

What are the roles of a BSGP TA in the SOMREO courses?

BSGP students have the option to TA for a stipend only, for credit only, or for both a stipend and for credit, within a given semester. CUST students are required to TA for credit at least once, for 2 credits. All BSGP students are welcome into the for-credit option. The for-credit option emphasizes content development to enhance future teaching, instruction, and mentoring roles, while the for pay is to compensate the student for administrative duties.

The following breakdown should be shared with both the course director/instructor and the potential TA BEFORE contracts are signed to ensure the best option for the students and course structure. Specific details of expectations within each TA assignment should also be discussed clearly at the start of the semester. It is the instructors responsibility to do regular (min. once a month) direct check-ins with the TA to ensure and maintain clear expectations and communications. This will also serve to balance TA autonomy with accountability.

For stipend – Administrative duties only

- Course preparation
 - Organization and preparation of materials or sessions only from the administrative side, not substantive content. Including invitation of speakers and logistics.
 - Participate in planning sessions from an administrative perspective.
 - Maintaining course materials in Canvas
- Course Instruction
 - Lead review sessions, but only from the programmatic angle. No content development should be requested, including development of practice problems or an instructional approach to the review sessions.
- Grading, Evaluation, & Attendance
 - Proctored exams
 - Help with grading of student written assignments.
 - Grade homework
 - Grade quizzes and exams
 - Conduct student surveys
 - Maintain student class attendance records.
- Other duties
 - Attend class
 - Office hours to help with student questions, with an emphasis on programmatic or administrative roles.

For credit (2 credits) - Course development duties

The specifics to what type of materials or course development are dependent on the specific assignment. Course directors/instructors should be prepared to provide substantive feedback to the TA for their growth as a future educator. They are required to complete a formal evaluation of the TA (via [THIS](#) form).

- Course preparation
 - Organization and preparation of materials or sessions from the substantive content specific side. This includes review and edits to exams or homeworks.
 - Participate in planning sessions from a content perspective.
 - Build, develop, or modify course materials for Canvas
 - Assist course instructors in creating the syllabus, lectures, or other course materials. This could also include high yield notes, ppt slides (didactic, flipped, etc.).
- Course Instruction
 - Lead class discussion topics
 - Create review sessions content
 - Develop and present lecture content
 - Serve as a final project/paper mentor
- Other duties
 - Provide student tutoring within reason.

Information for course directors

- All TAs will complete a feedback form/evaluation at the close of each semester. This will ensure equity across TA duties and adherence to allowed responsibilities.
- *For stipend assignments* are for 10 hours per week assignment as a 0.25 FTE assistantship.
- *For credit assignments* are for a 3-4 4 per credit hour per week (6-8 hours for the 2 credit course). This results in 96 - 128 hours for a 16 week semester.
 - *Guest lectures* - the primary instructor/course director MUST be present during TA guest lectures to ensure accurate and complete presentation of material. It is the responsibility of the primary instructor to “fill in the gaps” as needed.
 - *Review sessions* - TAs can lead these sessions without the presence of the primary instructor.
 - *Project Proposal* - Primary instructors should provide written documentation of expected duties associated with this appointment at the start of the semester. This document MUST be shared with the [CUST director](#) and [SOMREO](#).
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Background on these changes

We sent a request for feedback to all current and recent (the past 2 – 3 years) BSGP course directors and student TAs to gain a better understanding of how the TAs within the BSGP program are currently utilized, and ways the TAs could be incorporated. The goal of this assessment is to use these data to adjust the TA assignments within the BSGP program to maximize the benefit to all students, but also adjust for CUST student benefits for TAing for both credit and pay, without “double-dipping.”

Targeted recipients received this email on March 30, 2023, with a reminder on April 20, 2023.

“The SOMREO is evaluating the approach to TA’s within the classroom and we want to make sure that we are effectively supporting both the students and the faculty as best we can. In an effort to make sure we have a grasp on how things currently run within each course, we are asking for your feedback. Please complete this brief survey (<https://forms.office.com/r/JC5WCKj05L>) by May 10, 2023, to ensure your perspective is included as we grow, improve, and keep moving forward.”

Results

Participants

- Sixteen (16) individual responses
 - Six (6) course directors/instructors (CD)
 - Ten (10) BSGP student/TA (TA)

Courses associated with the TA position

- BIOM 422 – Methods (TA)
- BIOM 501 (CD)
- BIOM 507 (TA)
- BIOM 508 (2 TAs)
- BIOM509 - Fundamentals of Neurobiology (CD & TA)
- BIOM 510 (2 CD)
- BIOM 514 - Immunobiology (CD & TA)
- BIOM 522 (TA)
- BIOM 525 - CMBD Journal Club (TA)
- BIOM 555 (CD)
- IMSD bootcamp (CD)
- Neuro Elective - Neurophysiology (2 TAs)
- MD/PhD Translational Science Journal Club (TA)

What were the primary duties of a TA in this course?

- Course preparation
 - Preparation of materials and events for students
 - Organize student orientation events
 - Participate in planning sessions
 - Maintaining course materials in Canvas
 - Coordinate with invited speakers regarding logistics of the visit

- Assist professor in creating syllabus/lectures
- Course Instruction
 - Lead class discussion topics during the 2nd hour of the class.
 - Create and conduct review sessions
 - Led one session of a panel or single guest lecture
- Grading, Evaluation, & Attendance
 - Proctored exams
 - Help with grading of student written assignments.
 - Grade homework
 - Grade quizzes and exams
 - Conduct student surveys
 - Maintain student class attendance records.
- Other duties
 - Attend class
 - Office hours or student tutoring as needed

In what other roles could a TA potentially contribute to this/these course(s), but has not yet?

- Course materials
 - Help with preparation of on-line materials.
 - Develop course content for a class session or two, including high yield notes, ppt slides (didactic, flipped, etc.), then run session.
 - A TA could potentially serve as a final project/paper mentor.
- Additional comments
 - TAs are given autonomy. If we wanted to, we could do more.

Do the TAs typically have a role in course development or delivery? Explain.

- No
- Yes
 - In the review or discussion sessions
 - Through review and edit test questions or homework assignments
 - Very minor. TA may help maintain course materials
 - Yes. We do everything

Additional commentary

- For credit should be focused on developing and delivering a session or additional course content/material. If the TA is a CUST student, then any course development (incl. syllabi) and/or content delivery should count toward CUST (BIOM 542 - Teaching Assistant Practicum).
- Monetary compensation should be focused on TA assignments related to administrative work.
- Lack of oversight can create unequal efforts for equal stipend, even within a single course.
- Some courses can accommodate course development, others have too high of an administrative workload to allow for this.

BIOM 542 - Teaching Assistant Practicum** (2 Credits; Teaching Practicum).

This course may be repeated a second time as an elective, but the TA role cannot be for duplicate courses.

- *Description:* Teaching experiences is critical for most faculty positions. BSGP students enrolled in this course earn course credit for serving as teaching assistants with an emphasis on course development. Administrative duties are NOT included in this option and can be assigned for a stipend. Speak the [CUST director](#) and [SOMREO](#) if you want both assignment types (credit & pay).
- Students must inform the [CUST director](#) and [SOMREO](#) the semester BEFORE they intend to enroll. And, arrangements for teaching assistantships are made on an individual basis and coordinated (including override permissions) through the [SOMREO office](#). Please note, TA positions have a waitlist.
 - Any student TAing for credit rather than, or in addition to, pay must include [CUST director](#) and [SOMREO](#) and reach out to the faculty course director(s) of their choosing and develop a teaching plan. The teaching plan should meet the needs of the faculty course director and focus on teaching skill development for the TA.
- The preferred approach is for BIOM 540 to precede BIOM 542 (TAing for credit). Exceptions are awarded for BSGP students in Fall and Spring of year 2 on a case-by-case basis. If enrollment in BIOM 542 comes before BIOM 540, students are required to submit a justification to the [SOMREO office](#) on how they feel prepared to TA and/or description of access to educational mentors to help them during their role as a TA.
 - *For non-CUST students who do not intend on taking BIOM 540, we HIGHLY encourage some form of training prior to accepting a TA position (either for credit or for pay). For example, the UNM's Main Campus [Graduate Teaching Academy](#) no-transcript certificate in college teaching.*
- Before enrolling in 2 credit hours, please confirm with your research mentor and refer to your RA contract to ensure you are able to meet all of your other associated course requirements. You or your mentor will be responsible for any tuition charges above what your RA contract covers.
- Scheduling includes the day/time of the course students are assigned to TA, in addition to office hours and other TA requirements.
- For this course to count towards the students CUST requirements:
 - Obtain a written assessment (via [THIS](#) form) from the Instructor of Record (IOR) which the student will later include in their Teaching Portfolio. The SOMREO office or the CUST Director will provide guidance to the IOR as needed. The IOR will also provide the SOMREO office AND the CUST director with the students final semester grade. The CUST Director will enter the grade in LoboWeb.
 - The student must track their thoughts/lessons learned for this experience for their Teaching Portfolio (required for CUST students, optional for non-CUST students).
 - Assessment is based on regular meetings with the BIOM 542 instructors, evaluation by the faculty course director working directly with the teaching assistant, student evaluations, and a final report written by the TA that encompasses a description of accomplishments and self-evaluation.