

## TA Job Description for BIO475

### Unusual or unique aspects of the course

This lab course has a one-hour-per-week lecture component separate from the lab. TAs attend both.

### What aspects of the course / specific tasks are TAs involved in (what is the role of the TA in the course)?

1. TAs attend both the lecture and laboratory component of the course. (4-5 hours per week)
2. There is lab prep work for TAs but it is shared alongside the instructor. It is not required every week of the course. (1-2 hours during some weeks)
3. TAs are responsible for grading pre- and post-lab exercises following an answer key provided by the instructor. The TA submits the grades to blackboard and hands the assignments back to students. (Hours will vary)
4. TAs will need to hold one hour of office hours per week. (1 hour/week)

### Expectations for TAs *(things that should be specified in the job description for the specific course)*

1. TA meetings will be held once a week and will be no more than 30 min – 1 hour in length. TAs should come prepared with questions on the procedure, if any, for the meeting.
2. Office Hours: TAs should hold one hour of office hours per week.
3. TAs may meet with students outside of office hours at their discretion.
4. Response time for emails from the faculty member: 24 hours
5. Response time for emails from students in the class: 24 hours
6. Turn-around time for grading and inputting grades in blackboard: one week
7. TAs are expected to attend the lecture component of the course in addition to the lab.
8. TAs should be knowledgeable on instrumentation used in lab and ask questions/further training on the equipment if needed.
9. TAs are not required to work through the lab ahead of time themselves but are encouraged to do so.

### Commitments by faculty member *(things that should be specified in the job description for the specific course)*

1. Time within which the faculty member will respond to emails from TAs: 24 hours
2. Timing of when grading rubrics, course materials etc will be provided to TAs: At least one week ahead of time
3. The instructor will provide detailed instructions for any lab prep that is to be done by TAs and will be available for questions concerning lab prep

### General Biology Department Expectations of TAs and faculty

TAs should work a maximum of 20 hours a week on their TA responsibilities.

TA contracts run from two weeks before classes start until December 31<sup>st</sup> (fall semester) and from January 1<sup>st</sup> until a week after graduation (spring semester). [2021/22 dates were Fall – 8/16/21-12/31/21; Spring – 1/1/22 – 5/15/22].

Faculty should respect the fact that TAs also have course commitments and research responsibilities. While TAs are expected to be available for class periods and weekly TA meetings for large courses, faculty should be as flexible as possible in when other tasks are performed. They should also provide as much notice as possible of what these tasks are and any time commitments outside class (for example for lab preparation).

Faculty are encouraged to make the role of TAs in the course explicit in their syllabus and talk to students in their classes about the essential roles of TAs in the course, as well as how students should treat TAs and what they can and cannot expect from TAs (i.e. be polite, TAs are not available 24/7, expected turn-around time for grading). They are also encouraged to emphasize the international and team orientated nature of science in their classes and to have TAs introduce themselves to classes as professionals integral to the course mission.

TAs are expected to provide feedback to faculty if they find that they are working more than 20 hours a week on TA tasks and/or if the distribution of time spent on different tasks is different from the job description.

*TAs and faculty are encouraged to reach out to the Graduate Program Director in the first place (or the Associate Chair or Chair of the Biology Department if that is not possible) if they feel that these expectations are not being met.*