

TA Allocation Policy

Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering

This document outlines the policies and procedures for allocation of TA lines to students in the MIE department.

1) Definitions

A 50% TA position, also called a TA line or full TA line, is for 20 hours/week. A 25% TA position, also called a half TA line or half TA, is for 10 hours/week.

2) Allocation of TA Lines to Classes

- a) Classes at the 200, 300, and 400-level classes are assigned TA's based on class enrollment of the class lecture. A minimum enrollment of 30 students is needed in a lecture section for a TA to be assigned to the class at 25%. TA support is increased by 25% for each additional enrollment of 32 students. Thus, a class with 110 students has 1.5 TA lines; if enrollment is 128, the class gets 2 TA lines. 1.5 TA lines could be one student on a 50% TA and one student on a 25% TA, or three students each with a 25% TA.
- b) Lab classes receive extra TA lines commensurate with the TA workload required to run the labs. Currently the following classes have lab TA's: ME211, ME250, ME321, ME341, ME347, ME396, ME397, ME411, ME499, ME511, IE365, IE396, IE442, and IE499. Typically, one TA is assigned for every two lab sections in a class. However, the number of assigned TA's is subject to reduced or additional resources based on the needs of the course in prior terms.
- c) Enrollments often fluctuate until the add/drop day on the Friday of the second week of classes (tenth day of classes). TA's may be reassigned if enrollments change. Once a student is offered a TA position at a certain level (i.e. 25% or 50%), they are guaranteed that level for the semester, but their course assignment may change based on the ten-day enrollment.
- d) 500-level classes are not eligible for regular TA support.

3) Allocation of TA Lines to Faculty Members

- a) Each faculty member has a number of TA lines that are earned, called their allocation. The allocation is based upon the average number of RA's supported over a two-year period. The maximum number of TA's a faculty member can earn as an allocation is based on the total expected number of TA lines needed to support classes in the department and is subject to change based on student enrollment for MIE classes. The department head has final say on the maximum number of TA allocations for faculty.
- b) Some faculty, such as assistant professors, have contracts guaranteeing a minimum number of TA lines. This is a guaranteed minimum, it is not added to any lines earned through RA support. If a faculty member has one guaranteed TA line and also earns one TA line through RA support, their total is one TA line.

4) Assignment of Students to Classes

- a) Faculty members can nominate their PhD students up to the number of their earned allocations to serve as TAs. A faculty member may recommend particular assignments for their students. However, these are recommendations and TA's are assigned to classes based on departmental need. Students who have performed poorly as TA's in the past, as reported by the supervising instructor or in teaching evaluations, or who have a negative review in their academic progress towards a degree, are not guaranteed a TA position, even if they are requested by a faculty member within that faculty member's allocation.
- b) It is the Department's position that any graduate student with a positive attitude towards teaching and a relevant undergraduate degree should be able to serve as a TA for most undergraduate courses in our department. If a student does not have adequate background to serve as a TA for any of the available courses, they are not guaranteed a TA position, even if they are requested by a faculty member within that faculty member's guaranteed allocation.
- c) Only PhD students and MS students currently or formerly supported on at least 25% RA are eligible for guaranteed TA lines.

- d) The DGS assigns students to courses as follows:
 - i) List all the available positions and class enrollments.
 - ii) Assign TA's that were nominated, had satisfactory TA reviews, are in good academic standing, have positive reviews on their academic progress, and are within the number of a faculty member's TA allocation.

5) Roles and Responsibilities of TAs

- a) Below are roles and responsibilities for TAs of courses. A 25% TA is expected to work 10 hours/week and a 50% TA is expected to work 20 hours per week on average. Within those hours they are expected to be involved with the course as outlined below and as requested by the instructor.
- b) Exams
TAs should not generate exam content, but may grade exams provided the instructor gives them a detailed grading rubric. They may also be responsible to prepare the exams for distribution and proctor exams.
- c) Homework
TAs are allowed to grade homework provided the instructor gives them a detailed grading rubric.
- d) Lectures
It is the course instructor's responsibility to create and deliver lectures and generate all course content (e.g. homework, exams, projects, etc.) that are used to assess students. If the instructor is traveling, it is the instructor's responsibility to find appropriate guest lectures, or record lectures via lecture capture software. In some rare instances, TA's can deliver a limited number of lectures, typically restricted to a maximum of three lectures provided by a TA for a fifteen-week course. This is permitted only if mutually agreed upon by the instructor and TA and with written permission by the TA advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. The instructor must provide the lecture material to the TA during these circumstances.
- e) Must be at labs, prepare for labs
TAs must be at labs if assigned to a lab section. In addition, they need to prepare for the lab by setting up equipment and ordering necessary supplies with input from the instructor.
- f) Attend Lectures
Some courses with lots of in-class activities require TA's to attend the lectures. Additionally, if the TA has never taken the course they are expected to attend the lectures. Otherwise lecture attendance is at the discretion of the course instructor.
- g) Office hours
TA's must schedule office hours to answer student questions, with a minimum expectation of two hours per week. In some instances, longer office hours are needed and should be discussed with the instructor. The TA must answer student emails or questions posted on course discussion boards, blogs, etc. TAs should answer questions submitted by students in a timely manner, e.g. within one business day, but not excessively. They should discuss with the instructor if this becomes a problem.
- h) ABET
TA's may be required by the course instructor to collect and submit samples of student's work if it is an ABET selected course undergoing evaluation.