



**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY**  
Department of Earth Sciences

**Teaching Assistant Expectations**

**You will be working on a team with a senior graduate student called a TA coordinator. Please review the TA coordinator job description to clarify their role.**

**UNIVERSITY POLICY:** Graduate teaching and research assistants provide services to an academic or administrative department of the University as defined in their appointment letters. *A full-time graduate teaching or research assistant appointment shall not require a total workload exceeding 20 hours a week, on average.* The combination of service, study, and research performed by those holding full-time, 20 hours/week graduate teaching or research assistantships constitutes a full-time assignment; it is expected that you will accept no other work for pay. If you have been awarded a full-time assistantship, a request to perform other work is an exception to this policy, and must be approved by your department chair or program director. This requirement does not apply to students with a part-time teaching or research assistantship (less than 20 hours per week). Note: Graduate Assistants with a full-time assistantship (20 hours) may not hold another assistantship position.

**DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES OF TIME:**

It is the goal of our department to assign each TA no more than four labs, five recitations or one major lab class (e.g., Structural Geology, Sedimentary Processes & Systems, Introduction to Paleobiology, Mineralogy, Petrology) to ensure the 20 hour limit is not exceeded unless unavoidable due to the number classes or students' schedules, we try and limit TA assignments to one class.

If you are assigned **four introductory lab sections** you can anticipate your time commitments per week to be estimated as follows:

Lab teaching: 4 labs x 2 hrs/week =	8 hrs
Attending lecture: 2 Lectures/wk =	3 hrs (includes proctoring exams)
Preparatory time for labs:	approximately 2 hr
Instructor/TA course planning meeting	1 hr
Office hours:	2 hrs
Grading: 4 labs x 1 hrs/wk =	approximately 4 hrs
Fieldtrips – for those lab courses that have weekend field trips – we estimate ~1 hour additional time-averaged commitment per week that includes the reconnaissance and the field trip	

If you are assigned **five introductory recitation sections** you can anticipate your time commitments per week to be estimated as follows:

Recitation teaching: 5 recitations x 1 hr each	5 hrs
Attending lecture: 2 lectures x 1 hr each	2 hrs (includes proctoring)
Instructor/TA course planning meeting	1 hr
Preparatory time for recitations:	approximately 2 hrs
Office hours: 4 recitations	2.5 hrs
Grading: 5 recitations x 1.5 hrs each	approximately 7 hrs
Plus additional time for field trips for those recitations that have them.	

If you are assigned **a major lab class** (E.g. structural geology, sedimentary processes & systems, intro to paleobiology, and mineralogy) you can anticipate your time commitments per week to be estimated as follows:

Lab teaching time: 1 lab x 3 hrs	3 hrs
Attending lecture, 2 lectures/week	3 hrs (includes proctoring)
Preparatory time for lab: 1 lab x 3 hr	approximately 3 hrs
Instructor/TA course planning meeting	1 hr
Office hours (formal) 1 lab x 2 hr	2 hrs
Grading	approximately 6 hrs
Fieldtrips – 2 weekend field trips (averaged per week)	2 hrs

\*If you are assigned less than four lab sections or five recitation sections, or if your faculty instructor feels that your commitment to a lab class will not require 20 hours of work effort, you may be called upon to pick up other departmental teaching related assignments. This may include helping grade exams or other teaching-related work for the weeks following the end of scheduled classes up until TA/RA compensation ends.

\*The department also requires that TA's spend time in the last week(s) of the course to put away materials used in their lab/recitations. Those materials should be restored to the condition in which they were originally used (e.g., samples and corresponding labels returned to their proper places in a sample set) so that they will be ready the next time the class is taught. Any broken or missing items should be reported to the head TA and/or the relevant instructor.

**\*TA duties are not completed until the final grade roster is posted by the instructor, and TAs should expect to meet with the instructor after the semester is finished to discuss and assign final grades. TAs wishing to leave town before this is completed will need the approval of their instructor and their supervisor (Director of Graduate Studies).**

**GRADING: All grading needs to be done on blackboard.**

**UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING TIME OFF:** Graduate assistants generally are not required to work on standard holidays or on bonus holidays as defined by the Office of Human Resources. Standard holidays are days in which the University is not in session. These include *Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Martin Luther King Day for the academic year—and additionally Memorial Day and Independence Day for the calendar year.* Bonus holidays (typically three per year) are "floating" holidays that are scheduled proximate to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and/or Independence Day, to allow for longer recesses. In cases where the nature of the agreed upon responsibilities requires a graduate assistant to work on standard or bonus holidays (for example, to attend to critical laboratory functions), compensatory time will be provided by the employing unit. On days when classes are not in session but the University is open for business (Yom Kippur, Autumn Break, the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, the December-January intermission, Spring Vacation, and Easter Break), graduate assistants may take vacations at times that are mutually agreeable to them and their supervisors on the basis of their responsibilities communicated in advance. These will be considered paid vacations. (*Approved by the Board of Graduate Studies, April 1990.*)

Please feel free to contact Jolene Fitch, Academic Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns regarding this document. We would be interested in your feedback regarding our time estimates at the end of the semester.

We look forward to a great semester and are pleased to have you representing our department to our undergraduate student population.