

## Statement of Mutual Expectations For Graduate Assistants and Supervisors

By providing professional experience and mentorship, graduate assistantships are an integral part of the education of graduate students. A Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME) outlines in writing the nature of an assistantship and its supervision. It is not a formal contract, but rather a structured conversation to ensure that a graduate student and their supervisor share a clear understanding of what to expect from each other. The graduate school recommends that supervisors fill out the form below and discuss with their Graduate assistant at the start of their graduate assistantship assignment. Given the wide variety of research, administrative, and teaching assistantships, this template is meant to be customized as needed.

Student Name	
Student ID Number	
Supervisor Name	
Supervisor Title	

Assistantship Title	
Avg. hours/week	
Start Date	
End Date	

**Responsibilities of Assistant:** Include the most important duties of the assistantship. Potential topics include specific responsibilities, goals, deliverables (if any) and how they are to be submitted. For teaching assistantships (whether serving as the instructor of record or in a support role), include the course(s) and section(s).

**Responsibilities of Supervisor:** Specify the responsibilities of the supervisor. Potential topics include how the graduate assistant will receive continuing guidance and support, times when the supervisor will be available to meet, any training schedule, and supplies to be made available.

**Scheduling:** When the assistantship is to be performed, including work hours, regularly scheduled meetings, degree of flexibility in work schedule, and personal and sick leave procedures.

<b>Worksites:</b> Locations where the assistantship is to be performed. If a significant portion of the responsibilities will be satisfied remotely, supervisors should provide guidance on expectations and limitations.

<b>Procedures and Best Practices:</b> Required training, standard methods, required record-keeping, security protocols, and/or procedures for ordering supplies. For teaching assistantships, see Appendix A.

<b>Professional Development and Individual Development Plan:</b> Topics include skills to be developed during the appointment, training resources other than those provided directly by the supervisor, whether publications will result from the student's work and, if so, expectations for authorship, and/or expectations for travel.

<b>Organizational Culture:</b> Considerations such as office space, workspace, dress codes, appropriate titles and means of address, and/or team norms.

<b>Other comments:</b>

**We have met in person or synchronously online to review and discuss this agreement on the date noted below. The graduate assistant was given an opportunity to ask and receive answers to any questions about the assistantship:**

Student Signature
Date

Supervisor Signature
Date

If meeting online, you can save the document as a PDF and then add your digital signatures. We

## **Appendix A**

### Graduate Teaching Assistantship Guidance

Some teaching assistants serve as the instructor of record, while some support a course by leading discussion student meetings, grading student work, and assisting with course logistics. This list provides additional topics for the teaching assistant and supervising faculty member to discuss.

- What are expectations about TA presence in class meetings?
- How can the TA and instructor work together to create and contribute to a positive and inclusive climate for the students?
- If the TA will be grading student work...
  - What are the grading deadlines?
  - What standards (e.g., rubrics) and procedures will be used to ensure transparency, accuracy, and consistency?
- Student communication...
  - How should the students contact the TA?
  - What are expectations for TA response times to student emails, phone messages, etc.?
- University policies for conduct and academic integrity: <https://www.memphis.edu/osa/>
  - How will students be made aware of these policies?
  - How will academic integrity be ensured?
  - What technology is allowed in the classroom?
  - How will student information covered by the Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) be protected?
  - What are the expectations for student conduct?
  - What are the policies related to sexual misconduct, discrimination, civility, and safety?  
<https://www.memphis.edu/oie/>
  - How will we ensure that course materials meet standard accessibility standards?
  - What is the process for identifying and offering academic accommodations for students?  
<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/faculty/index.php>
  - What constitutes an excused absence and how will they be accommodated?
- What are the expectations related to professional conduct?
- To whom should the TA report concerns about student conduct or wellbeing?
- How should the TA communicate with their supervisor if an illness or other unavoidable absence conflicts with their duties?
- What training or support is recommended or required?