



Tokyo Tech



Basic Rules for a Teaching Assistant (TA)

Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning,
Tokyo Institute of Technology

What is a Teaching Assistant (TA)?

- The university's roles: Education + Research
- TAs assist the university in its roles for university students
 - Education: Teaching Assistant (TA)
 - Research: Research Assistant (RA)
- A TA's operations
 - **Those that require expertise**
 - Assistance in the preparation of lecture materials, exercise problems, and resumes
 - Assistance in scoring quizzes and small reports
 - Providing guidance and offering support to students
 - Assistance in the operation of T2SCHOLA
 - **Assistant operations that do not require expertise**
 - Office clerical work and assistance to examination proctors
 - Assistance in the lending, carrying, and handling of equipment for lectures

The TA System in Japan

- 1992: The beginning of the TA system in Japan
 - Notification of the “Special Expenditure for Advancement Promotion”:
Educational assistant operations
 - Improvement in the treatment of graduate students
 - Opportunities for improvement of university education and training as leaders
- 2022: More aggressively use TAs and improve educational effects
 - Article 8 of the Revised “Standards for Establishment of Universities”:
Share part of classes
 - If being recognized to achieve sufficient educational effects
 - Article 11 of the Revised “Standards for Establishment of Universities”:
Conduct necessary training

(Standards for Establishment of Universities:

<https://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/ja/laws/view/3793/en>)

The Tokyo Institute of Technology has also been making plans for TA training, the recognition system for **various TA qualifications** according to ability, the system to set the qualifications necessary for each job description, and the system to set **the hourly wage** according to the job description.

A TA's Advantages

- From the perspective of students

- **Be able to acquire an education.**

- It is necessary to educate junior colleagues even in **ordinary companies**, which is subject to evaluation.
- Because they are students of the same university, the abilities of TAs and students **are similar to one another, which makes it easy to teach.**

- **By educating others, one's understanding will broaden and deepen.**

- Being unable to teach unless one understands all the information about the subject.
- By providing explanations to others, one will fully understand what is lacking in one's own understanding.

- TAs receive economic support (although it is not high, one will be able to receive a salary).

- From the perspective of the university

- Students will be able to continue their schoolwork in an economic sense.
- Improvement of the graduates' levels by gaining experience in education
- Excellent (and inexpensive) educational workers

- **Consciousness as a teacher**
 - Being in **a strong relation** of a teacher and students with an influence in the classroom.
 - Rush behavior (even outside the classroom and outside the university) is not allowed.
 - Jokingly talk about students' grades. For example, address their specific grades publicly, "Well, I guess a miracle happened to those who got an A on this test."
- **Although the teacher may be unworthy of the name, yet the TA should remain faithful to the teacher**
 - There are various types of teachers, and there may be something of which one is not convinced. However, if a TA shows such a judgmental attitude in front of the students, the relationship of trust in the classroom will collapse.
- **Dress and grooming**
 - **Try to wear clothes that are clean and that do not generally provide an unpleasant feeling.**

Rules for a TA

- Use of language

- Talk politely.

- TAs must be the ones who are respected.

- Having a friendly talk has an advantage of providing a sense of affinity to students, but we will be troubled if one is treated lightly by students, and class does not work.

- Code of ethics

- Treat everyone **equally and fairly** regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, beliefs, and other characteristics.

- Confidentiality

- **One must not share** personal information that one came to know as a TA, such as grades, addresses, and phone numbers, **with persons other than those concerned nor post such information on social media.**

Rules for a TA

● Harassment

- Use one's position as a TA and **behave badly** to students in an unfair manner.
- Require attention as a TA **may face harassment** as well.
- Reference: <https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/0/students/counseling/harassment>

● DEI (Diversity, equity, and inclusion)

- Basically, refer to male and female students by family name + san.
 - If one does not know how to read, ask the student.
 - If a student has a request on what to call the person by name, follow that request.

● If there is (likely to become) a problem, promptly consult the following:

- The teacher in charge
- Student Guidance Room and Harassment Consultation

Rules for a TA

- **Crisis Management, Health and Safety**
 - In principle: Follow the instructions of the instructor in charge.
 - In case of **severe injury** (unconsciousness, massive bleeding, extensive burns):
 - **Call 119** for an ambulance.
 - Contact the Health Support Center and the Campus Security Center.
 - Otherwise: Call the Health Support Center.
 - Notify when, where, who, how, and what condition occurred.
 - If the Health Support Center cannot be reached at night
 - Consult Emergency Telephone Consultation Center in Tokyo or Emergency Consulting Center in Yokohama.

- **Strictly observe deadlines when submitting documents**
 - At the time of making an application:
 - Bank transfer, matters related to tax, an individual number, and other deadlines.
 - Foreign students (additional):
 - A copy of a residence card
 - A written pledge on the applicability of specific categories
 - At the time of implementation: A work report and work schedule

Common Items Concerning Exercises

(Computer Lab, debates, and experiment)



- Creation of lessons and plans
 - Create the course content and a scenario in which the task schedule is written by the minute.
 - Conduct exercises within the range of items that students have learned in the lecture.
- Confirmation of the handling of equipment
 - Try to use audiovisual equipment the day before the day of the class.
- Punctuality
 - It is fundamental to start and end class on time.
 - Therefore, consult the teacher in charge with regard to what time class preparations will start in the classroom.
- Attendance checking
 - Do not spend time. Checking attendance with a quiz or questions will be more efficient.
- Create a relaxed yet orderly environment.
- Introduction of exercises
 - Explain the assignment and then ask questions of the students.

- The end of exercise
 - Provide **feedback**.
 - A TA summarizes what has been found from the assignments, processes, and results of training, what has been achieved, and what is remaining as a new issue and then promotes individual students' understanding.
 - Then link them to before the exercise, exercise results, and future exercise content and confirm how the exercise is positioned in the class curriculum.
- Explanation
 - When explaining an event or assignment, make preparations in advance, such as writing **the key expressions and sentences** in the lesson plan.
 - As for the explanations of something theoretical, **give many specific examples** afterwards.
 - Be sure to write important definitions, key words, and special terms on the blackboard and verbally repeat them.
- Responses to questions and opinions
 - **Seriously answer them**. However, do not allocate much time to way too low quality questions.
 - Make students think that their statements contributed to class.
 - If one does not know the answer to a question, withhold the answer and specifically explain it in the next class.
 - When answering questions at the stage of thinking about the answers to problems or questions, try to give appropriate clues. It would be better to consult the teacher in charge in advance.

● Dealing with students

- There are various types of students.
- Instead of forcing **a shy student** to make a statement, be sure to judge the timing by watching the expression on the student's face.
 - Divide the students into small groups and have them discuss.
- The way to address **a student who** frequently makes a statement and **changes the subject** is to shift the student's opinion to a topic of the discussion in the entire class and elicit opinions from other students.
 - Instruct the student to talk after class or during office hours.

● Equal opportunities

- Regarding the questions to students and questions from students, incorporate **the opinions from a lot of students**.

● Humor

- Be careful not to displease students.

- Computer Lab.

- **Familiarize oneself with** the handling of equipment prior to the day of class.
- Be careful not to spend too much time on one student.

- Debates (Group work)

- Although there is an advantage that when a TA becomes a moderator, a debate will efficiently progress, **freewheeling thinking by students** may be **suppressed**.
- It is also fine for a student to become a moderator and for the TA to **become an observer or participate in the debate as one of the speakers**.
- **Play the role of encouraging shy students.**
- Understand the purpose of a debate and try to make adjustments to prevent the debate from **getting off course**.

● Experiment

- Be sure to **pay utmost attention to safety** to avoid an accident.
- Disseminate instructions on how to handle experimental equipment and how to respond to/process hazardous materials.
- Try to conserve the environment, such as ventilation.
Summarize the ways of coping when an accident occurs and prepare a manual together with the teacher in charge.
- Emphasize that it is a safe and useful experiment if students act according to one's instructions.

Contact Information/Handbook/References

- List of consultation counters:
<https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/students/counseling>
 - Student Guidance Room
 - <https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/student-support/students/counseling/guidance>
 - Harassment Consultation
 - <https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/0/students/counseling/harassment>
 - Mental health and counseling
 - <https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/student-support/students/counseling/counseling>
- Office procedure (Human Resource Section)
 - <https://www.jinjika.jim.titech.ac.jp/syoku/index.html>
- “TA Handbook” (in Japanese and it will be revised soon.)
 - https://www.citl.titech.ac.jp/resource/titech_tahandbook/
- Research Division for Higher education, Hokkaido University, “Hokkaido University, Teaching Assistant Manual for University-wide Education” (in Japanese).
 - <https://high.high.hokudai.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/15TAM.pdf>

Emergency Contact

● Campus Security Center

- O-okayama : 03-5734-3119 (ex. 3119)
- Suzukakedai : 045-924-5119 (ex. 5119)
- Tamachi : 03-3454-8532 (ex. 8532)

● Health Support Center

- O-okayama : 03-5734-2065 (ex. 2065)
03-5734-2057 (ex. 2057)
- Suzukakedai : 045-924-5107 (ex. 5107)
- Tamachi (School infirmary): 03-3454-8672 (ex. 8672)

● Consultation in night

- Emergency Telephone Consultation Center : #7119, 03-3212-2323
- Emergency Consulting Center in Yokohama : #7119, 045-232-7119

Summary of the Rules for a TA

- A TA needs the consciousness of a teacher
 - Dress, use of language, code of ethics, personal information protection, harassment, and DEI
- Sufficiently make advance preparations.
 - Understanding of the class content and the method of explanation
 - How to use equipment
- Close contact with the teacher in charge
 - Although a TA is an educational staff member, **do not try to solve the problem by oneself. Be sure to consult the teacher in charge.**
 - The ones who **responsibly** solve the problem are the teacher in charge of the subject who is a full-time staff member and the university.



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Thank you very much for your attention.

