

Updates about Biology UTAs (Spring 2024)

There are several important updates concerning Biol UTA staffing for the upcoming year:

- BUE will be more directly engaged in the hiring of UTAs effective immediately. For any questions about hiring of course staff, you can contact Xiabin_Cao@brown.edu
- MDL (Multidisciplinary Teaching Labs) will continue to oversee the financial aspects of UTA hires and payroll. For any questions about this, please contact Grace_Seleyman@brown.edu in MDL.
- **Effective immediately, UTAs must submit actual hours worked on a weekly basis.** This is a sharp contrast to historic practices where UTAs submitted a predetermined number of hours each week regardless of actual hours worked (e.g. 6 hours/wk for 14 weeks, totaling 84 hours across a semester).
- UTAs will still be capped for a maximum number of hours worked in a given semester, with the standard for most courses being ~90 hours for the term. BUE will be monitoring course enrollments throughout the shopping period and will be communicating final allocations for UTA hours during this time.
- UTAs and instructors will receive weekly reports on cumulative hours worked. As an instructor, you do not have to verify weekly UTA hours; these reports are primarily to help monitor net hours worked so that UTAs do not exceed their semester allotment. If you see a problem with the reporting, please contact Grace immediately. **Please note that any hours worked above the semester limit will not be compensated unless instructors submit additional budget requests to BUE during the semester, and these hours are approved by Associate Dean Toni-Marie Achilli.**
- Please communicate these changes to your course UTAs at the outset of the semester. You may want to include some of these changes into your UTA Guidelines and Expectations document submitted to BUE (template on next page). In addition, given the changes to the ways in which hours are reported, we encourage you to provide course-specific guidance on what constitutes billable time for your course staff, e.g.
 - Suggest “limits” on UTA time to review and prepare content outside of class or lab
 - If UTAs are holding office hours and there is no attendance, expect UTAs to redirect their efforts during that time to other course responsibilities.

Lastly, we are working to develop a more standardized and inclusive process for UTA hiring in Undergraduate Biology to improve our candidate pool and ensure more equitable access to opportunities. This will necessitate some changes to the current process, including the timeline for TA postings and selections, when UTA budgets will be finalized and more. We are working on developing a complete UTA Handbook which will be disseminated later this semester detailing updated policies, processes and best practices in hiring and overseeing UTAs.

Written Guidelines and Expectations of Biol UTAs Template

1. UTA Responsibilities: *Overall duties, attendance in course meetings, office hours, communications with students, assistance with grading, leadership in discussions/labs, timing of TA-instructor meetings.*

- UTA # 1
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
 - Responsibility 3
- UTA # 2 (if there is more than one UTA in your course with differing responsibilities)
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
 - Responsibility 3
- etc.

2. Learning Objectives (choose 1 or more of the following, or write your own specific to your course). *As per [University UTA Guidelines](#) adopted for UTAs in that semester. Instructors are asked to adopt one or more learning objectives for UTAs in their courses. Learning objectives are statements that describe what UTAs should be able to do by the end of their tenure in your course. The CCC has a recommended list for instructors to include as they see fit within their UTA cohort, or instructors may develop a learning objective for UTAs specific to their course. While you may start considering what these learning objectives may be for your course, you may also consider having a conversation with your UTAs and developing these together.*

- Critically reflect on their teaching practices and any biases to support and engage all students in the learning process;
- Collaborate with instructors on improving course learning goals and creating equitable teaching and learning environments by giving and receiving critical course feedback;
- Create a community of learners across course TAs, students, and instructors;
- Identify and effectively communicate key concepts in their respective course(s) with students;
- Develop professional skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, ethical conduct, mentorship, and time management;
- Effectively engage with course concepts to enhance their own learning;
- Incorporate teaching and disciplinary skills to their everyday lives.
- Other: _____

3. Workload Statement: *UTA time commitment weekly and/or over the course of the semester.*

- (Must include) All new Biol UTAs are **required** to attend the [Sheridan Center Undergraduate Teaching Assistant Orientation](#) and will be compensated for their time by the Biology Undergraduate Education office. Any returning Biol UTA is encouraged to attend the orientation for their continued development.
- All TAs that will be TA in a Lab course will be required to ensure all Traincaster Training is up to date
- Include additional bullets pertaining to workload specific to a course
- etc.

4. Compensation Statement: (Must include) *UTAs will be contacted by Grace Seleyman to be entered into the payroll system. Students are responsible for entering actual number of hours worked and adhering to payroll policies and procedures emailed to them at the start of the semester.*

UTA Signature: _____

Date: _____

UTA Signature: _____

Date: _____

UTA Signature: _____

Date: _____

UTA Signature: _____

Date: _____

UTA Signature: _____

Date: _____

Instructor Signature: _____

Date: _____