



TA Training CoP: TA Attendance



Session Workbook Slides

Nov 2024



Your Questions

What do you want to know about TA participation/engagement?
What challenges would like to be able to address?

Low attendance and we don't want to use giftcards as incentives-it didn;t seem to make much of an impact when we tried it

Low TA attendance in sessions - we have the majority of TAs signing up for sessions, but many don't attend. This creates some tension when we have people that have spent time creating and facilitating workshops/panels

Low attendance, even with free food

Improving faculty engagement (both encouraging their students to attend and participating in teaching development)

Schedule conflicts with research and workshops, how do we find out schedules ahead of time esp with research schedules

Schedule conflicts with other teaching duties (TAs and Faculty)



TA Lack of Attendance reasons?

Reasons New TAs do not attend TA Training?
Example: Pressure to not spend time away from their research (pressure from supervisors)
Lack of interest in teaching
Conflicts with lab meetings, classes, and research
Don't know what they don't know - not clear how the content will apply to their role
Lack of interest in any of the work
May have overload of training opportunities
Type of duties assigned
Reasons Returning TAs do not attend TA Training?
Examples: Repeated sessions (sessions offered are exactly the same as what they attended in previous years)
Feels they don't need the training again
Think they know all the material already
May be interested in getting more hands on experience teaching rather than more training (lack of progression within the program & within in the TA role)
Teaching not always valued by their faculty/supervisors
Lack of community in the department

Your RSVP

Attending

Maybe Attending

Not Attending

Why would TAs attend?

Reasons New TAs <u>Would</u> attend?
Required
Actual interest in the work
Relevance to assigned TA duties (type of work - labs, marking, invigilation, etc)
Paid time
Encouragement from supervisors
Reasons Returning TAs Would attend?
Paid time
Free food, gift cards - sometimes :)
Career development - building teaching portfolio
Want to share/give back to newer TAs
Provide feedback from previous sessions
Better chances for teaching award nominations/applications
Interested in gaining hands on experience teaching



Here are some Strategies Coordinators Identified in the past for **boosting TA Attendance**

- **Pre-survey** (Align LOs with TA needs)
- **Timing** (When to offer what workshop)
- **Scheduling** (TA availabilities)
- **Make Training Mandatory**
- **Name of the TA Training Program:** Should it be TA Training?
- **Motivation for learning**
- **Peer Motivation** (Connect TAs)
- **Food**
- **A "venting session":**
- **Feedback** (From TAs)
- **Letter of recognition**
- **Sense of Community** (of TAs)
- **Drawing on Returning TA's expertise in Training**
- Being strategic about **who sends the invite** to the sessions

Anything to Add?

- Have a yearly calendar for training and distribute to TAs in advance



Strategies to boost attendance

GROUP 1			
Strategy to boost attendance	Why/how would these help (new and/or returning TAs) - online or f2f?	What suggestions would you have to make this an impactful motivator? (i.e: Best way to do this;best time to do this, how to do this, etc)	You will be working on slide #7 for this column. Wait for Instructions
Pick 3 strategies you are interested in trying - write below			What challenges (if any) may be involved?/ Why they may not work? How can you address the challenge?
1. Faculty buy in	-reminder to attend -reinforce culture of teaching by sharing with faculty and prompting an opportunity to talk about teaching Give faculty awareness of training so they can add the hours to the allocation of hours agreement	-Clear communication with faculty-giving them time/notice -present at a faculty retreat with benefits of the training (how it will be beneficial for faculty) -a live presentation more effective than email messages	Time & scheduling - survey for potential times that work for them, awareness of grant deadlines Lack of interest - survey Faculty of what they are interested in participating in with the TA Perception that this isn't part of their job - leadership needs to address this with faculty and communicate its importance
2. Letter of recognition	-Extrinsic motivator to build out skills and evidence of skills -a line for the CV	-rather than a letter per workshop, have a tiered system with more recognition and opportunities for people who do more	New senate process for developing this system - familiarizing with the current senate process Time and resources needed to create the letter of recognition program - hiring additional staff/student worker, a clear template to work off on Lack of interest in letter - different letters for different level of achievement/peer competitiveness, communicate benefits for receiving this letter (jobs/awards)
3. Feedback survey in addition to pre survey	It would help us get a senses of impact of the training and adjust training for the following year	Could collect feedback in person in an event Celebrating TAs hip near the end of the term - focus group format (ask about TA successes and challenges)	Getting them to complete it - offer gift card (as a draw) Being over surveyed - try to minimize number of surveys by combining



Strategies to boost attendance

GROUP 2

GROUP 2			
Strategy to boost attendance Pick 3 strategies you are interested in trying - write below	Why would these help (new and/or returning TAs)-online or f2f?	What suggestions would you have to make this an impactful motivator? (i.e: Best way to do this;best time to do this, how to do this, etc)	You will be working on slide #6 for this column. Wait for Instructions What challenges (if any) may be involved?/ Why they may not work? How can you address the challenge?
1. Food - home baking/cooking	Establish a connection - shows care Most students are away from home and appreciates the above and beyond effort	Say it in the invitation (home baking will be provided)	-allergies/dietary restrictions and liability -cost
2. Pre-survey	Align offerings with the tasks and interests/needs, times/schedules	Relevance to needs	-timing - need to capture new TAs (who might not know what they need) and feedback from experienced TAs -survey completion (can build this within the session)
3. Scheduling	They trained closer to when the task is required	Ensure that timing of offerings matches with when the duties occur	-many different programs with different schedules -

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