



IUPUI

## SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS AND COMPUTING

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN-CENTERED COMPUTING

Indiana University–Purdue University  
Indianapolis

### Faculty Expectations for Graduate Assistants <sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

First off, congratulations on your new role as a Graduate Assistant (GA) in the Human-Centered Computing (HCC) Department. GAs serve a vital role in our department by assisting faculty in carrying out teaching and research activities. The department selects and assigns GAs to faculty on a semester by semester basis based on the GAs' academic record and qualifications. We as a department want GAs to be successful and thus, we have created this expectations guideline. This is meant to serve as only a rough set of instructions and GAs should discuss specific duties, tasks, and responsibilities with their faculty supervisor.

#### 2. Professional Behavior with Students When Assigned Teaching Tasks

GAs assist instructors with a variety of tasks related to classroom teaching. Given that you represent the school and department, we ask that you always conduct yourself professionally when interacting with undergraduate or graduate students.

- If you are tasked with classroom responsibilities, you will assist with delivering material, grading, and/or other tasks. Be prepared to help students by answering questions in a clear and concise manner, providing professional feedback on student work, and meeting with students outside of class. For example, in courses taught in computer labs using software demonstration, be proactive and prepared if necessary to walk around the room to assist students who may get stuck or have questions.
- You might find yourself conducting labs or study sessions, meeting with students outside of class, or researching and preparing instructional materials such as handouts, slideshows, or other tools for delivery.
- If students ask you a question and you do not know the answer, first try to find the answer yourself. If you can't, then you should forward the question to the head Teaching Assistant (TA) or faculty supervisor.
- Do your best to answer to students in a timely fashion. For example, if students email you, respond within 24 hours.
- If you are grading assignments or projects, ask your faculty supervisor about grading policies, their grading preferences, when items should be returned to students, and so on. Generally, it's ideal to grade and return work as soon as possible. Try to give feedback to the students in ways that are commensurate with the assignment. Lastly, if you are noticing common problems or potential pitfalls in student's work, please let your faculty supervisor know so that they can address those concerns and issues.

#### 3. Take Initiative! Be Proactive!

Whether you are assisting faculty in a classroom setting, a research project, or in another assigned capacity, the best way for GAs to assist faculty is to be proactive and **ask** for tasks to perform. You should feel free to take initiative and make suggestions, contribute ideas, offer to help, and ask

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<sup>1</sup> Updated in Fall 2016.



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how you can be of assistance. Your supervisor might not know what you don't know so when tasks are unclear, ask your supervisor. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor how you can be of assistance.

#### 4. Presence, Reporting, Punctuality, and Communication Etiquette

We highly recommend scheduling weekly review meetings with your faculty supervisor. Develop a schedule with your supervisor to establish when you are available to work and establish deadlines for each assigned task you are given.

- **Arrive on time**, prepared, and remain for the required time, and ensure any deliverables are completed on time.
- Avoid unexplained absences or tardiness. If circumstances arise that prevent you from keeping to your scheduled hours, then report this to your supervisor as soon as you can. This way they can adjust and modify their own plans if needed.
- In general, if you cannot meet an obligation that has been assigned to you or need to cancel a meeting, do not panic. Instead, contact your faculty supervisor as soon as you are able. If you need to cancel a meeting, 24-hours' notice is typical professional courtesy.
- When tasks are assigned to you during a face-to-face meeting, it could be helpful to follow up with an email to your faculty supervisor with a bulleted list of key action items assigned to you during the course of the meeting. This way the faculty confirms you understand your assigned tasks and it creates a document that helps you both to be accountable.

#### 5. Prompt and Open Communication with Faculty Supervisor

- As soon as possible, discuss with your supervisor how best to address and contact him or her. Some supervisors are more comfortable with a "first name basis" rapport and others prefer to be addressed by his or her professional title. If you are unsure, ask your supervisor what he or she prefers. Keep the communication channels open, so that you can engage in honest, timely, and open dialogue anytime it is needed. Some professors prefer to keep all written communication over IUPUI e-mail or Canvas, while others may be willing to share personal contact info such as phone number.
- All of your school-related and department-related communications with faculty and students you are assisting need to happen through the official school and department media channel (IUPUI e-mail or Canvas, not your personal e-mail).

#### 6. Conclusion

These are just a few guidelines to help you make your contribution to the department as a GA. Your efforts can directly and positively influence student success. This opportunity will provide valuable experience for everyone and we look forward to your contributions to the department!

Thank you!  
The HCC Faculty