Policy Guidelines for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants in Human Development and Family Studies
Revised 3/26/2018

**General Guidelines**

To promote consistency in the way that Undergraduate Teaching Assistant’s (TA) are being utilized within the department, the following guidelines should be followed:

1) An undergraduate TA can only:
   a. be a TA for a maximum of 6 credits over his or her academic career,
   b. TA for 1-2 credits per course (approval needed by department chair for 3 credits; or 3 credits can be split between two instructors with agreement from both instructors)
   c. TA for a course one time.

2) Students must document their hours and tasks on a weekly basis.

3) At the beginning of every semester instructors must report their use of a TA to the department administrative assistant. The department requires this information for tracking purposes.

4) The mechanism in which students can enroll is HDF497 (S/U).

5) If students are engaging in grading activities, the grading must not be evaluative in nature, should be de-identified and should only include “check-list” type grading (i.e., identifying if a student met a certain objective requirement). Students can help to calculate scores on multiple choice exams as long as scantron grading is used and the results are de-identified.

6) Every effort should be made by the instructor to de-identify assignments that TA’s will review.
Faculty and Instructor Expectations

Being a Teaching Assistant should be reserved for the highest achieving students. Faculty and instructors should have some knowledge of the student beyond their class performance, as well as knowledge of the student’s work ethic and level of responsibility.

Faculty and instructors must work with the students ahead of time to identify peer conflicts. Undergraduate TAs are part of the same social structure as the students they are teaching, a fact that can create tremendous social pressures and ethical conflicts for the students. The course instructor should review the class roster with the undergraduate TA well in advance of the start of the semester to identify students who may present a conflict situation. The course instructor could elect to grade these students. Students in the class should also be told the name of the TA and allowed to voice any conflicts of interest to the instructor.

Faculty and instructors should work with the students ahead of time to identify schedule conflicts. It is likely that the peak teaching and grading loads on undergraduate teaching assistants will coincide with peak loads in the courses they are taking. Undergraduates have only limited flexibility to adjust their schedules to smooth out the work-load. Undergraduate TAs should obtain their course schedules and syllabi as far in advance of the start of the course as possible. Course instructors should work with the students to compare the teaching schedule with other courses to determine areas of difficulty, and attempt to resolve the issues prior to the start of class.

Faculty and instructors should ensure that the undergraduate TA receives the appropriate training. The course instructor must provide course-specific training for the undergraduate TA.

Faculty and instructors must never require undergraduates to prepare course material without oversight, and must never allow students to engage in evaluative grading. Students should not be allowed to engage in evaluative grading of essays, tests or quizzes or test design activities (e.g., developing test questions, answer keys, etc). TA’s can help to calculate grades on multiple choice exams that have already been graded via scantron, as long as the document is de-identified.

Faculty and instructors are exclusively responsible for evaluation and grading evaluation (and hence all grading). TAs are allowed to prepare materials for lectures or recitations, homework questions, or other related material. The end result must always be supervised by the instructor. Grading guidelines, partial credit, re-grading policies and other such issues must be determined by the course instructor.

Faculty and instructors must establish reliable lines of communication. At a minimum, the course instructor should hold weekly meetings with the undergraduate TAs. Additionally, course instructors should make themselves available in whatever way they and the undergraduates agree on, to ensure that they can provide guidance at the times when the undergraduate TA is most likely to need it.
Faculty and instructors must adjust their expectations.
Because an undergraduate TA will not have the depth of underlying knowledge or life experience that graduate TAs have, course instructors must realize this, and prepare material in much more detail and depth than they would for graduate TAs. Faculty and instructors sometimes lose sight of this fact, and essentially force their undergraduate TA to learn material as if they are students. This places further time pressures on the undergraduates, and creates unneeded frustration and pressure.

Faculty and instructors should teach all required class hours. Supplementary classes, such as voluntary discussion sections or tutorial work, may be taught by undergraduate assistants who are directly supervised by the faculty and instructor in charge of the course. Such supervision shall usually consist of frequent meetings with the undergraduate assistants to discuss pedagogical matters and/or occasional attendance at discussions led by undergraduate assistants. The direction of laboratory sessions, field trips and projects by undergraduate teaching assistants is permissible, provided such individuals do not bear primary responsibility for any formal instruction.

Suggestions on how faculty and instructors should work with TAs:

- Faculty and instructors should clearly communicate the expectations and responsibilities of the TA both verbally and with a learning contract (the latter especially if the TA is enrolling for course credit) before the beginning of the semester.
- Articulate the number of credits to be earned.
- Articulate the average number of hours per week expected to work on this course.
- Discuss professionalism, ethical behavior, academic integrity, and other issues.
- Discuss the TA’s role in helping students with assignments.
- Meet with the TA regularly throughout the semester.
- Have the TA log her or his hours with an hourly log/time sheet.
- Encourage TAs to respond to student questions and to grade assignments in a timely manner.
- A TA should inform you that (s)he should be excused from grading a student’s assignment/exam if (s)he currently or has had a relationship with that student.
- Inform the TA that the ultimate responsibility for assigning grades belongs to you, the faculty and instructors instructor.
- Inform the TA that confidentiality must be maintained regarding students with whom they work (must sign confidentiality agreement)
- Ask the TA for feedback throughout the semester so that adjustments can be made in the course.
- Do both a midterm and end of semester evaluation and discuss the results with the TA.
- Do not share test or exam content or answers with the TA.
Information of Faculty/Instructors

- The TAs have to enroll to receive credit. There is no compensation for the TAs.
- Undergraduate TAs previously (not simultaneously) should have taken the same course or an equivalent, earned a grade of A- or higher, and be in good academic standing if (s)he will work directly with students.
- Faculty, lecturers, and CDC staff are able to recruit TA’s from their classes.
- **Per course instructors** can recruit TA’s if they teach the course on a regular basis and receive permission from the department chair. Per course instructors should speak with the Department chair if interested in working with an Undergraduate TA to determine the appropriateness of the request.
  - Appropriateness of the request will be based on the following criteria:
    - The instructor can commit to weekly meetings,
    - The instructor has previously taught the course at least 2 time,
    - The student has taken the course.

Recruitment/Selection of an Undergraduate TA:

- Instructors may recruit students who have taken their class and received at least an A-.
- Ask the student what other courses and activities that (s)he has committed to for that semester to determine if (s)he really will have enough time for the TA responsibilities in your course.
- All TA’s are required to sign a CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT (see appendix)

All STUDENTS who will be working as an undergraduate TA should be directed to fill out the online “Undergraduate Teacher Assistant Application” form. The form will be used to track students enrolled as TAs. The form can be found at the following url: [http://goo.gl/forms/F7UJo3b57P](http://goo.gl/forms/F7UJo3b57P)

Earning Credit:

- Students may earn credit for their TA responsibilities by enrolling in HDF497 (S/U). This Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship cannot be used as a Senior Field Placement.
- When indicated, students can split credits between two instructors (e.g., 1 credit for instructor A and 2 credits for instructor B).
- Below are the approximate number of hours per week to earn various credits for the TA’s activities (attending class, meeting with the faculty and instructor, preparation, and other course activities):

  1 Credit = 3 hours per week = 36 hours/semester
  2 Credits = 6 hours per week = 72 hours/semester
  3 Credits* = 9 hours per week = 108 hours/semester (*approval needed by Department Chair)
Suggested functions that TAs may perform:

- Help develop course materials.
- Develop and/or maintain course websites.
- Teach a class session during the lecture period (it is recommended to provide some opportunities for TAs to have visibility and to develop competence in their teaching).
- Grading assignments with clear-cut, objective answers (e.g., true-false, multiple choice). No evaluative grading of assignments with subjective answers (e.g., essays). All work should be de-identified using student codes (last 3 digits of student id# and first initial, e.g., 798S).
- Assist in other activities related to the course (e.g., making copies, updating powerpoint slides, etc.)
- Be alert to students who have been absent and have not submitted assignments or otherwise have changed their behavior. Unusual behavior should be reported to the instructor or the HDF office.

Functions that TAs should not perform:

- Grade evaluative papers, quizzes, and exams when no answer key or grading rubric is available.
- Teach lecture sessions on a regular basis (i.e., more than one time per semester).
- Assign final grades for individual students.
- Work unrelated to the course.

Performance Issues:

TA:
At times issues will arise with TA’s and/or the quality of their work. Please use the following guidelines:

- Instructor should review the TAs log sheet and compare to the work actually performed.
- Provide the student with early and helpful feedback about their performance, as well as you expectations. This feedback should be both written and verbal. Documentation of steps to mitigate the issue are important.
- Consult with colleagues or the department chair or undergraduate coordinator to identify additional strategies to problem solve the issue.
- If all efforts to help correct TA performance do not work, the student will receive a Failing grade (U) for the course.

Instructor:

- All students will receive an exit survey at the end of the semester to assess their TAship. The survey will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Committee coordinator. Instructors who do not follow the rules set forth in this handbook will lose the privilege of participating in the Undergraduate TA program.
Departmental Expectations

The department should review courses for the appropriateness of undergraduate TAs.

The best courses for undergraduate TAs have the following characteristics:

- The course themselves are well-established, and the material is well-developed and tested.
- The domain knowledge is well-established and fairly narrow in scope.
- There is little new development of course materials required and, of this development, none of it is required of the TAs.

The department should obtain and evaluate feedback from the TAs and graders on the quality of their teaching or grading experience for the semester. Some feedback is especially important in the first few weeks of the semester, as this is the best time to avert potential major difficulties. Furthermore, departments should obtain feedback on the TAs’ overall experience at the end of the semester. This feedback can be used to improve problem areas to the benefit of all parties involved.

The department should provide a “neutral third party” for dispute resolution. This person should be a respected faculty and instructors member, whom the undergraduate TA or grader can approach in confidence and confidentiality, without fear of reprisal (and could be the same person who is responsible for undergraduate TA affairs). Undergraduates need a source of empowerment when they are involved in disputes. They often feel helpless and fearful that the faculty and instructors member with whom they have a dispute can negatively influence their remaining student career. Departments must provide a mechanism to diffuse these fears and concerns, and correct the difficulties before they further affect the undergraduate TA and/or the class. The Department Chair, Director of the Undergraduate Committee, or any member of the Undergraduate Committee may serve in the role.

The faculty member or instructor should provide office space and resources for the use of undergraduates. Unlike graduate students, undergraduates don’t have office space in academic buildings. Nevertheless, they need to hold office hours and meet with students in private settings, just as graduate TAs do. Students are more likely to seek help from their TA if they can do so in a private setting with appropriate resources (such as table and chairs).

Faculty and instructors should make every effort to de-identify student work if a TA is engaging in grading activities. TAs should not be privy to student grades. Therefore, every effort should be made to de-identify assignments with which the TA will assist with grading. It is suggested that in Sakai “tests and quizzes” be used to de-identify assignments. Alternatively, id codes can be used to de-identify quizzes, tests and exams. Codes should only include the last three digits of the student id and their first initial (798S).
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand and agree to the following statements regarding my access to HDF________.
I,___________________________________ understand the significance of the responsibility I
have as a student assistant to maintain the confidentiality of educational records.

1.In the course of my work as a student assistant in HDF________, I understand that I will
come into contact with confidential information (e.g. student grades, identification, userids,
personal data, disability status). Confidential information may be spoken, written or electronic.

2.The nature of the information that I have access to is extremely private and must be protected.
I will not, under any circumstances, share this information with other students, faculty (excepting
the faculty teaching this course), or staff. This information includes, but is not limited to, written
records, computer files, student visits or telephone calls, office memoranda and conversations
or any written or oral transactions that may occur.

3.I agree not to access or attempt to access any information other than that which is required to
do my job.

4.I agree not to discuss confidential information where others can overhear or access the
conversation.

5.I agree not to access any confidential information for any person other than the faculty
member teaching this class.

6.I agree that I will not disclose my user name and password to any person. I understand that
my user name and password are the equivalent of my signature and that I am accountable for
all uses of my user name and password.

7. I agree to log out of any computer session opened under my user name and password prior
to leaving any computer or terminal unattended.

8.I understand that I may be required to participate in periodic training.

9. I will keep confidential papers, reports, and computer printouts in a secure place, and deliver
to the faculty at the end of the course.

10.The HDF_______ Sakai contents (e.g. reference materials, exams, assignments, tutorials)
that I will access, will be used only for the purposes assigned by the faculty teaching the course.

I understand that violation of this agreement may result in disciplinary action.
Student Declaration:
I have read and understand the terms and conditions of the above agreement.

______________________________             __________________________
Student’s Signature                        Date

______________________________             __________________________
Instructor’s Signature                    Date