



Handbook for Teaching Fellows 2011-2012

Dear Teaching Fellows:

I have often heard it said that a university is a community of scholars. Though that concept is somewhat idealistic, it does guide much of what we do at Brandeis, and when we achieve that community it is of great benefit to all of us. The idea of a community of scholars means that we are all teachers (often of each other); we are all students; and we are all scholars or researchers. As you begin your graduate training at Brandeis, you too will enter this community and develop your skills and knowledge as students here and as scholars and researchers, but also as teachers. I believe that many of you will discover the joy and value of teaching, will constantly try to improve your teaching skills, and will pursue a life-long career to teach others.

By serving as a teaching fellow in various courses at Brandeis, you not only help your professors and fellow students, but you have the opportunity to develop teaching skills and ways of handling the many challenges that come through teaching. It is a serious undertaking to be responsible for helping other students to learn and for dealing with the various issues that come up in classrooms and in evaluation.

This Handbook is designed to assist you as you face these challenges. In addition to the important guidance your professor will give you, it will provide a variety of resources and materials that can help you succeed in the classroom and learn to become an ever better teacher.

It is also important that you take advantage of the extracurricular workshops on teaching offered by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), the Director of University Writing, and the Committee for the Support of Teaching (CST). These are focused, practical workshops on how to lead discussions, react to written work, deal with issues of diversity, grade assignments effectively and fairly, and so on. Each workshop generally lasts only one hour, but each provides an opportunity to learn from experts and ask specific questions. These workshops are not an obligation but an opportunity.

As you hone your teaching skills and savvy, you will also make yourself more competitive when you apply for academic jobs. We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,



Malcolm Watson
Dean of Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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Resources for TFs

Workshops

Each semester the GSAS sponsors several workshops. The format and topics of the sessions vary widely. Some focus on teaching in specific disciplines, some on aspects of your professional development, and some on technology and its applicability to teaching. In addition, The Committee for the Support of Teaching (CST) and the Graduate Student Affairs office will also be sponsoring several teacher training workshops throughout the year. All workshops are announced to students through the GSAS e-newsletter, *Highlights* and also through e-mail. We will also be enrolling Teaching Fellows in a Latte Class where we will be posting articles, useful information, lecture and speaker dates of interest, and--as we develop them--some brown bag lunches to share experiences, ideas, questions, etc.

Library 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. Scheduling research or technology instruction sessions, getting assistance and training with use of the online learning management system LATTE, creating multimedia presentations, and booking technology-enhanced classrooms and media equipment are just a few examples of areas where LTS staff can help you.

If you have questions about LTS services, collections, or resources, make the library services desk in Goldfarb Library your first stop. Visit us on Goldfarb 1 or call x6-4670. More information about the full range of services offered by LTS can be found at: <http://lts.brandeis.edu/>.

Course Reserves at the Library

- Materials being used in your courses can be placed on Reserve making them accessible to all students in the class. Academic Services reports that 12% of students entering Brandeis come from low-income families and book purchasing may be a hardship.
- Submit the list of Reserve materials well before the start of each semester to ensure that processing can be accomplished. You can place reserve requests in person at the Loans & Returns desk, via email to: reserve@brandeis.edu, or by using My E-shelf feature in the LOUIS catalogue.
- Items on physical reserve are located behind the Loans & Returns desk in the Library
- The best practice for articles is to link to an online version and add it to the Course Management system (LATTE). For information on how to provide links to articles see: <http://lts.brandeis.edu/teachlearn/webct/online-articles.html>
- You can find out what items are on reserve for your class by searching for them in the LOUIS Course Reserves Catalog by the course name or instructor's name.
- Most reserve items circulate for 2 hours within the library; videos and CDs circulate for 4 hours within the library. Library owned reserve books can be checked out overnight two hours before closing. This does not include personal copies placed on reserve.
- If you have questions about materials on reserve for your class, contact reserve@brandeis.edu, or call x6-4630.

As a TF, it is possible for you to check during the course of the semester as to how often an item has been checked out. If you suspect that students have been neglectful in consulting materials on reserve, please call x6-4630 and request the report.

English as a Second Language

The English as a Second Language Program provides university funded one-on-one tutorials in writing to undergraduates throughout the academic year. If one of your students, whose first language is other than English, needs help with his/her English proficiency to succeed in your classroom, contact the ESL Program Coordinator, Feruza Aripova, x6-3992 (faripova@brandeis.edu).

Teaching Fellows who find that language problems inhibit their performance should contact the Graduate ESL Program in Rabb 342. Assistance is available to develop fluency and improve pronunciation. Any TF who wishes to discuss cultural aspects of teaching in an American classroom is also welcome. Contact Kimberly Sizelove, Interim Director, ESL Programs, x6-3991 (sizelove@brandeis.edu).

Inside the Classroom

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

Before the Semester Begins

Clarifying expectations—yours, the instructor's, the department's, and the university's—is a prerequisite to entering the classroom. You need to know who is responsible for what and how much of the "what" falls to you. It is, thus, 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's policies and know what to do if and when you encounter academic dishonesty or questionable practices (see Appendix I)
- 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 also need to think about the evaluation you can expect from the professor or department about your performance.

Best Practices

This handbook is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and to take full advantage of the resources available to support your teaching. The document found in Appendix VIII, "Best Practices," provides you and your faculty with guidelines to clarify the relationship between you as a TF to the faculty member with whom you are working, and to the students for whom you are serving as a TF. You are urged to discuss this document with him or her and to refer to it throughout the semester since it defines the relationship between TFs, faculty, and undergraduate students.

Professional Conduct

Open communication is one key to a positive teaching experience, but it is also necessary to 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 can be misconstrued.
- Establish 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 course instructor or your faculty advisor. Strive to be evenhanded and even-tempered in your interactions with all students. Even small, seemingly insignificant actions or gestures can be misconstrued.
- 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 work 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, sex, 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 encourages 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 should advise that person to contact the Associate Vice President of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer. A full copy of the University's policy statement on non-discrimination, academic

honesty, and harassment is available in the "Rights and Responsibilities Handbook." Guidelines for Best Practices, developed by the Committee for the Support of Teaching are listed in Appendix VIII.

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: for confidential advice, to file informal or formal complaints against faculty, TFs, students, administrators or staff, x6-4464.
- Graduate Student Affairs: for confidential advice, filing complaints against students. Call Alwina Bennett, Assistant Provost, x6-3546 (direct line).
- 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 numbers 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.
- For more specific information on creating a bias-free classroom environment, refer to the "Checklist for a Gender-Inclusive Classroom," Appendix V.

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 you should request a copy of the official documentation from Academic Services. Academic Services will specify the accommodations required in each individual case. It is the student's obligation to obtain this letter. (See

Appendix XIV for a copy of the letter); do not make any accommodations without the letter of verification. A letter from a physician or clinic testifying to a student's disability is not an acceptable substitute. Once the student does present such a letter, you must make the specified accommodations. If you have questions, contact Beth Rodgers-Kay, x6-3470. In addition, while teaching, make sure to:

- Separate the person from the disability.
- Recognize the person who is physically challenged or learning disabled has rights, among them is the right to privacy.
- Treat the person with a disability as someone with a full range of skills and abilities.
- Avoid stereotyping persons with disabilities by occupation or attribute.

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 chalkboard.
- 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. You may want to have them fill out index cards with their name, address, phone, academic interest, previous courses, and other pertinent information.
- 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 e-mail? Your departmental mailbox? Your office? Should students call you at home? 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 class 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 of sections 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, who tends to participate, who sits in the front, who comes prepared, and who takes notes. Be aware of any personal interaction among students 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 that allow the student to express their own views and perspective.
- 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.

Motivating Students

Motivating 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 with them.
- 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 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, not lead them.
- Use the blackboard 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 students, 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 put the discussion in a tactful way on a productive tract.
- Rephrase student questions or responses and redirect them back to students.
- 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. (Refer to Appendix IV, "Cultural Variables in the Classroom").
- 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?
- Some "factors of diversity" are easy to recognize. Others are easily hidden. See Appendix IV & VIII for suggestions to help you pick up on subtle differences in backgrounds, learning styles, and personalities of your students.

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

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 information to be presented will spark interest.
- Pay particular attention to the introduction, transitions, and conclusion of your lecture.
- Outline material on the blackboard or in PowerPoint. A photocopy outline of the lecture 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 "Coop 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 just confuse students.
- Try to vary the lecture format a bit. Incorporate questions; give them a chance to interact; distribute handouts.
- Learn to use Power Point. Use slides, films, audio, or videotapes, 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. Videotaping 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 mode 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 class, 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 your 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 course instructor your concerns about fairness and consistency, anxiety regarding suspicions regarding competency to grade or criticize 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, for conveying praise and criticism in a productive manner, and for 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 being given.

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 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 reread one of the first you graded to ensure consistency.
- Try grading tests section by section, reading all students' answers to the same question before proceeding on to the next question.
- Consider grading papers and exams anonymously. Easier said than done, especially with papers submitted via computer, but something you can work out 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 advice that students expect an "A" for merely following your directions.
- Return graded work as quickly as possible. If you can not return a set of assignments on time, let the class know and tell them when to expect their work.
- Never (as in 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 (as in 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 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 unnecessarily 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—these constitute critical feedback. Utilize the technology; Microsoft Word contains easy-to-use tools that allow you to correct papers without having to print them out. Storing commonly used comments by creating a customized grading toolbar that contains shortcut icons for all the tools you might use for grading, and returning papers to students electronically are significant time savers. LTS offers workshops on Electronic Grading to learn how to use these relatively easy computer aids.
- Never comment on the students' work habits, personality, or appearance. Stick to substance.
- Encourage students to write for an educated reader, not a specialized audience (such as this class or this instructor).
- Focus on two or three points. Aim to stimulate the greatest possible improvements for the next assignment. Make specific recommendations.
- Be honest, but as encouraging as possible.
- Be certain that your comments are clear to

and concise. Do not use unfamiliar abbreviations or complicated terms. (Students will be frustrated if they need to consult an encyclopedia or dictionary to understand your criticisms.)

- Unless you plan to discuss papers and exams, return them at the end of the period to avoid disrupting the class.
- LTS offers training in setting up Excel as an aid in calculating, weighing and reporting grades to students. Information is available on-line on the LTS website.

Students always want to have their assignments returned as soon as possible. Since most assignments are fairly narrow, grading exams and papers can be repetitive and boring, but assigning grades is a major responsibility. For further suggestions regarding grading and evaluation, consult Appendix IX, "Evaluating Student Performance: Testing and Grading."

Additional Resources

The Committee for the Support of Teaching is composed of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and administrators. Their website contains extremely useful materials on teaching methodology, discussion groups, and student participation, lecturing, student diversity, testing, how to grade effectively and provide feedback, developing a syllabus, learning activities, materials on working with first year students, etc. The length of this list is daunting, but it gives you a sense of how complex, exciting and rewarding good teaching can be. As you prepare to teach or face challenges in the classroom, take advantage of the 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, about setting priorities, about respecting authorship, and about 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 is responsible for this volume as well as for the adjudication of alleged violations of its contents.
- 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 mindful that academic conventions vary by region of the world, and some students have been exposed to years of practice of locally-legitimate practices that do not pass muster 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 Department of Student Rights and Community Standards for adjudication through the Student Conduct System. You may go to google.com and enter a sentence or two in the 'search' space. Google will pull up several options which you may have to sort through, but this can be an effective option. Appendix I lists websites that can help you to locate the source of a text or an idea that is "too good to be true" for an undergraduate. For further guidance, please

contact Dean Gendron, Director, Student Rights and Community Standards to manage any specific situations that may arise with a student or students in your courses. He can be reached at x6-3543 or gendron@brandeis.edu.

Working closely with the faculty instructor for your course should establish clear guidelines and promote a climate of academic integrity at Brandeis. (See Appendix I) ***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 Student Conduct System.***

Proctoring

Proctoring is intended to inhibit or prevent students from cheating. As a Teaching Fellow you may well be asked to proctor an examination with the professor for whom you are TFinng 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.
- You can personalize booklets in advance so that no one can bring one distributed by you.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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 have any questions before proceeding check: <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/>.

Take the booklet(s) to the faculty instructor, describe what you have seen and why you are suspicious, and leave the matter 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 Brandeis voicemail account from LTS. It is free, allows students easy access to you, and keeps your home 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. Hostile behavior may not be aimed at you. 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 Development 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?

This makes two questions. Can you write an incisive qualified recommendation? That is, do I know the student well? Can I 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:

- 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.

For information on filing a student reference, go to the Hiatt Career Center's site at: www.brandeis.edu/hiatt/facultystaff/credentials.html

Improving Your Teaching

The improvement of one's teaching is a never-ending process. You need feedback as much as do your students, perhaps more so. Feedback can help you to modify and optimize your teaching, 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 stand-alone instructor. 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 here:

<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 reciprocate.
- Carefully observe the styles of gifted teachers. How do they structure their classes? Why are their lectures, labs, 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.

Academic Services

Academic Services includes the following services for undergraduates: Academic Advising, Academic Fellowships Assistance, Brandeis Posse Scholars Program, Brandeis University Group Study, Disabilities Services and Support, Health Professions Advising, International Students and Scholars, Lerman-Neubauer Fellowships, Study

Abroad, 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 difficulty 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.

Students with the last name A-E: Natacha Cesar, ncesar@brandeis.edu

Students with the last name F-K: Katie McFaddin, kmcfaddi@brandeis.edu

Students with the last name L-Q: PJ Dickson, pdickson@brandeis.edu

Students with the last name R-V: Laurie Nelson, lnelson@brandeis.edu

Students with the last name W-Z & International Students: Brian Koslowski, bkoslow@brandeis.edu

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 15 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. Evening drop-in study groups are offered in Usdan 130 in most of these 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 web 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 the Academic Services or you may call x6-3471 to make a referral. SSP 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, the 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 the 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 text books. 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

This office 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. The 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 and scholars at Brandeis University. If you feel a student is struggling with English, please

contact Academic Services or the ESL 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 (around the corner from the UNet Help Desk). For more information, go to:

www.brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter

For information about working for the Writing Center as a consultant, contact the directors at writingcenter@brandeis.edu

Mailman Psychological Counseling Center

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

The Art of Referral

Some undergraduates find TFs less intimidating and perhaps more sympathetic than faculty members. This tendency to view the 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.

The "Quick Chart for Problem Referral" (Appendix III in this handbook), provides a chart of the most common lines of referral. 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.**

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 you, if you know where to look. This section is designed to point you in the right direction.

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 publisher's 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 from other departments, should contact their departmental administrator at the beginning of the semester regarding an assigned office location and hours. There is currently limited office space on campus, and it may be necessary for you to share an office with a colleague. 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 in Gerstenzang 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 based on current or projected

enrollment as well as the educational technology needs as requested by the instructor. 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 in a class, 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 enrollment in a class 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. Please email jdriscol@brandeis.edu with your request.

- To report a problem (heat/AC, seating issues), please contact your dept. administrator
- If you need to use a classroom for events, please contact Conference & Events Services, x6-4300
- For information on what equipment is available in our classrooms or for assistance with AV equipment, contact MTS, x6-4739 or x6-4429 or go to: <http://its.brandeis.edu/teach/learn/multimedia/index.html>
- For a campus map, use the online map
- For information on what equipment is available in our cluster classrooms, go to: <http://its.brandeis.edu/teachlearn/spaces/>
- To report a safety emergency, contact Public Safety, x6-3333
- If you are locked out of your classroom, contact Facilities, x6-8500
- 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. In the event that there is no chalk or erasers 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 (Appendix II) 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 using either the registration system on sage or by following the appropriate manual registration process. An instructor may not add or drop students from a class.

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.

Signature/Consent Codes

Instructor signature codes are needed by students to add classes that are controlled by instructor permission or to override a numeric limit, as well as to allow students to drop a class in accordance to the drop policy. Codes and the details of the drop policy can be obtained by the instructor by logging into sage.

Class Lists and Student Photos

- The primary instructor of a class has access to class lists and student photos for that class by logging into LATTE. Department Administrators do not have access to this information at this time.
- The class lists in LATTE should NOT be considered the official registration record of the class. For official enrollment numbers and the class roster, please use sage. The sage system is the authoritative source for student records.

Waitlists

During early registration for the following 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 may be added or instructors may be asked to increase the capacity of the class.

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.

The preliminary final exam schedule is posted on the Registrar's website a year in advance. Generally final exams assignments are based on the class time block. Classes that fall outside the block system are assigned to an exam period that

corresponds to the closest class block.

Since instructors are not required to give a final exam during Finals Week, early each semester the Office of the Registrar ascertains whether an instructor is planning a final exam via the Final Exam Planning page. In addition this page provides a mechanism for instructors to request exam proctors, examination or blue books, classroom preference and equipment needs.

After this information is analyzed the Office of the University Registrar will post the Final Exam Schedule on its website and notify both students and instructors of its availability.

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. Make-up exams may be given either during Conflict Resolution which is scheduled in the last exam period during Finals Week or during the make-up exam period at the beginning of the subsequent semester. Legitimate reasons for being permitted an excused absence from a final examination include illness and family emergencies. Students are expected to remain on campus for all their exams; thus missing an exam due to making premature travel plans is 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. In such cases, the student will be notified and informed which exam is being rescheduled to Conflict Resolution. 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 either Conflict Resolution or the subsequent make-up exam period, 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, such as a professional conference, prevents an instructor from attending a final exam, s/he should plan to have either their teaching fellow proctor the exam or make arrangements with a colleague to fill in.

Some students will have special exam accommodations 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 the Disability Services, a division of Academic Services.

Final examinations must be **retained by the instructor for six months**. Do not return blue books to students for any reason before this deadline.

Grading

- Midterm and final grades are submitted via 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/March.
- 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 for due dates for all grades.

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 all 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 either in your classes.
- The University now administers end-of-semester TF evaluations.
- Video taping a class is an effective way to demonstrate your teaching abilities to a prospective employer. A free video taping 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.
- Review course evaluations. Ask that copies of any outstanding evaluations be put in your file.
- Be efficient and organized.
- 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 that 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."
- Keep all end-of-semester TF evaluations you students have filled out (they will be returned to you by the beginning of the subsequent semester). You may incorporate them in your Teaching Dossier.

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 GSAS students the chance to develop and teach upper-level courses 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 distributed by the GSAS in January each year.

Teaching Awards

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences sponsors an annual award ceremony at which an outstanding Teaching Fellow(s) is honored. The TF receives a certificate from the Dean 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.

Teaching at Other Colleges and Universities

Teaching positions at nearby colleges and universities are often available to advanced graduate students. Copies of evaluations, letters of recommendation from colleagues at other institutions, and other supporting materials can all be added to your teaching dossier.