

University of Colorado Boulder

Department of Theatre & Dance

Instructor/Teaching Assistant Letter of Agreement

This letter of agreement outlines standards for the lecturer/faculty/GPTI (hereby referred to as *instructor*) and teaching assistant (TA) working relationship as established by the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Colorado Boulder. By signing below, and as approved by the assigned department supervisor for the course, both individuals agree to abide by the expectations established in this letter of agreement in order to ensure a mutually positive working relationship and a high quality educational experience for the course's students.

Guidelines for the TA:

- **Production Attendance** - If the course's students are required to see a production, and if that production will be pertinent to the grading, the TA must attend the production. See the Department Administrative Assistant for complimentary tickets.
- **Grading** – The TA is expected to complete 75% of all papers/projects, quizzes, and tests. The instructor should plan to grade the remainder both to alleviate the workload of the TA and also to maintain contact with the students' grasp of content. Essays and exams should be returned to students not less than one week, and not more than two weeks after they are submitted. (It is up to the TA, not the instructor, if the TA would like to grade and return homework faster than within one week). TAs may be asked to alphabetize papers, exams, and quizzes, and to enter them into an electronic database.
- **Course Attendance** – The TA is responsible for daily class attendance.
- **Classroom Participation** – The TA may be asked to lead review sessions. If the TA desires to present a class lecture they should work with the instructor to choose a date and discuss lecture content.
- **Resource Acquisition** – The TA may be asked to make copies of reading material, to scan the material for online reading, and to secure videos from the library. The TA should plan ahead for the acquisition of all such materials so that they are ready each day (when applicable) for class.
- **Educational Feedback** – When applicable, both the instructor and the TA should aim to leave the students with the kind of feedback on their assignments that will improve the educational experience by allowing the students to not only understand why they lost points, but also to grasp how they can improve next time.
- **Office Hours and Student Communication** – The TA will hold one weekly, scheduled office hour to meet with students. While the TA should make an effort to respond to emails and requests for meetings with students, the TA will not be expected to meet unreasonable demands for excessive meetings, for answering emails late at night, or to conference with a student who does not try to schedule a meeting in a timely fashion.
- **Weekly Meetings** – The TA should be available for brief, weekly meetings with the instructor.
- **Proctor Final Exam** – The TA should plan to assist the instructor in proctoring the final exam.
- **Two Required Meetings** – Instructor and TA should meet twice during the semester to formally check in by discussing the class, their working relationship, and areas of success and improvement. Please use the worksheets at the end of the letter of agreement to record the outcomes of these meetings and give a copy to the Graduate Program Assistant after each meeting. The directors of either theatre and/or dance can be invited to attend the required meetings for additional support and resources.

Guidelines for the Instructor:

- **Syllabus** – The instructor should provide both the TA and the Department Administrative Assistant with a syllabus by the end of the first week of the semester.
- **Rubrics** – The instructor should always provide clear rubrics and grading keys. In order to ensure consistent grading practices, the department encourages the instructor and TA to grade several papers together before grading separately.
- **Grading** – The instructor is ultimately responsible for the final grades and should manage the course grading and the TA's function as an educator within that course with that responsibility in mind. Instructors may ask their TAs to enter grades on Canvas, but they must confirm the grades before the grades are released to the student. Essays and exams should be returned to students not less than one week, and not more than two weeks after they are submitted.
- **Weekly Meetings** – The instructor will hold brief, weekly meetings with the TA.

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- **Mentorship** – The instructor has the unique opportunity to serve as a mentor to the TA. The instructor should therefore assist the TA in developing their own tools as an educator, including grading, developing lectures and course material, and – as applicable – meeting with students. In unfamiliar situations, a TA can reach out to their instructor for guidance.
- **Two Required Meetings** – Instructor and TA should meet twice during the semester to formally check-in by discussing the class, their working relationship, and areas of success and improvement. Please use the worksheets at the end of the letter of agreement to record the outcomes of these meetings and give a copy to the Graduate Program Assistant after each meeting. The directors of either theatre and/or dance can be invited to attend the required meetings for additional support and resources.

The instructor should tailor the duties of the TA to the needs of their course. The department expects that the TA should be able to commit to all of the aforementioned duties, and that while the instructor is not required to assign *all* of them, the instructor may also require *no more* beyond this list without the approval of the assigned supervisor. (In such unusual cases, please attach an addendum of explanation to this form, signed by all parties.) In some cases, the department may assign a TA additional duties either within or beyond the course, based upon individual appointments.

Instructors should know that a TA contract is a 15% appointment, and each TA is contracted for 6 hours a week of work per class. The workload is not always equally distributed over the semester, and some weeks are heavier and other lighter. Please keep in touch about the hours the TA is spending on the class workload. There are two exceptions: TA contracts for DNCE 4017 and DNCE 4037 are for 20% and 8 hours of work per week.

Once the instructor has filled in the duties required for the TA for their individual course below – in accordance with the department expectations outlined above – the instructor, TA, and supervisor should sign this letter of agreement and submit it to the Graduate Program Assistant **by the end of the second week of the semester**.

Course/Section _____ Semester and Year _____

Assigned Duties:

Print Instructor Name	Instructor Signature	Date
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Print Teaching Assistant Name	Student Signature	Date
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<i>For Office Use Only</i>		
Print Supervisor Name	Supervisor Signature	Date

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Instructor: _____ **TA:** _____

Required Meeting #1

To be completed and submitted the 5th week of the semester

Semester/Year _____

Please know that the intent of this meeting is to focus the TA/Instructor relationship on mutual support and on learning and growing as educators.

Questions to complete:

Both: From your perspective, how is class going? What is going well? What challenges have come up? How is your workload? Is it within the contracted hourly amount? If no, what strategies can be employed to address this issue?

Instructor: What is one area where your TA is doing really well? Where is one area for the TA to focus on improving for the rest of the semester?

TA: How is your instructor supporting you as a TA and how could they do more/differently to help you do your best? Are students responding well to the instructor's materials: syllabus & rubrics? GPTI/TA only: Does the TA see opportunities for the class or for the students that the GPTI might benefit from?

Signatures:

Instructor: _____ TA: _____

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GPTI/TA Check-In Sheet

Instructor: _____ **TA:** _____

Required Meeting #2

To be completed and submitted the week after fall/spring break

Semester/Year _____

Please know that the intent of this meeting is to focus the TA/Instructor relationship on mutual support and on learning and growing as educators.

Questions to complete:

Both: Have you addressed the challenges that you identified at Required Meeting #1? Has it made a difference? How can you fine tune it? Are there additional challenges that you need to address at this point? Please check in again about your workload. Is it within the contracted hourly amount? If no, what strategies can be employed to address this issue?

Instructor: What is another area where your TA is doing really well? Is there another area for the TA to focus on improving for the rest of the semester?

TA: How is your instructor supporting you? Has your instructor acted on the opportunities discussed in the first meeting?

Signatures:

Instructor: _____ TA: _____