

GEOGRAPHY TEACHING ASSISTANT STATEMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

31 July 2025¹

All Geography Graduate Teaching Assistants are responsible for understanding and abiding by the regulations and procedures outlined in this document.

1) Office Staff:

The Geography Department Manager (DM) is Manny Williams Fuentes (POT 817). Manny has many responsibilities but is not in charge of TA-related work issues so do not seek his assistance regarding your work as a TA until you have consulted with the Primary Instructor of the course to which you are assigned, a fellow TA, your Faculty FTAMP Mentor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or Chair. The DM is the right person to contact about getting paid and other questions regarding getting set up in the system.

The GIS Program Coordinator is Jeff Levy (Miller basement). Jeff is responsible for maintaining the teaching labs in Young Library as well as the labs in Miller basement. Contact Jeff to get support for teaching in Young Library or for accessing the labs in Miller basement. He is also the primary contact to gain access to ArcGIS Pro or ERDAS Imagine software.

2) Contracts and Responsibilities:

TA Contract Periods:

For Fall: 27 Jul 2025 to 13 Dec 2025

For Spring: 14 Dec 2025 to 2 May 2026

Please note that each semester includes 10 pay periods. If payroll paperwork is not completed by the beginning of the contract period, pay will be distributed across the remaining pay periods. Contact the DM for information about pay periods. In Spring semester, your TA position will not become inactive until around a week after grades are due, to allow time to submit grades.

Supervisor and Primary Instructor: The Chair of the Department is the official supervisor for all teaching assistantships while the DGS oversees issues involving TAing and students' own course work and degree requirements. Students working as graders (Type 4 TAs) or recitation leaders (Type 3 TAs) will work with a Primary Instructor (a faculty member) who is responsible for day to day supervision related to the specific course tasks. If you are the Primary Instructor for a course (Type 1 TA) be sure to consult with the Chair (1) confirm the key things that must be in your syllabus (Title IV assignment, UK Core assignment, etc.) (2) and pedagogy resources.

Workload: TAs and RAs are first and foremost full-time graduate students. You will be assigned responsibilities requiring no more than 50 percent of your time/not more than 20 hours per week, with an understanding that you might work less than this average some weeks. TA responsibilities include class preparation, classroom and laboratory teaching,

¹ This document supersedes all previous versions and is subject to change.

grading assignments, email correspondence, Primary Instructor and student meetings, etc. (Please see <https://regs.uky.edu/administrative-regulation/ar-52> for more information).

TAs and RAs are advised to keep a weekly log of the hours spent working on various tasks. If at any point you find that you are working significantly more than stipulated in the aforementioned regulation, please talk with your Primary Instructor and/or the DGS or Chair ASAP so that we can resolve the situation and ensure that your employment situation is equitable and efficient.

Remember your obligation to the course and Primary Instructor ends when final grades are turned in, NOT the end of instruction.

Availability and Schedule: Please inform your Primary Instructor of any days/times during the week when you are not available for any TA-related matters because of your own schedule related to graduate seminars, proposals, Qualifying Exams, etc. (i.e. a day of the week when you are not in lecture, recitation, or office hours, and that you reserve for working only on matters related to your status as a graduate student). TAs and faculty should communicate with each other well before the end of the semester on the process for finalizing grades, including expectations for in-person availability for grading. TAs should not assume that remote participation is possible without discussion with the faculty. Any concerns or issues about this should be discussed with the Chair and/or DGS.

Students facing any circumstances affecting their ability to perform their duties as a teaching assistant such as meeting deadlines, attending lectures or leading recitation sections should contact their Primary Instructor, the DGS and Chair as soon as possible.

Role of Teaching Assistant. The role of TAs will vary in terms of pedagogy and producing course content. If you have any concerns about your position, especially as you develop expertise about what is and is not working during recitations, be sure to contact your Primary Instructor, the DGS or Chair ASAP.

3) Copying and printing:

Please consult with the Primary Instructor on the need to duplicate any course-related materials, including exams, student papers or other assignments, especially in large quantities. You will need to setup access to the departmental copy machine in POT814, using your Wildcat Card. You should not use this access for printing or copying your own personal materials (including for your own classes). It is not appropriate for Primary Instructors to expect or ask TAs to use their personal printers to print any course-related materials, unless a TA agrees to do so. Be sure to make explicit arrangements with your Primary Instructor at the start of each semester, keeping documentation thereof.

4) Scheduling Make-up Exams and Other Student Events:

It is your responsibility to schedule necessary DRC testing, makeup exams, video screenings, etc. for students in concert with the Primary Instructor. This includes reserving departmental spaces (e.g., the conference room) for test taking. You should establish a policy for this with

the Primary Instructor at the beginning of the semester. Please ask the DM for assistance in confirming room availability.

5) Student Privacy and FERPA:

The University, College of A&S, Graduate School, and Geography Department take student privacy and the protection of education records very seriously. It is your responsibility as a TA to ensure that you understand and comply with all aspects of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). You must review FERPA regulations (<https://registrar.uky.edu/ferpa>). Some general guidelines:

- If you have any questions about complying with FERPA (including the use of shared TA offices in relation to student assignments) please consult the Primary Instructor, the Chair or DGS before responding or providing information about students' in-class work, assignments, attendance, etc.
- Do not provide any information on students to anyone who contacts you including whether a student is enrolled in a class (see limited exceptions below). **This absolutely includes any family members, friends, or other faculty.** Parents are the most likely people to request this kind of information but being parents of a student and paying tuition does NOT give them access under FERPA. Send these inquiries to the Chair or DGS who will advise.
- If you are a TA for a Primary Instructor always forward requests for information on student grades or overall performance to the Primary Instructor.
- Avoid discussing grades or student work in detail via email (including with UKY staff in Athletics or other departments where students have signed a disclosure waiver).
- Do not leave students' assignments (graded or not) outside of your office, or post students' grades using first or last names or Student ID#s as an identifying marker.

Limited Exceptions (You should consult with the Chair or DGS before sharing any information):

- If you receive a request for information about students' performance in class (for example from someone in Athletics who is monitoring student academic status, or other similar university staff) be sure to clarify that the student has signed the necessary waiver of disclosure (such as a Release of Academic Information) before you share any specific information.
- If students sign a disclosure waiver with one unit on campus you can only share information with them, not any other University units or individuals, until you obtain proof of specific signed waivers.
- In order to share information with parents of the student they must provide you with a signed waiver of disclosure (such as a Release of Academic Information) from the student. Being parents and paying tuition does NOT give them access under FERPA.

You must also ensure that students have privacy during office hours. However, do not close your office door. Instead, make sure that no one is hovering outside your doorway and/or leave the door at least halfway open. You may also discuss other room availability with the DM.

6) Title IX – Student Protection Against Sex Discrimination

As a teaching assistant you are a mandated reporter and if a student reports sexual harassment, discrimination or assault, you are required to report it to the university's Title IX office (located on the 18th floor of POT, <https://oeo.uky.edu/key-priorities/title-ix-compliance>). You can make a report via an online form or contact the Director of the Title IX office (Sarah Mudd, (859) 257-8927, EqualOpportunity@uky.edu).

Relevant University Regulations

Discrimination and Harassment AR 6.1 - <https://regs.uky.edu/administrative-regulation/ar-61>
Sexual Assault - <https://regs.uky.edu/administrative-regulation/ar-62>

7) The Syllabus is a Contract

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with all University Senate and Ombudsman policies regarding course syllabi. Please see <https://provost.uky.edu/instructor-resources>.

A copy of your final syllabus must be emailed to the DM.

8) Student, Faculty, and TA Classroom Decorum:

Regardless of whether you are a Primary Instructor or an assistant to one, it is your responsibility to set the tone for respectful and civil discussion in ways that encourage and teach students to express their diverse opinions without judgments or offending others. The range of challenges in doing so is vast and beyond the scope of this document. If you have any concerns about how students are treating one another and/or treating you in the classroom or office hours, and you are unsure how to address the situation, please contact the Primary Instructor, Chair or DGS (avoid including student-specific details in email correspondence). You should also familiarize yourself with anti-discrimination laws relevant to education, including University and Departmental Diversity statements, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (see above).

9) Academic Integrity:

All University instructors are required to follow university policy regarding academic offenses. Should you encounter an academic offense or suspected offense, be sure to talk with the Primary Instructor, Chair or DGS immediately prior to grading the assignment, prior to contacting the student, and prior to posting a grade. The Department Chair is responsible for determining whether or not there is sufficient evidence to pursue the case, contacting the student, and proceeding according to university policy from there.

Some indicators of plagiarism include differences in sentence structure and writing style within the same assignment (or between assignments), different font styles and colors, ambiguity or inconsistency between sources cited and those in the bibliography, use of generative AI or other forms of automation, etc. You should also be aware of websites that provide students with pre-written essays for a fee.

The Academic Ombud provides a checklist for determining if an academic offense has occurred: <https://ombud.uky.edu/faculty/academic-offense-procedures>. It can be useful to make this link available on syllabi, assignment handouts, and Canvas. If you are not the

Primary Instructor talk with students about using class time in the first week and when discussing the first assignment to show them the document and discuss its primary points.

10) Academic Ombud, Office of The Provost, and Dean of Students:

Academic Offense Procedures: <https://ombud.uky.edu/faculty/academic-offense-procedures>

Syllabus Guidance: <https://provost.uky.edu/instructor-resources>

Support and Resources: <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/dean-students/faculty-and-staff-resources/support-faculty-and-staff>

11) TA Evaluation and Mentoring:

FTAMP: The Department of Geography Faculty Teaching Assistant Mentoring Program (FTAMP) provides assistance and feedback/support for Teaching Assistants to improve their classroom performance/techniques and, by so doing, improve the learning experience for undergraduates. Teaching assistants in their first semester of teaching will have two observations. Teaching assistants beyond the first semester will have one classroom observation, plus be entitled to one (additional) optional classroom observation at their request. The first observation and evaluation should be completed before the middle of the semester and second observation by the end of classes. The Department may conduct additional observations of teaching assistants if it is deemed necessary by the Chair.

The observation will be done by FTAMP mentors: departmental faculty members assigned by the Chair. These assignments change each semester. FTAMP mentors will conduct classroom observations, write up a report of their findings (using the departments FTAMP observation form) and hold a private follow-up meeting with the teaching assistant. This meeting is to discuss any issues arising from the mentor's observation (his/her strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to enhance in-class content, delivery, and undergraduate learning experiences etc.) and any additional concerns on which the TA might wish advice. After the meeting both the TA and FTAMP mentor sign the observation form and it is turned into the DM.

FTAMP mentors should be available through the semester for on-going consultation and troubleshooting regarding any issues the TA encounters in their work.

Departmental Resources: Teaching assistants have several other resources within the department, namely the Primary Instructor for the course, other faculty who have taught the same course, and their advisor. Any problems that arise for teaching assistants are best dealt with earlier rather than later.

12) GEO 741 Requirement

GEO 741 is required for (1) all Geography PhD students, and (2) all Geography M.A. students working as teaching assistants. In order to build teaching skills for their time at UK, students should take GEO 741 their first semester. GEO 741 will fulfill grad school / SACS requirements for TA training. With advisor/DGS approval students can substitute another course to meet this requirement, e.g., EPE 672 College Teaching and Learning (3 credit

hours) or GS 699 Practicum in College Teaching (3 credit hours) or adjust the timing for taking GEO 741.

13) Important Websites

Note: University policies are dynamic and subject to change and so you should consult with the Chair or DGS to ensure that you are operating with correct and up-to-date information.

Key Policies on Teaching and Research Assistantships

UKY Graduate School Policies on Assistantships on <http://gradschool.uky.edu/assistantships>

Resources for Teaching Assistants

Note: this is a non-comprehensive list.

UKY Academic Calendars <https://registrar.uky.edu/calendars>

UKY Center for the Enhancement of learning and Teaching (CELT) <https://celt.uky.edu> (be sure to join the listserv for workshop and other resource/event announcements)

UKY Learning Management Systems <http://www.uky.edu/canvas/>

UKY Academic and Behavioral Alerts <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/academic-advising/faculty-resources>

UKY Office of Equal Opportunity <https://oeo.uky.edu/>

UKY Disability Resource Center (DRC): <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/disability-resource-center>

UKY Martin Luther King Center: <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/martin-luther-king-center>

UKY Office of LGBTQ* Resources: <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/lgbtq-resources>

UKY Violence Intervention and Prevention Center (VIP): <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/vip-center>

UKY Center for English as a Second Language (ESL): <https://esl.as.uky.edu/>

UKY Counseling Center: <https://studentsuccess.uky.edu/counseling-center>

UKY Office of Academic Ombud Services: <https://ombud.uky.edu/>

Student Support for TCE Process: <https://eval.uky.edu/>