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Introduction

GSAS is excited to have you serve as a Teaching Fellow or Course Assistant this academic year. We have compiled a multitude of resources in this handbook to guide you in your work both inside and outside the Brandeis classroom. Please take the time to review the information presented here and do not hesitate to contact GSAS should you have any questions.

Workshops

Each semester the GSAS, the Graduate Student Affairs office, and the Center for Teaching and Learning sponsor several workshops. The format and topics of the sessions vary widely. Some focus on teaching in specific disciplines, some on aspects of your professional or academic development, and some on technology and its applicability to teaching. All workshops are announced to students through the GSAS e-newsletter, Highlights, and also through email. We might also enroll Teaching Fellows in a LATTE class where we might post articles, and other useful information. If this occurs, the course will be automatically visible on your personal LATTE page.

Library and Technology Services (LTS)

LTS offers comprehensive library and technology support to the Brandeis community. Teaching Fellows can expect to work with LTS staff in a variety of ways such as: scheduling research or technology group instruction sessions or individual consultations, getting assistance and training with use of the online learning management system (LATTE), creating multi-media presentations, and booking technology-enhanced classrooms and media equipment.

If you have questions about LTS services, collections, or resources, visit or contact the library services desk at Goldfarb Library, level 1 (x6-4670). More information about the full range of services offered by LTS can be found at http://lts.brandeis.edu. You may also contact an appropriate subject liaison: http://lts.brandeis.edu/research/staff.html

Course Reserves at the Library

- Course Reserves are books, videos, and CDs that are set aside to support your students’ course work and instruction. LTS encourages you to place all required course materials on reserve to ensure that these high demand items are available to all of your students. More information: http://brandeis.libguides.com/reserves, reserve@brandeis.edu, or call 6-4630.

- You can place reserve requests online here: http://brandeis.libguides.com/reserves or at the Information & Borrowing desk.

- Please allow 2-3 business days to process reserve requests for library-owned materials, and 5+ business days to order and process purchase requests for reserve materials. Requests submitted within 2 weeks of the first day of classes will experience significantly longer processing times.

- Physical reserves (books, DVDs, CDs) are kept behind the Information & Borrowing desk. Reserve books circulate for 2 hours within the library; video and audio materials circulate for 4 hours within the library.

- Personal copies of books, videos, and audio materials can be put on reserve for your class. They must be lawfully acquired or purchased.

LATTE (Brandeis online learning management system)

- Electronic course materials can be made available through LATTE. You can use LATTE to share readings, e-books, videos, and other media. Visit http://latte.brandeis.edu for more information.

- You can add films from the Brandeis film collection to LATTE. For more information,
visit http://brandeis.libguides.com/lattevideos.
• For questions about course materials on LATTE, contact latte@brandeis.edu or call x6-LTTE.

English Language Programs (ELP)
The English Language Programs office provides university funded one-on-one tutorials in writing and oral skills to undergraduates and GSAS students throughout the academic year. If a student needs help with English language proficiency to succeed in your classroom, please contact Vinodini Murugesan at x68398 or at vino@brandeis.edu.

Teaching Fellows who find that their current level of English language skills inhibits their performance in the classroom or lab should contact Vinodini as well. Professional assistance is available to develop fluency and improve pronunciation. Any TF who wishes to familiarize themselves with the cultural aspects of teaching in an American classroom is also welcome to contact ELP.

Before the Classroom
The following sections are designed to help you develop and enhance your skills as an educator.

Before the Semester Begins
Before entering the classroom, Teaching Fellows should clarify the faculty instructor’s and the department’s expectations.

Clarifying expectations. You need to know who is responsible for what and how much of the “what” falls to you. It is essential to clarify with your faculty instructor the following:
• Course requirements
• Attendance policies
• Administrative duties
• Office hours
• Grading protocol and standards (e.g. letter grade, pass/fail, comments only, grading in pencil, expectations for student writing ability), assignments, and the expected range of grades
• The kind of problems you are to resolve and the kind you should refer to the instructor or someone else
• Academic honesty—make sure you understand Brandeis’ policies as explained in the current Rights and Responsibilities handbook and know what to do if and when you encounter academic dishonesty or questionable practices.
• Evaluation, both written and informal, is an important part of your development as a teacher. This handbook includes a section on student evaluations, but you might also think about how you’ll be evaluated as a teacher or course assistant by the faculty and your department.

Professional Conduct
Open communication is one key to a positive teaching experience, but at the same time, you must also set boundaries. Your attitude and demeanor reflect your respect for yourself, your subject, and your students.

• Recognize and respect students as individuals.
• Learn students' names and how to pronounce them correctly. LATTE enables you to see pictures of each of your students on a class roster. Even if you do not integrate LATTE into your pedagogy, the roster function is extremely valuable in helping you to establish classroom rapport.
• Be enthusiastic. Show your interest in the subject and demonstrate your commitment to teaching.
• Maintain eye contact with students while speaking.
• Learn to use and understand nonverbal language. Even small, seemingly insignificant actions or gestures may be misconstrued.
• Establish a rapport with your students. Be concerned, but draw a clear line between professional and personal involvement. Conflicts of interest could jeopardize your academic and professional standing.
• If you find yourself in a difficult situation, discuss it frankly with the faculty instructor or your faculty advisor. Strive to be evenhanded and even-tempered in your interactions with all students.

• Differentiate yourself from your students. Dress and act in an appropriate and professional manner.

Non-Discrimination and Harassment

Brandeis University is committed to providing its students, faculty, and staff with an educational and vocational environment in which all people are treated with respect and dignity. Each person has the right to work and be educated in an atmosphere free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, national or ethnic origin, sexual identity, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, disability, or military experience (qualified disabled veteran or other eligible veteran status).

It is the responsibility of every member of the Brandeis community to give full support to our harassment policy. Brandeis requires reporting of perceived discrimination or harassment; it is the policy of Brandeis to investigate such reports. Teaching Fellows who become aware that a student, faculty, or staff member believes that s/he has been subject to discrimination or harassment will advise that person to contact the Associate Vice President of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer, and must do so themselves. A full copy of the University’s policy statement on non-discrimination, academic honesty, and harassment is available in the Rights and Responsibilities handbook.

If you feel that a student has been sexually harassed, you must act! Any faculty member, employee, or student who sexually harasses a member of the University is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the University. The following resources are available on campus:

• Associate Vice President of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer: to receive confidential advice or to file informal or formal complaints against faculty, TFs, students, administrators or staff, call x6-4464.

• Office of Prevention Services: to receive advice or to file informal or formal complaints against faculty, TFs, students, administrators or staff, call Sheila McMahon, Sexual Assault Services and Prevention Specialist, x6-3626.

• Graduate Student Affairs: for advice, call Jessica Basile, Director of Graduate Student Affairs, x6-3547.

• Brandeis Rape Crisis Hotline: to speak with student counselors on call from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am, x6-TALK.

• Public Safety (Campus Police) Emergency: available 24 hours, x6-3333

• Psychological Counseling Center, x6-3730

• Student Sexuality Information Service, x6-3695

Confronting sexual harassment may be uncomfortable but you must act:

• Take the issue seriously—Brandeis policy is zero tolerance.

• Provide support to anyone who is experiencing sexual harassment or assault.

• Do not tolerate sexual and sexist remarks about any person or group.

• Discuss the problem of sexual harassment and educate others.

Gender

Include all people in general references by substituting gender-neutral words and phrases for "man" words.

• Refer to women and men equally and make references consistent.

• Avoid using "man" or "woman" as a suffix or prefix in job titles.

• Grant equal respect to women and men.

• Base your communication on pertinent qualities, not gender.

• Studies show that men tend to dominate classroom discussion time. Be aware of this and strive for balance.
Race and Ethnicity

Be aware of words, images, and situations implying that members of a racial or ethnic group are the same.

• Avoid using qualifiers that reinforce racial and ethnic stereotypes.
• Avoid using ethnic clichés. Keep an open mind. Do not assume that some students are athletes, on financial aid, or unprepared.
• Be aware of language that carries questionable racial or ethnic connotations.
• Do not ignore potentially offensive remarks made in class—it is your obligation to deal with these.
• Avoid patronizing and tokenism with regard to any racial or ethnic group.
• Recognize that some students feel uncomfortable in the college classroom. Lack of participation does not always indicate lack of interest.

Students with Disabilities

Brandeis University is committed to providing an environment that is equitable and accessible to all qualified students with documented physical, learning, or psychological disabilities. Once accepted, a student must document the disability to receive reasonable accommodations. If a student notifies you of a disability, please request a copy of the official academic accommodation letter from Disabilities Services. Disabilities Services will specify the accommodations required in the individual case; other accommodations may not be appropriate. It is the student’s obligation to obtain this letter. A letter from a physician testifying to a student’s disability is not an acceptable substitute. Once the student does present such a letter, the accommodations specified are mandated. If you have questions, contact Beth Rodgers-Kay, x63470.

While teaching, be sure to:
• Separate the person from the disability.
• Respect that persons with disabilities have rights; avoid addressing their needs in front of other students.

• Treat the person with a disability as someone with a full range of skills and abilities.
• Avoid making assumptions regarding the preferences, wishes, or attributes of a person with disabilities.

What is Title IX?

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Nine Things to Know Under Title IX (from knowyourix.org):

1. Title IX a landmark federal civil right that prohibits sex discrimination in education. Title IX is not just about sports; it is a prohibition against sex-based discrimination in education. It also addresses sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence. Sexual violence includes attempted or completed rape or sexual assault, as well as sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, exhibitionism, verbal or physical sexuality-based threats or abuse, and intimate partner violence.

2. Title IX does not apply to female students only. Title IX protects any person from sex-based discrimination.

3. Schools must be proactive in ensuring that your campus is free of sex discrimination.

4. Schools must have an established procedure for handling complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence.

5. Schools must take immediate action to ensure a complainant-victim can
continue his or her education free of ongoing sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence.

6. Schools may not retaliate against someone filing a complaint and must keep a complainant-victim safe from other retaliatory harassment or behavior.

7. Schools can issue a no contact directive under Title IX to prevent the accused student from approaching or interacting with you.

8. In cases of sexual violence, schools are prohibited from encouraging or allowing mediation (rather than a formal hearing) of the complaint.

9. Schools cannot discourage you from continuing your education. Title IX is a positive right to be free of a hostile environment in order to protect your access to education.

Under Title IX, faculty members, teaching fellows, and course assistants are considered responsible reporters. Responsible reporters are considered helping professionals who could reasonably know how to help a student who has experienced an incident of sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, or sexual harassment. Further in-person training will be provided to TF’s and CA’s to fulfill this responsibility. There are three basic steps to remember:

1. Listen… If a student discloses a past assault, allow him or her to tell you what they want you to know.

2. Engage with Empathy… You don’t need to worry about fact-finding; express care & concern for the student

3. Report… Please notify your Brandeis professional staff supervisor and also be sure to contact the Brandeis University Title IX Coordinator, Linda Shinomoto. She can be reached at (781) 736-4456 shinomot@brandeis.edu.

Inside the Classroom

First Class or Section Meeting

The first class meeting or section sets the tone for the entire semester. Here are some tips for starting off on the right foot.

- Try to act calm and assured. Chances are undergraduates are beginners in your field—they’re nervous, too.

- Handle necessary administrative details first. Be sure that students have a copy of the syllabus. Reiterate course requirements and policies stated by the instructor.

- Introduce yourself. Write your name on the board.

- Take attendance. This will help the students to settle in and allow you to begin learning their names. Some TFs prefer to have students introduce and talk a bit about themselves to break the ice.

- Reiterate the objectives of the course as a whole. Explain policies on attendance, late papers, class conduct, and grading.

- Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the course. You may want to explain your academic interests and how the course fits in. Discuss how the course might be "useful" to undergraduates.

- Set office hours and tell students how to get in touch with you to make an appointment or to discuss a problem. Do you prefer email? Your departmental mailbox? Your office? Should students call you? What time is convenient?

You should do some actual course work during the first meeting. This will communicate to the students your seriousness of purpose and also give them a better idea of what the course will be like. Students at Brandeis "shop" for classes until the tenth day of instruction. To avoid disruption to the class later on, help them to make an informed decision as early as possible.
Leading Class Meetings and Discussion Sections

Depending on various factors (the subject matter, preference of the section leader, and nature of the material to be covered), the format can range from loosely-focused, free discussions to highly-directed recitation sessions. Regardless of the format, the section leader should create a comfortable atmosphere for student interaction. You must become used to asking questions and facilitating discussions. Here are some tips on how to run your section in an organized, productive fashion.

• Have specific, substantive goals—what you want students to discover and learn. Design questions and materials to achieve these objectives.
• Observe classroom dynamics carefully, especially during the first few weeks. Notice who pays attention, tends to participate, sits in the front, comes prepared, and takes notes. Be aware of any personal interaction among students that may lead to difficulties later on.
• Insist that students attend their assigned section. Student "migration" will make it difficult for you to establish a stable, comfortable atmosphere for discussion.
• Some students may ask to switch to your section "because it's better than their own," according to their friends. Encourage them to stay where they are and to share notes with their friends. Explain the benefit of two different points of view.
• If it becomes apparent that there is a distinct difference in the way students are treated by different section leaders in the same course, enlist the instructor's aid.
• Try to assess the academic level of the class. Insofar as it is appropriate and feasible, adjust the pace and material accordingly.
• Make sure that students are aware of their responsibilities during the section period and clearly explain how participation will influence their course grade.
• Refer to students by name.
• Never come unprepared. Read or reread all assigned materials before the section no matter how well you feel that you already know the subject matter. Bring pertinent materials with you to class. Otherwise, how will you know "what the author is talking about on page 79?" 
• Avoid asking questions for which you expect one specific response. Trying to read your mind rather than thinking critically about the material may discourage students.
• Be kind in your criticisms and generous in praise for intelligent, articulate responses.
• Design your questions carefully. Pose questions that elicit a variety of responses and allow students to express their own views and perspectives.
• Sum up: at the end of the session, review important points raised. This will help the students feel that they are taking something concrete away with them.

Engaging Students

Engaging students is one of a TF’s most difficult challenges.

• Make it clear from the beginning that all students are expected to participate by speaking and listening to each other. Mandatory attendance policy helps to ensure that students come to class. If Woody Allen is right—"showing up is 90% of success"—you will help students just by requiring that they come to class.
• Meet with shy or non-participatory students outside of class to discuss strategies to help them to participate. Ask them to prepare a position on an issue or find out topics that are of greatest interest to them. Let them know that you will direct questions on these topics toward them during class.
• Have reticent, shy students read aloud as part of their contribution to the course.
• Do not suffer from "pause panic." A few seconds of silence might be enough to encourage students to venture a response. Wait a little while before calling on someone. (Thirty seconds will seem like an eternity!) It takes some students longer than others to formulate their answers.
• Do not rush to answer your own question if no one offers an immediate response. Guide the students; do not lead them.

• Use the board to list the main discussion questions and to record important points.

• To ensure that students are prepared at the beginning of the semester, assign two or three students to lead the discussion each week. Feel free to call on them if the discussion comes to a halt. This can also give a basis for their participation grade.

• Have a plan, but be flexible. Pose follow-up questions to encourage students to focus on issues that they, perhaps unexpectedly, find controversial or unclear.

• “Team A and Team B” strategies: Divide the students in the section into smaller groups. Have them collaborate on group activities and then present collective opinions to the class.

• Encourage students by positively reinforcing all responses whether they are correct or incorrect. Attempt to reinterpret or redefine incorrect responses to tactfully put the discussion on a productive track.

• Rephrase student questions or responses and redirect them back to students.

Do not panic if the discussion becomes overheated when controversial or highly emotional issues are raised.

• Try to regain control of the situation. Ask students to step back. Put the clash into a broader perspective before resuming discussion.

• Poll the class to solicit opinions of each student.

• Interrupt the exchange and have all students spend several minutes writing about the issue. This will allow time for tempers to subside and for you to collect your thoughts and re-channel the discussion.

• Race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and even differing levels of students’ preparation influence the classroom dynamics in every learning environment. Fostering a friendly and inclusive classroom atmosphere is a difficult task for even the most experienced TF. Astute TFs recognize diversity and promote sensitivity.

• Try to assess your own conscious and unconscious biases. Ask yourself the following questions:

  • Am I made uncomfortable by students whose backgrounds differ from my own?
  
  • How open am I to nontraditional modes of expression or styles of learning?
  
  • Do I make assumptions about various student groups?
  
  • Do I shy away from potentially sensitive topics even when they are directly related to the subject matter at hand?

Lecturing

TFs may be asked to lecture to their classes during the semester. Lecturing is one way to convey a lot of information to many people at the same time. It gives the lecturer the opportunity to integrate the most up-to-date information and scholarship in an organized and coherent fashion. But students may find the straight lecture format boring. Here are some tips to help capture students’ interests and hold their attention.

Organization

• Do not begin with a key point. Speak a bit first, giving students a chance to settle down.

• Explain how the lecture fits into the course as a whole. If necessary, review major points of the previous lecture.

• Display your enthusiasm for the subject.

• Give students an idea of where your lecture is going. Perhaps a brief overview of the major points or some practical applications of the presented information will spark interest.

• Pay particular attention to the introduction, transitions, and conclusion of your lecture.

• Outline material on dry erase boards or PowerPoint or Prezi. Post PowerPoint slides to LATTE. This is a very effective
way of ensuring that students understand the structure and substance of the lecture.

• Spell out important or foreign names (otherwise you might find yourself reading about a "Coo Day Tot" rather than a "Coup d'état" on an exam!) Do not erase material too quickly.

• Gauge the level of preparedness of your audience and present appropriate material. Avoid using unnecessary technical language and discipline-specific jargon. If jargon is necessary, be sure to define new or unfamiliar terms.

• Resist the temptation to "cover everything." Try to keep the focus narrow to give students a reasonable amount of information to digest. Make the major points clear.

• Use examples to illustrate your points, but avoid complex or lengthy examples that may confuse students.

• Try to vary the lecture format a bit. Incorporate questions; give them a chance to interact; distribute handouts.

• Learn to use PowerPoint. Use slides, films, audio, video, graphs, maps, or pictures. (If you are using any audio or visual equipment, check beforehand to ensure that it is in good working order and that power sources are convenient. Make sure that any supporting materials are easy to read or hear.)

• Do not digress from the central theme of the lecture.

• Break for a few minutes during a long lecture session to give students a chance to collect their thoughts. The “break” can be a question, a video clip, or an interesting photograph.

• Plan your lecture to include optional material. If you are running long, cut it out. If you are running short, use it.

• Repeat or sum up major points during and at the end of your lecture.

• If you are unsure if the lecture went well, you might want to ask students to write down the major points. Collect their responses and assess whether it is necessary to repeat key concepts during the next class session.

Delivery

• Be prompt, alert, organized, and efficient.

• Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard in all parts of the room.

• Do not feel tied to the lectern or the front of the classroom. Move around at a slow and deliberate pace (quick, jerky movements may make students nervous or uncomfortable).

• Try to speak slowly. Attempt to eliminate any hesitations ("um") in speech.

• Eye contact is absolutely vital. Try to avoid looking off into space, looking down at the floor or up at the ceiling. Come prepared with notes, but do not read them.

• Avoid distracting mannerisms. Use gestures sparingly. Recording a session or having a colleague sit in may be useful in helping you to identify unconscious mannerisms.

• Pause occasionally to give your audience time to think and write.

• Vary the volume and the inflection of your voice.

• Try to be relaxed and comfortable. A speaker’s mood can be contagious.

Lab Sections

Teaching a lab section offers you a unique opportunity to interact with students on an individual basis and to help them to discover the connections between the physical world and the theory presented in lecture. The lab is also a good environment for relating students’ course work to current topics of research. To get the most out of your teaching experience, it is important that you come into every lab well prepared.

• Be safe. Familiarize yourself with the emergency procedures. Know where the eyewash, safety shower, fire extinguisher, and nearest telephone are located. The students must know too!

• Give students a list of your expectations; go over them on the first day of class. You may save yourself some work in the long run.

• Run through the lab procedure yourself with the equipment that the students will
use. This is the time for you to find trouble spots.

• Familiarize yourself with the theory behind each lab. You do not want to be caught off guard with a question you are unable to answer but should know.

• Anticipate likely questions. For example, "Why do they tell you to make measurements with the current going both ways through the coil?" or "Once you plot these points on your graph, how are you going to find the best straight line through them?" This will not only help the students to make connections; it will give you an idea of how well they understand the material.

• Start on time. Some labs are particularly long and students may need to leave for other classes, commitments, or dinner!

• You may want to give a brief talk before starting the lab. Point out potential problems with the experiments, tricky equipment, important measurements to make, etc. (By pointing these out before lab, you may avoid answering the same question 20 times. Then again you may not, but it's worth a try!) Also, reiterate the significance of the experiments.

A lab section is a good place to enhance your teaching skills. Try to find ways in which you can help the students to help themselves. Often they will learn more by you not answering a question than by you answering it. Help them to find the answers to their own questions by asking them about what they do know. Show them how you make connections. If you think of a new analogy for a problem, use it. If it does not get through, try something else.

Finally, show all students respect and consideration and they will reciprocate. Although teaching a lab requires an enormous amount of time and energy, it can be extremely rewarding.

Assignments and Grading

Every TF experiences that rising sense of dread of grading or commenting on student papers, exams, or lab reports. Discuss with your faculty instructor your concerns about fairness and consistency, grading student work, and uncertainty about how to word or vary comments. Establish clear standards to evaluate papers and exams before you begin to grade them. Check and recheck with the instructor to calibrate your standards.

Below are some suggestions for setting and maintaining standards, conveying praise and criticism in a productive manner, and safeguarding your sanity throughout the grading process. Provide pre-exam support. Encourage students to see you during office hours to discuss any difficulties they might be having. If you are making up a quiz, test, or assignment, make sure all directions are clear. Always try to take the exam yourself first; that way you can iron out any problems before they come to light while the exam is underway.

It is essential to maintain consistency, especially when grading a large number of papers or when teaching only one section in a large course. Some tips:

• In consultation with the faculty instructor and other TFs, compile a set of sample answers. Discuss the "ideal answer." Agree on criteria for assigning grades.

• Share exams with TFs in other sections. Pick out three or four assignments and read through them without making any marks or comments on the original. Compare your assessments.

• If you are evaluating many papers, periodically re-read one of the first you graded to ensure consistency.

• Try grading tests section-by-section by reading all students’ answers to the same question before proceeding on to the next question.

• Consider grading papers and exams anonymously. It is easier said than done, especially with papers submitted electronically, but try it for exams and quizzes. Building as much objectivity as possible into the process will pay real dividends over the long run.

• Set and state policies for acceptance of late assignments. Adhere to them strictly.

• Let students know the policy regarding extensions.

• Avoid giving such extremely detailed guidance that students expect an "A" for
merely following your directions.

- Return graded work as quickly as possible. If you cannot return a set of assignments on time, let the class know and tell them when to expect their work.

- Never post grades with names or social security numbers. If you have to post grades publicly, devise a system that masks the identity of the person receiving the grade.

- Never return assignments by placing them in a box outside your office or in the departmental office. You are violating a student’s right to confidentiality and inviting someone to take a paper that is not his/hers for possible use in some other course. If someone wants an assignment returned, and you cannot find a safe and convenient way to return it, ask for a self-addressed stamped envelope.

- Remember that it is against Brandeis policy to offer extra credit or optional work to students on an individual basis. If a student wants to do extra work to make up a poor exam grade, gently deny the request. If you do it for one person who received a “D,” you are obliged to do it for someone who received a “B+.”

Comments on Assignments

- Weigh your comments carefully and offer concrete suggestions for improvement.

- Communicate criticisms fairly. Accentuate the positive, if possible.

- Balance criticism with reassurance and guidance on how to improve.

- In most cases you need not teach writing, but do respond to it. Grammatical, spelling, or syntax errors should not be ignored.

- Warn students that poor writing may conceal or obfuscate good ideas and detract from their grade. Encourage them to seek help from the writing center and to choose, whenever possible, writing-intensive courses.

- Comments should not be designed to defend the grade that you have given.

- Comment extensively and provide critical feedback. Use the technology; Microsoft Word contains easy-to-use tools that allow you to correct papers electronically. You can save time by storing frequently used comments in a customized grading toolbar and returning papers to students electronically.

Additional Resources

The Committee for the Support of Teaching (CST) is composed of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and administrators. Their website contains extremely useful materials on teaching methodology, discussion groups, student participation, lecturing, student diversity, testing, grading, developing a syllabus, learning activities, etc. As you prepare to teach or face challenges in the classroom, take advantage of this resource:

http://www.brandeis.edu/das/committees/cst/index.html

Academic Integrity

Your personal approach and teaching style have a profound effect on the way students learn from you about the material you cover, setting priorities, respecting authorship, and fulfilling obligations. How you communicate about academic integrity matters greatly and sets the tone in your classroom. There are many ways to create an atmosphere of integrity in your section and among your students:

- Emphasize and discuss the statement on academic integrity inserted in the syllabus. Brandeis University publishes its expectations about academic integrity in the student code of conduct entitled Rights and Responsibilities. The Department of Student Rights and Community Standards and the Director of Academic Integrity are responsible for this volume, as well as for the adjudication of alleged violations of its content.

- Give clear guidelines about assignments and papers, and specify the circumstances under which collaboration is acceptable.

- Require that students develop their own ideas and substantiate them; direct them to analyze or compare what they have learned, not merely restate data, themes,
or ideas in the readings. Keep in mind that academic conventions vary by region of the world, and some students have been exposed to years of locally-legitimate practices that are not acceptable in the American higher education culture.

- Design testing situations that discourage cheating, (e.g., scrambling questions, using different versions of an exam, assigned seating, and active proctoring).
- Work closely with any student who seems unclear about proper citation, referring them to tutors, The Writing Center, and their academic advisor if necessary. The practice of paraphrasing is a specific concern. We think of this practice as facile, though it is understood differently or incorrectly by many students.

Remember, students have a contractual relationship with Brandeis, and as an instructor you are charged with upholding the institution’s end of the contract. Violations of our policies on academic honesty must be referred to the Director of Academic Integrity for adjudication through the Student Conduct System. You may go to google.com or another search engine and enter a sentence or two in the search field. Google and other search engines will pull up several options which you may have to sort through, but this can be an effective option. For further guidance and search resources, please contact Erika Lamarre, Director of Academic Integrity, to manage any specific situations that may arise with a student or students in your courses. She can be reached at x6-5075 or elamarre@brandeis.edu. You can also visit her website at http://www.brandeis.edu/svpse/academicintegrity/.

Working closely with the faculty instructor for your course should establish clear guidelines and promote a climate of academic integrity at Brandeis. This means that you may not sanction any student (e.g. lower the grade or require additional work) based on suspicion of academic dishonesty without referring the matter to the Director of Academic Integrity.

**Proctoring**

Proctoring is intended to inhibit or prevent students from cheating. As a Teaching Fellow you may be asked to proctor an examination with the professor for whom you are TFing, or you may give an examination. Bear in mind the following guidelines:

- Students should not have clothing or books on the floor near the desks at which they are taking the examination. Announce clearly, before distributing test materials, where you want these items to be placed.
- If there are enough desks or seats in the examination room, tell students to sit at alternating desks or in alternating rows.
- Hand out test materials face down and instruct students not to turn the examinations over until told to do so. Thus, the students at the front of the room are not starting the examination before those in the back.
- Be aware of what is going on during the exam. Do not bring study materials or papers that need your complete attention. Walk around the room from time to time, or pick a seat in a different location if there is more than one person proctoring.
- Do not accuse a student of cheating during or after the examination. Brandeis regulations regarding the handling of these matters are designed to protect the rights of accusers and accused.
- If you think someone is cheating, stand quietly nearby but do not interrupt the examination. If that is not possible, make sure you can identify the student and the examination booklet when the exam ends. If you think Student A is copying from Student B, make sure you can identify both booklets.

Take the booklet(s) to the faculty instructor, describe what you have seen and why you are suspicious, and work with the professor for further analysis and action. You might want to jot down your initial observations while they are still fresh. If a charge of academic misconduct is raised, you must be as clear as possible about what you saw, and if there is a hearing at a later date your credibility as a witness will be higher if you can provide documentation of what you saw.
Support Outside the Classroom

Managing Your Time

Balancing TF responsibilities with graduate work is an awesome task. Here are some tips for managing your time effectively.

• Practice self-discipline. Seek a reasonable balance between teaching and your scholarship. Both are important.
• Consider using a Brandeis voicemail account from LTS. It is free, allows students easy access to you, and keeps your phone number confidential.
• Take time to think about the tasks that you failed to complete. Try to identify the reason. Was it procrastination, indecision, disorganization, lack of direction/purpose, perfectionism, distraction or interruption, fatigue or sickness?
• Prioritize: Set realistic goals for completing difficult tasks. Set long-term and short-term attainable objectives. Meeting these will help bolster your confidence and motivate you to continue with your studies.

Dealing with Difficult Situations

There are no foolproof strategies for dealing with difficult situations. Even the most experienced teachers are occasionally dismayed by adverse reactions by students or troublesome events. Be prepared to think on your feet and to deal effectively with difficult situations. Some problems can be avoided if caught early and controlled by an alert TF.

• Try to support and encourage students. Avoid provoking a student’s natural defensiveness and hostility.
• Do not be intimidated by the student who purports to "know it all," challenging your statements and quoting authorities at every turn. Give the student a chance to express an opinion, but do not allow long disruption to the class. Speak with the student privately. Acknowledge the worth of the contributions, but point out the difficulties caused by disruptions.
• Do not allow a student to stray too far from the topic or material under discussion. Politely but firmly redirect the student to the material at hand.
• If a student attempts to engage you in a nonproductive argument, offer to speak together after class. Remain calm and as non-judgmental as possible.
• No student receives special treatment. Remind students that the same options must be offered to every student in the class. Be firm about asserting your authority. If the student is especially persistent, suggest that the matter be taken up with the instructor. Advise the instructor about the problem and the student's impending visit.
• Some students may try to prey on your good will. Recognize the student's behavior for what it is—an attempt to unfairly influence or intimidate you, but do not become cynical about the intentions of all students.
• Recognize the TF’s awkward position between undergraduates and the professor. Be judicious in what you say and do. Discuss student problems with the course instructor, but respect student confidentiality.
• Part of your responsibility, as a TF, is to be available to students. Keep regular hours and let students know how to get in touch with you. Do not, however, allow a student to pester you incessantly. Schedule a conference, set time limits, and try to focus on the student's most immediate concerns.
• Do not hesitate to refer a student elsewhere. Academic Services, staffed by trained professionals, is there to help all students.
• Consult with the course instructor or program chair before becoming involved in official grievance procedures.
• In all difficult situations, do your best to maintain your composure and professionalism. Do not respond as if you have been personally attacked (even if you have!). It is not personal; it is professional.
• Remember that students face problems, academic and nonacademic, every day. Outbursts or disruptive behavior might
signal a deeper problem. Extreme cases should be addressed to the instructor or the student's academic dean.

Writing Letters of Recommendation

Writing a letter of recommendation for a student can be an anxiety producing experience. The Hiatt Career Center suggests to undergraduates that they approach people they feel are most qualified to comment on their performance. Especially in large lecture courses, TFs may have more individual contact with students.

Would I? Should I?

The first question is whether you will write the letter. Can you write an incisive qualified recommendation? That is, do you know the student well? Can you assess his/her abilities? Will the recommendation show the student in a positive light? If not, perhaps it is best to decline.

The second question is whether you should. Is it appropriate for me, as a TF, to write a letter, or would the student be served better by a recommendation from a faculty member? In principle, this is a responsibility of the faculty; a letter from the faculty member of a prestigious graduate program would certainly carry much greater weight. In some cases, however, a joint effort between a TF and a faculty member might be the ideal solution. If you feel comfortable writing a recommendation, ask the student for the following information:

• The purpose of the recommendation (general, graduate school, specific employer, character reference).
• A copy of the résumé (C.V.) or a brief statement.
• A copy of a paper written for the course, if available.
• The recommendation deadline—be absolutely sure to meet it!

Recommendation letters come in many different forms and styles. Approach your advisor or other faculty members for suggestions. The most effective recommendation letters often include the following:

• For how long and in what capacity you have known the student
• A rating of the student's intellectual ability and growth compared to other students
• Discussion of relationship with other students/faculty
• Assessment of the student's overall knowledge of the subject
• Remarks on the student's intellectual curiosity, eagerness to learn
• Specific examples of student abilities, conduct, papers, and the like.

Improving Your Teaching

The improvement of one’s teaching is a never-ending process. You need feedback as much as your students do, perhaps more so. Feedback can help you to modify and optimize your teaching, which is so critical at this early stage of your career.

Brandeis has a formal end-of-semester evaluation administered in all classes in which you are a teaching fellow. However, the end-of-semester form will not be returned to you until the beginning of the following semester when it is too late to change anything you are doing in the course in which you have been evaluated.

Therefore, in addition, The Committee for the Support of Teaching offers several different midterm assessment forms on their website: [http://www.brandeis.edu/das/committees/cst/course-feedback.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/das/committees/cst/course-feedback.html). The midterm assessments will provide feedback that is exclusively for your use (you need to tell the students this) and will allow you to modify your approach based on concrete information from the students.

Not only do students appreciate the fact that you are open to their suggestions, but your responsiveness is likely to have a positive impact on your final evaluation—the one that counts!

The following tips can also help you to enhance your teaching skills:

• Invite a peer or a professor to sit in on your section or class to offer a critical review of your performance. Offer to
• Carefully observe the styles of gifted teachers. How do they structure their classes? Why are their lectures, labs, and/or discussions enjoyable? Can you emulate any of their teaching characteristics?

• Be open to criticism. Weigh it carefully. Get as much feedback as possible early in the semester to ensure that the course is proceeding on track.

• Observe students carefully. If they seem distracted, lost, or bored, try to change your teaching style or adjust the level of the material you are presenting.

• Be proactive if things are not going well. Make a change if a strategy is not working.

**Student Services**

**Mailman Psychological Counseling Center**

Undergraduates are eligible for free counseling services at the Mailman Psychological Counseling Center, x6-3730.

**Academic Services**

Academic Services includes the following services for undergraduates: Academic Advising, Academic Fellowships Assistance, Brandeis University Group Study, Disabilities Services and Support, Health Professions Advising, Lerman-Neubauer Fellowships, Textbook Voucher Program, the Transitional Year Program, and the Student Support Services Program. These programs and services are free of charge to students. Feel free to refer your students to any of these services by calling x6-3470.

**Academic Advising**

Each student has his/her own advisor in the Office of Academic Services based on last name. If you have concerns about a student, that student’s advisor may be familiar with the case. Referrals from faculty and graduate instructors are an important part in supporting students who are in academic distress or who are facing difficult personal circumstances. The advising staff should be in a good position to help and will know the best resources (on and off campus) to assist that student. Please contact Academic Services for more information about advising x6-3470.

**Brandeis University Group Study (BUGS)**

Brandeis University Group Study, or BUGS, provides peer tutoring to all undergraduate students. BUGS offers group study sessions for over 20 academic subjects to students who want to improve their knowledge in a course. Sessions are led by knowledgeable and non-judgmental students who have already taken the class. They are recommended by faculty members to help students better understand course material, prepare for an exam, or answer any questions relating to the class. Drop-in study groups are offered in Usdan 130 in most subject areas. All sessions meet weekly and are free of charge. There is no need to enroll or to make an appointment. A student may come at any point during the designated times that are posted on the website each semester. Students and faculty may request tutorials be added in certain subjects; contact the Program Advisor, x6-3470.

Tutors for all foreign languages must contact the course instructor before an initial session with students to determine the focus of tutorial sessions. Each month, tutorial reports are to be sent to the instructor. If you are a TF in a language course, you will receive a call or a Language Instructor Contact Form from the tutor who has been assigned to work with a student in your class. To use the Tutorial Service most efficiently:

- Inform students enrolled in your course(s) that the service is available;

- Refer particular students whom you feel would benefit from the assistance of a peer tutor. (If you would like to refer a student for assistance in a course for which tutoring is not offered or to work on a specific concern, special arrangements
can be made to meet the student's needs);

- Respond promptly to the language tutors who contact you about students in your course.

The Student Support Services Program (SSSP)

Students may request a tutor from Academic Services, or you may call x6-3471 to make a referral. SSSP is a small, community-oriented program dedicated to working with students who are the first in their families to go to college and also with students who come from low-income backgrounds. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, there are 930 Student Support Services Programs nationwide; Brandeis University is one of the few highly selective colleges chosen to have this program. SSSP provides such services as academic advising, career planning, graduate school preparation, mentoring, cultural and academic trips, and a computer lab. For further information, please visit SSSP in Usdan 130 or contact the SSSP Director Gerardo Garcia Rios, x6-3470.

The Transitional Year Program

The Transitional Year Program (TYP) at Brandeis enrolls 20 outstanding students in a year-long academic program. Because these students have not had access to highly-resourced high schools, TYP gives them the opportunity to take both undergraduate courses and exclusive classes. These students become part of the Brandeis community upon joining the program and many stay at the University beyond the transitional year. Should one of these students be in one of your classes and you have concerns about performance, contact Erika Smith, the TYP Director, x6-3471.

Textbook Voucher Program

Each semester, Academic Services awards book vouchers, ranging from $50-$150, to undergraduate students in need of assistance to purchase textbooks. To be eligible to receive the voucher, students must be on financial aid and have exhausted all possible financial resources. Students may receive a book voucher only once per academic year, either in the fall or the spring semester. Applications will be available during the first week of classes in the Academic Services office on the second floor of Usdan. For more information, call the Academic Services Office, x6-3470.

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

ISSO offers assistance and referral services on personal, academic, and immigration-related matters affecting international students. It also provides programming of special interest to the international community on campus and coordinates the Brandeis host family program. ISSO is located in Kutz Hall 215, x6-3480.

The Gateway Scholars Program

Although academically qualified to enter Brandeis, some international students (not all) require more practice in speaking, reading, and writing English. The Gateway Scholars Program is designed to give non-native speakers of English the skills they need to become successful students at Brandeis. If you feel a student is struggling with English, please contact Academic Services or the ELP (English Language Program) Office.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center at Brandeis provides writing tutorial services to undergraduate and graduate students from all disciplines. Students may use the Writing Center for assistance in every phase of the writing process, from pre-writing to final draft. Graduate Student writing consultants, are able to help with conceptual issues (e.g., thesis, argumentation, and organization) and professional writing skills (e.g., personal statements, job letters, and grant applications). The Writing Center is open Monday through Friday, with early afternoon, late afternoon, and evening hours and is located in the Goldfarb Main Library, Room 107, which is on the first floor behind the main computer cluster.

For more information, go to: brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter.
For information about working for the Writing Center as a consultant, contact the directors at writingcenter@brandeis.edu.

The Art of Referral

Some undergraduates find TFs less intimidating and perhaps more sympathetic than faculty members. This tendency to view TF as more accessible has advantages and drawbacks. Students may be more frank with TFs in expressing their feelings about the course, their general academic progress, or even their personal lives. But some may feel that they can more easily manipulate the TF due to the TFs relative inexperience.

As a TF, your best defense against "over involvement" is knowing when and how to refer students to other University resources. Wise referrals will save you time, reduce stress, and ensure that the student receives the proper assistance.

Keep in mind there are support services all over campus:

- Familiarize yourself with the various services available on campus.
- Whenever possible, promptly inform the faculty instructor or your program chair of any problems.
- Deal promptly with all students expressing complaints and concerns.
- Be attentive to students and express concern, but do not become involved personally.
- Learning disabilities and medical conditions are not always readily apparent. If you have any questions regarding undergraduates with disabilities, contact Academic Services, x6-3470.
- If you think that a student is in serious trouble academically or personally, you should contact the instructor and proper office for help.

Ordering Books

In most cases, the instructor will handle book orders several months before the course begins. Forms are normally distributed by the bookstore to each department and then passed along to instructors. If you have your assignment early, the instructor may ask for your help in ordering books.

- Be sure that you have a complete list of materials to order.
- Be sure to return them to the bookstore by the appropriate deadlines.
- If something on the list is out-of-print or unavailable, notify the instructor immediately.
- Indicate whether you want the materials in hard or soft cover.
- Be sure to check that all course materials have arrived before the course starts.
- In some cases, many instructors in the same department may use a standard text. Check to see if your program has a special agreement with the publisher or if the books are all ordered together.

Requesting Desk Copies

For courses that you are assisting, it is often possible to obtain desk copies of materials free of charge from the publisher. Speak to the course instructor about ordering desk copies. In many cases, program administrators can provide you with standard forms on Brandeis letterhead designed for that purpose. They may also help you to obtain publishers’ addresses.

Getting an Office

GSAS will assign office space for TFs in many Arts and Sciences departments. A $5 key deposit is required for all office assignments and must be paid in exact change. TFs will be emailed office location

Administrative Details

TFs are often called upon to handle administrative matters relevant to the course that they are assisting. Attending to these details can be surprisingly time consuming. Look to your program administrator for advice. Ask more experienced TFs for help if necessary. Resources are available to help—this section is designed to point you in the right direction.
and key pick up information once all office assignments have been made (usually no later than mid-September). Office assignments will not necessarily stay the same for the fall and spring semesters, even if you are continuing as a TF from one term to the next. There is limited office space on campus, and it may be necessary for you to share an office with one or more colleagues.

There are two designated graduate student areas that also provide space to work and study: the Graduate Student Center on the main floor of Kutz Hall and the Graduate Study Lounge (Gerstenzang, room 134) in the Science Quad. Both centers have public computers reserved for graduate student use. The Gerstenzang Study Lounge is a quiet work and study space.

Classrooms

The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for assigning all general University-shared classrooms for classes and some academic events. Classroom assignments are made prior to the start of the semester and are based on current or projected enrollment, accessibility, and the educational technology needs as requested by the instructor. Most classrooms have technology with standard equipment (data projection, PC, and DVD). Small classrooms may have data projection with laptop connections. Instructors using VHS should notify the registrar’s office through their department administrator and contact Media Technology Services (MTS) to digitize or arrange streaming of the material. During the add/drop period at the start of the semester, instructors may find that additional seating is needed to accommodate students who are ‘shopping’ (i.e., attending but not officially enrolled in) the class. If additional seats are needed, please contact your department administrator who will work with the registrar’s office to try to make an adjustment. If you feel that you need to cap enrollment, those requests must be made through your department chair to the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Please note, the Registrar may need to impose a cap if the course enrollment approaches or exceeds the seating capacity of the assigned room. Section rooms (e.g., discussion sections) will be assigned after the start of classes on a space available basis. Classroom requests should be in block. Please email jdriscol@brandeis.edu with your request or any questions about format.

• To report a problem (heat/AC, seating issues), please contact your department administrator.

• For classroom equipment problems, information on what equipment is available in classrooms, or for general assistance with AV equipment, contact MTS, x6-4739 or x6-4429 or http://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/index.html.

• For classroom equipment instructions: http://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/classroom_instructions.html.

• For information on what equipment is available in our cluster classrooms: http://lts.brandeis.edu/location/labs/index.html.

• To reserve a classroom for an event, please contact Conference & Events Services, x6-4300.

• To report a safety emergency, contact Public Safety, x6-3333.

• If you are locked out of your classroom during a weekday, contact Facilities, x6-8500.

• If you are locked out of your classroom during the evening or on a weekend, contact Public Safety, x6-3333.

• For non-urgent safety concerns, contact Public Safety, x6-5000.

Ordering Materials and Supplies

Most materials you will need are available in your program/department office including lab supplies, blue books for exams, maps, slides, and other supplies. If there is no chalk/erasers or whiteboard markers in your classroom, ask your program administrator. In many cases, labs require special equipment and supplies. Instructors and program administrators can help you to obtain what you need.
Photocopying, Duplication and Scanning

Each program sets its own guidelines for copying privileges. In some cases, TFs are free to photocopy using “program” copy cards or copy machines in program offices. In others, copy cards need to be obtained from the instructor.

Large orders of printed materials can be copied at the Copy Center, lower-level Usdan, x6-4530. This requires a requisition form available from your program administrator. Be aware of the regulations governing copyrights before you duplicate materials. In some cases, the library will arrange for a limited number of copies of course materials for reserve use. Teaching Fellows may visit the ITRC, Library Faculty Scanning Center, or Information Commons in the Main Library to scan course materials. Clear instructions on how to use the scanners are provided and extra help is available at the Computer Help Desk.

Registration and Course Enrollment

Each student is responsible for managing his/her class schedule and therefore must add and drop classes as necessary, either using the registration system on SAGE or by completing add/drop forms and having them processed at the Registrar’s Office, Kutz 121. An instructor may not add or drop students from a class in SAGE. A student’s official enrollment resides in SAGE and not LATTE.

Early registration is held in October/November for the spring semester and March/April for the fall semester. After early registration, departments and the dean’s office review courses that are under-enrolled, as well as over-enrolled, to determine what action should be taken. A class drawing fewer than eight students may be canceled, unless special approval from the dean’s office is granted.

Registration opens on SAGE again at the start of each semester. Please see the Academic Calendar on the Registrar’s website for the dates of both the early registration and registration periods.

Waitlists During Early Registration

During the early registration period (for the following spring or fall semester) and during summer freshman registration for fall term, the waitlist function is activated for all classes that are controlled by a numeric limit. Once a class is closed, the student is given an option of placing his/her name on the waitlist. At the end of the registration period, the lists are sent to the dean’s office, the academic department, and class instructor for review. Additional sections for a course may be mounted or an instructor may be asked to increase the capacity of his/her class.

Consent Codes During Registration

A consent code may be used in SAGE by a student who has permission of the instructor to: (1) add a class which has reached its numeric capacity; (2) add a class that requires instructor consent; (3) drop a class in accordance with the drop policy. Consent codes and the details of the drop policy (as well other sage-related policies) can be obtained by going to the sage log-in page and selecting ‘User Guides’.

Final Exams

A study period of one or two days precedes final exams. Examinations, lectures, or any other mandatory activity may not be scheduled during the study period.

A tentative final exam schedule is posted on the Registrar’s website a year in advance. This tentative exam schedule is solely based on class time blocks and common exams but provides no indication as to whether a specific class will be scheduled for a final exam during Finals Week. Instructors convey their intention via the Final Exam Planning page in SAGE. For those requesting a scheduled final, this page also provides a mechanism for instructors to request exam proctors, examination blue books, classroom preferences, and equipment needs. Instructors are notified when the Exam Planning page becomes accessible in SAGE.
In order to minimize the number of students with exam conflicts, it's not unusual for the Registrar's Office to move one or more classes to a different exam period. These adjustments are made before the official final exam schedule is posted on the Registrar's home page. Classes having a final exam that fall outside the class block system are assigned an exam period.

University policy prohibits instructors from giving a final exam to individual students before the scheduled exam. If a student is unable to sit for an exam at the scheduled time, the student needs to see his/her academic advisor in Academic Services and discuss the possibility of an excused absence. Approved make-up exams are administered either during the Conflict Resolution exam period (i.e., the last exam period during Finals Week) or during the make-up exam period at the beginning of the following semester. Legitimate reasons for excused absences include illness and family emergencies. Students are expected to remain on campus for all of their exams; early travel plans are not an acceptable excuse and may result in being denied a make-up exam.

Students who are scheduled to take two exams at the same time are identified by the Registrar's Office before the Final Exam Schedule is posted online. These students are notified via email and informed which exam is being rescheduled to the Conflict Resolution period. Students who are scheduled to take three exams in three contiguous exam periods within a 24-hour period may opt to have one of the exams postponed to Conflict Resolution, pending approval of the instructor.

Instructors, with the help of their teaching fellows, are expected to administer their own exams and be available during the exam in order to answer questions and assist students. In the event that an outside academic commitment (e.g., professional conference) prevents an instructor from attending a final exam, s/he should plan to have either his/her teaching fellow proctor the exam or make arrangements with a colleague to fill in. The Registrar's Office does not proctor such an exam.

Some students will have special exam accommodations that have been approved by Disability Services which can include extra time on exams, a low distraction exam environment, and/or the use of a laptop. For more information please contact Disability Services, a division of Academic Services.

Final examinations are to be retained by the instructor for six months and not given back to students during this time period.

Grading

- Midterm and final grades are submitted in SAGE by the primary instructor. Teaching Fellows may be granted access to enter grades in SAGE by the primary instructor. Midterm grades are typically due in October and March and are only required if a student is performing unsatisfactorily.

- Final grades are due shortly after the end of the semester. However, grades for seniors have special deadlines. Please be sure to check the academic calendar on the Registrar's website for grade due dates.

Syllabus

Students should be provided with a written explanation of the requirements for the course and the basis for assigning grades.

The syllabus outlines exam schedules, reading lists, office hours, and expectations of students.

Your attendance policy and a statement about the rights of students with disabilities should be included on the syllabus. You may require students to attend all classes if you wish.

Deadlines

Administrative deadlines are included in the Academic Calendar at:

http://www.brandeis.edu/registrar/calendar/index.html

If you have any questions, consult the course instructor or the Office of Academic Services, x6-3470, if necessary.
Documenting Your Teaching Experience

The TF’s position is a transitional one, occupied only during graduate school years. Just as your graduate work trains you to enter your field as a qualified researcher, your work as a TF prepares you to enter the academic world as a trained teacher. Experiences that you have gained can help you in your job search. Start to compile your dossier as early as possible. Materials collected over a period of several years will better reflect your personal development and help you to document your range of experience.

Documenting your experience as you go along will alleviate last minute rushing to prepare materials when you are ready to enter the job market. Keeping track of your experiences and reviewing them periodically will also help you to mature as a teacher and improve your skills.

As a TF, you may function in a variety of classroom settings. The following suggestions for how to document your experiences to create a teaching portfolio or for use in support of your professional development may not apply to all of you, but we see it as a comprehensive list of the kind of evidence it is possible to gather about your teaching experiences.

- Ask students to complete a midterm evaluation. This will allow you to adjust your teaching techniques to maximize effectiveness and provide a written evaluation of your teaching effectiveness. Please feel free to reproduce and use in your classes.
- Be sure to keep your end-of-semester TF evaluations.
- Video-recording a class is an effective way to demonstrate your teaching abilities to a prospective employer. A free video recording service is offered through the Media Technology Services department in the Main Library.
- Record your experiences, positive or negative, in a personal log. Refer back to them as often as possible.
- Keep copies of all materials that you design or prepare for your courses (e.g. handouts, tests, paper assignments, group exercises). Be prepared to discuss them in detail, explaining why you chose the format that you did.
- Keep a record of any innovative strategies that you have used in the classroom. Note whether they were successful and why they did or did not work well.
- Make sure that faculty advisors, and the instructors with whom you are teaching, are aware of your future plans.
- Be visible. Arrange for an observation of your section or lecture. Keep any written evaluations by peers or instructors.
- Maintain a file of professional contacts—people who you meet at conferences, workshops, labs, archives, etc.
- Keep a record of any pedagogy conferences, workshops, or other events that you have attended. Save programs, notes, etc.
- Keep up with professional journals. Several now include sections with innovative teaching strategies specific to your discipline.

Building Your Teaching Dossier

In most cases, your program will maintain your teaching dossier along with your academic file. Contact your program administrator.

- Keep your file up-to-date. Request teaching recommendations from instructors at the end of the semester when the experience is fresh. Do not wait several years until you need the letters to find a job. (The faculty member may be hard to track down or unavailable.)
- When approaching a faculty member or program chair for a teaching recommendation, be specific and explain what aspects of your teaching experience you would like the writer to highlight. Stress that you want a teaching recommendation and not a general academic letter of support.
- Your dossier should reflect the breadth of your experience. Try to include information on your performance with several professors, in various situations, and in
different roles (e.g. as a section leader in a large introductory course, in a lab as a lecturer, or in an upper level course.)

• Letters should be filed directly through your program administrator. Do not attempt to handle them yourself.

• If possible, furnish your department with a written request for distribution of your dossier well in advance of your deadline. Be specific about which materials you would like to see included in anything that they send out.

• Check periodically with your program administrator to ensure that all materials you expect are actually on file. You may need to request something again from an instructor or "referee."

University Prize Instructorships

In some programs, graduate students are encouraged or even expected to teach their own classes during their course of study. Other programs only offer opportunities for TFS to support faculty members. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences now offers its students the chance to develop and teach upper-level courses for undergraduates in their area of interest or specialization through the GSAS University Prize Instructorship program.

GSAS students interested in teaching their own courses submit course proposals to be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary committee. Prize instructorships are awarded on a competitive basis. Details and applications for this teaching prize are posted on the GSAS website in December each year.

Teaching Awards

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences sponsors an annual award ceremony at which an outstanding Teaching Fellow(s) and/or Course Assistant is honored. The TF receives a certificate from the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in recognition of his/her outstanding contribution to undergraduate teaching. GSAS solicits nominations for these awards during the spring semester. Not all departments participate.