

GSI Duties at Haas School of Business

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INTRODUCTION

The course instructor and GSI should work together as a team to achieve the goals of the course. The instructor is responsible for the majority of the instruction, determining course content, preparing the syllabus and exams, introducing new material, and assigning final grades. The overall goals of the GSI are to enhance the learning experience of the students and to provide the instructor with whatever assistance is required to teach the course effectively and efficiently. The responsibilities of the GSI vary according to the needs of the course and the wishes of the individual instructor. Each GSI should determine the course instructor's requirements and expectations at the beginning of the semester. Detailed below is a description of the various duties that may be required of a GSI.

PREPARE FOR AND LEAD DISCUSSION SECTIONS

While there are exceptions, discussion sections generally meet once a week and last from one to two hours each. The instructor is responsible for providing guidance as to what should be covered by the GSI during the discussion section. The degree of guidance varies by instructor, but GSIs are generally given broad guidelines under which to work (for example, go over homework assignments or review certain concepts). GSIs are responsible for determining how best to present the assigned topics in the classroom.

HOLD OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are designed to allow students to receive additional help and have their questions answered on an individual basis. Some students are hesitant to approach their GSI for help or are not aware of the purpose of office hours. Therefore, GSIs should explain what office hours are for and warmly encourage students to attend. Students may ask course-related questions about homework, concepts, and study techniques as well as more general questions about course selection and career decisions.

Since the University can often be very impersonal, office hours are an excellent means of getting to know your students and helping them to feel more comfortable with you and the course.

Office hour requirements vary by course and field. Consult with your course instructor for guidelines. GSIs may determine their own office hour schedule, however, an attempt should be made to schedule office hours at a time convenient to most students. Office hours should not be scheduled when the lecture section of the class meets nor at the same time as those of the instructor. If possible, office hours should be staggered (i.e., some Tuesday, Thursday and some Monday, Wednesday, Friday office hours as well as varying the meeting time). Room F308 is available for holding office hours.

GRADE EXAMS AND PAPERS

Many instructors require their GSIs to grade midterm and/or final exams. Generally the instructor will provide guidance as to how the exams should be graded. Often, the GSI has some degree of flexibility in assigning points and weights. While students will often argue about the weights assigned to specific errors, these arguments can be quickly ended if a fair and consistent grading policy has been applied. The instructor is responsible for assigning letter grades to individual exams as well as the final course grade. Prior to grading the exams, the GSI and instructor should jointly determine the grading policy, who will deal with student grade challenges, who will record the grades, and how quickly the exams must be graded and returned.

In addition to grading exams, GSIs may be required to grade papers or other assignments. The procedures outlined above should also be followed when grading these assignments.

PREPARE, ADMINISTER, AND GRADE QUIZZES

While the instructor is responsible for exams, GSIs may be asked to prepare small quizzes to test the basic knowledge of their students. The quizzes are generally administered during discussion section and are graded by the GSI. GSIs should discuss specific quiz requirements with their course instructor.

ATTEND LECTURES

Some instructors ask that their GSIs attend lectures in order to obtain a better understanding of course content and direction.

MEET WITH COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Actual contact with the instructor varies widely. Some instructors have one initial meeting with their GSI and then no further contact until finals. Others meet on a weekly basis. Most are somewhere in-between. Meetings with the instructor can be useful to discuss course content, emphasis, homework assignments, grading, problem students, and many other course-related topics.

PROCTOR EXAMS

Instructors may ask for assistance in proctoring midterms and finals. Proctoring consists of walking about the examination room, watching for abnormal exam-taking procedures (e.g., cheating), and answering student questions. Incidents of suspected academic dishonesty should be referred to the instructor. When answering questions, GSIs should ensure that they do not supply information to the student that the exam is designed to test. Legitimate questions generally involve ambiguities and typographical errors. The best way to deal with information gathering attempts is to suggest that the student reread the question. Generally, instructors teaching large, introductory classes require more proctoring assistance than those teaching smaller, higher level courses.

COORDINATE HOMEWORK GRADING

While many GSIs are provided with a reader who is responsible for grading homework assignments, some GSIs must do the grading themselves. In both cases, the GSI should determine the grading policy and criteria as well as late homework policy from the instructor. GSIs with readers are responsible for communicating requirements and expectations to the reader and for dropping off and picking up the homework. Generally, one week is considered adequate time to grade and return homework

Homework solutions can be placed on reserve in the Long Library. Information on how to reserve material can be obtained at the front desk.

SUPERVISE READERS

GSI's with readers may be responsible for ensuring that the readers perform their required duties (grading homework/exams, posting and reserving solutions, and maintaining adequate records) in a timely and accurate manner. If a reader's performance is inadequate and does not improve after discussions, speak to your course instructor. If necessary, a placement reader may be obtained.

ASSIST COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Instructors may ask for additional assistance in teaching the course. Examples are suggesting exam questions, proofreading exams, and providing input about course content. Since instructors vary in their teaching techniques and philosophies, there are many other small tasks that could be asked of a GSI. If the request is course related, it is probably a legitimate request.

OPTIONAL DUTIES

GSI's may wish to enhance the learning process by offering additional services. These services may range from review sessions, extra office hours, and special appointments to review resumes and give career advice. Once a GSI has fulfilled the minimum requirements of the position, decisions about optional tasks should be made on the basis of time, need, and desire.