canvas or email. In their classes, TAs can also project activities for students onto the classroom screen and ask them to use their own paper to submit their work. When exams in the Elementary Language sequence are to be given in paper format, the DELI or DM will make copies of the exams for all sections and leave these for TAs in their mailboxes. When printing documents, do not print multiple copies. Print the original and use the copy machine for more copies.

If you access the copy room after hours, be sure to lock the door and return the key to your TAs office before leaving the department.

IV. Seminar Rooms and Shared Spaces

The Seminar Rooms are used as additional classroom space by our department but can also be reserved by other departments. TAs and PTIs can use these rooms to schedule oral interviews and make-up exams. If you need to use these rooms, please contact the DM and reserve them at least two days in advance to avoid conflict with any other events that might be taking place there. When you are finished, make sure that you lock the door and return the key to the main office.

At times the department may have other office space available to be assigned as a shared office or additional meeting space. When available, these rooms can also be used by TAs and PTIs to conduct oral interviews and make-up exams. If you need to use these rooms, please contact the DM and reserve them.

Department and University Policies

The following university policies apply to both TAs as students and to the undergraduate students that they teach.

I. Student Privacy and FERPA

The University, College of A&S, Graduate School, and Department of Hispanic Studies take student privacy and the protection of education records very seriously. It is your responsibility as a TA to ensure that you understand and comply with all aspects of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). You must review FERPA regulations (<http://www.uky.edu/registrar/FERPA-privacy>). Some general guidelines:

- If you have any questions about complying with FERPA (including the use of shared TA offices in relation to student assignments) please consult the Primary Instructor, the Chair or DGS before responding or providing information about students' in-class work, assignments, attendance, etc.

- Do not provide any information on students to anyone who contacts you including whether a student is enrolled in a class (see limited exceptions below). **This absolutely includes any family members, friends, or other faculty.** Parents are the most likely people to request this kind of information but being parents of a student and paying tuition does NOT give them access under FERPA. Send these inquiries to the Chair or DGS who will advise.
- If you are a TA or a Primary Instructor, always forward requests for information on student grades or overall performance to the Primary Instructor.
- Avoid discussing grades or student work in detail via email (including with UKY staff in Athletics or other departments where students have signed a disclosure waiver).
- Do not leave students' assignments (graded or not) outside of your office, or post students' grades using first or last names or Student ID#s as an identifying marker.

Limited Exceptions (You should consult with the Chair, DELI, or DGS before sharing any information):

- If you receive a request for information about students' performance in class (for example from someone in Athletics who is monitoring student academic status, or other similar university staff) be sure to clarify that the student has signed the necessary waiver of disclosure (such as a Release of Academic Information) before you share any specific information.
- If students sign a disclosure waiver with one unit on campus you can only share information with them, not any other University units or individuals, until you obtain proof of specific signed waivers.
- In order to share information with parents of the student they must provide you with a signed waiver of disclosure (such as a Release of Academic Information) from the student. Being parents and paying tuition does NOT give them access under FERPA.

You must also ensure that students have privacy during office hours. However, do not close your office door. Instead, make sure that no one is hovering outside your doorway and/or leave the door at least halfway open.

II. Title IX

As a TA you are a mandated reporter; just as faculty are mandated reporters for the students in their classes. If a student reports sexual harassment, discrimination, or assault, TAs, PTIs, and faculty are required to report it to the university's Title IX office (located in the basement of the Main Building, <https://www.uky.edu/eeo/title-ix>). You can make a report via an online form or contact the Director of the Title IX program via the above website.

Relevant University Regulations

- Discrimination and Harassment AR 6.1 - <https://www.uky.edu/regs/ar6-1>
- Sexual Assault - <https://www.uky.edu/regs/ar6-2>

III. Anti-discrimination

Regardless of whether you are a faculty member, Teaching Assistant, Primary Instructor, or assistant to one, it is your responsibility to set the tone for respectful and civil discussion in ways that encourage and teach students to express their diverse opinions without judgments or offending others. The range of challenges in doing so is vast and beyond the scope of this document. If you have any concerns about how students are treating one another and/or treating you in the classroom or office hours, and you are unsure how to address the situation, please request an in-person meeting with your primary instructor, DELI, Chair, or DGS.

IV. Academic integrity and cheating

All University instructors are required to follow university policy regarding academic offenses. Should you encounter an academic offense or suspected offense, first check the policy outlined in the syllabus for your

course to see if the offense and resulting actions are covered by these policies. Syllabi produced for the Elementary Language sequence include two policies related to academic integrity, most recently titled “Use of Generative AI, Online Translation tools, and other sources” and “Codes of Student Conduct”. These policies are updated each semester, be sure to familiarize yourself with the policies outlined in the syllabus for that course that semester.

When in doubt regarding academic offenses, it is best to talk with the Course Leader, DELI, or Chair as soon as possible, and prior to contacting the student or posting a grade. The Department Chair is responsible for determining whether or not there is sufficient evidence to pursue the case, which would include contacting the student and proceeding according to University policy from there.

V. Academic Ombud Services

The [Academic Ombud Services](#) is responsible for resolving academic related problems and conflicts for which established procedures have not yielded a satisfactory solution or for which no established procedure exists. Their services are available to TAs in their role as graduate students and to the undergraduate students in our classes.

- Academic Rights of Students <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/academic-rights-students>
- Code of Faculty Responsibilities <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/faculty-responsibilities>
- Code of Student Responsibilities <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/student-responsibilities>

Graduate Teaching Resources and Development

I. Key Policies on Teaching and Research Assistantships

Note: University policies are dynamic and subject to change and so you should consult with the DELI, DGS, or Chair to ensure that you are operating with correct and up-to-date information.

- UKY Graduate School Policies on Assistantships on <http://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>
- UKY Policies Relative to Teaching and Research Assistants, Univ. Administrative Regulation 5.2: <http://www.uky.edu/regis/files/ar/ar5-2.pdf>

II. Resources for Teaching Assistants

Note: this is a non-comprehensive list.

- The Graduate School guidelines for Assistantships <https://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships#Additional%20Employment>
- The Graduate School TA Supervision and Feedback Overview: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/ta-supervision-feedback-overview#End-of-Semester%20Evaluation%20of%20Overall%20Performance>
- The Graduate School provides an excellent list of internal and external websites related to teaching, including some of those listed below: <http://gradschool.uky.edu/teaching-assistant-resources> Also ask the DELI, DGS, Chair, or HIGSA leadership for a recent copy of campus resources for students facing various challenges.
- UKY Academic Calendars <http://www.uky.edu/registrar/content/academic-calendar>
- UKY Center for the Enhancement of learning and Teaching (CELT) <http://www.uky.edu/celt/> (be sure to join the listserv for workshop and other resource/event announcements)
- UKY Learning Management Systems <http://www.uky.edu/canvas/>
- UKY Academic Communication Tool (ACT) Alert Management System (formerly Early Alert System) <http://www.uky.edu/studentacademicsupport/ACT-alert>

- UKY Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (OIEEO)
<http://www.uky.edu/EVPFA/EEO/index.html>
- UKY OIEEO Explanation of Relevant Terms and Laws: http://www.uky.edu/EVPFA/EEO/terms_laws.html
- UKY Disability Resource Center (DRC): <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/DisabilityResourceCenter/>
- UKY Office of Institutional Diversity: <http://www.uky.edu/diversity/>
- UKY Martin Luther King Center: <http://www.uky.edu/mlkc/>
- UKY Office of LGBTQ Resources: <http://www.uky.edu/lgbtq/>
- UKY Violence Intervention and Prevention Center (VIP): <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/VIPCenter/>
- UKY Center for English as a Second Language (ESL): <https://esl.as.uky.edu/>
- UKY Counseling Services: <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Counseling/>
- UKY Office of Academic Ombud Services: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/>
- UKY on FERPA and Student Privacy: <http://www.uky.edu/registrar/FERPA-privacy>
- Title IX and (Sex) Discrimination (See also the UKY OIEEO Website)
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html
- US DOE on FERPA <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
- The Study (UKY's hub at Transformative Learning for help with writing, studying for and taking exams, taking notes in class, etc. They have lots of great resources, including 1-page handouts, for students and faculty. They will also come give presentations to your class.) <https://www.uky.edu/thestudy/>
- UKY Student and Academic Support <http://www.uky.edu/studentacademicsupport/>
- UKY A&S Advising <http://www.as.uky.edu/advising>