

The Institute has recently decided that the scholarship given to Master's students will be treated as teaching assistantship and the TA's are supposed to work for eight hours per week on an average to earn their stipend of Rs. 1800 (likely to be revised upwards soon). In this document, I try to put into writing many of the unwritten laws in the department about teaching assistantship and introduce some new guidelines. The goal of the document is to bring clarity to our thinking as well as to provide transparency to students about our policies.

1. Which category of students can be allocated TA duties?

The various categories of students who pursue M. Tech in IIT Bombay are:

- (a) Regular (paid a stipend of Rs. 1800)
- (b) Sponsored
- (c) Self-Financed
- (d) QIP
- (e) 3 year RA
- (f) 1.5 year PA

The regular students are to be allocated TA duties. The institute has now linked scholarship to teaching assistantship. Therefore it is important not to allocate TA duties to students who are not paid scholarship. Most students who join the institute in the other categories are not told at any point of time before joining the institute that they will have to be teaching assistants. Therefore it is not fair to allocate duties after they join. If at all we decide to include more categories, we will have to explicitly spell this out in the brochure.

There has been an instance of a student refusing TA ship and preferring to be a self financed student. Clearly, it would be unfair to ask that student to also be a TA.

2. How many hours should a TA work?

On an average the TA should work for eight hours per week. Obviously there are peaks and troughs in duties and faculty should aim to keep the average load at 8 hours a week. A work schedule maintained by the TA and signed and approved by faculty will help ensure this average. See later for details.

In particular, the Aero department defers payment of scholarship if the work done during a month is less than average and pays it later when the work is compensated. We should aim to keep the average steady over a semester rather than over a month. Therefore, scholarship should not be cut or deferred in case the work done during some month is not upto the average.

3. What are the set of duties a TA can be asked to perform?

- (a) Attending Classes: If the TA is asked to attend classes by the instructor, then attending one hour of class accounts for one hour of TA.
- (b) Teaching a class: A TA should be asked to teach a class only in exceptional circumstances where the faculty member can not take the class. No more than 6 classes should be taught by a TA in one semester.

This is to protect against having a large portion of a course taught by a TA

- (c) Conducting Tutorials
- (d) Help students with difficulties: TA's could have regular office hours of at most two hours a week during which doubts about the course can be directed to the TA.

This is to prevent TA's claiming to have helped students for eight hours a week.

- (e) Grading answer books, assignments and conducting vivas
- (f) Maintaining software and hardware and information related to academic activities in the department
- (g) Porting, testing, developing or installing software related to course or lab.

Student's own research work (for thesis) or research with a faculty in his lab does not count in TA-ship hours.

4. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that a TA works for the stipulated time? The concerned faculty member. It is imperative that a faculty ensures that a TA does work on an average between six and ten hours a week. Deviations beyond this are undesirable. Unless the work is between ten to twelve hours a week, it is possible to find the optimum number of TA's so that the load on the TA's is balanced. In the case the load is between ten and twelve, half a TA can be assigned to a course.

5. What does a TA do if he or she is overworked? The DPGC will serve as a forum of appeal in case a TA feels he or she is being overworked. The student representative in the DPGC can put up the item in the DPGC.

6. How does a faculty member keep track of number of hours spent by a TA?

The TA is expected to maintain a work sheet whose format is predesigned. The TA records his/her activity each week. The faculty member signs this worksheet once each month approving of the number of hours put in that month. A form approving the work done is satisfactory is currently signed. In addition, the worksheet can be signed.

As said earlier the average may vary quite a bit from month to month but the faculty should ensure the average over the semester is maintained

7. When are TA's assigned for a course The TA's should be assigned in November and May for their second and third semester duties. The first semester students are assigned in July.

8. Who allocates TA's The PG faculty advisors and the time table coordinators assign TA's.

9. Do TA's work in the vacations also Yes, provided their work in the vacations is also counted towards the total work done in the next semester.

Some labs like the software and the research labs may benefit from having TA's throughout the year. Some courses may also benefit if the TA's could prepare early.

10. What are the norms for allocating TA's to courses The TA's should be assigned in the following order of priority:

- (a) CS 101 (One per twenty students plus 2-3 to coordinate)
- (b) UG Labs (One per twenty students for a three credit lab)
- (c) UG Courses (One per forty students)
- (d) PG Lab (One per twenty students)
- (e) PG Courses (One per forty students)
- (f) S/W lab (Three to Four including CS101 Lab)
- (g) Research Labs (One per lab)
- (h) Other Professional Activities of the department (based on demand and supply)

To determine the number of TA's to be assigned to a course, one calculates the number (a rational number) eligible based on the registration and then combines it with any labs associated with the course. The final figure is rounded up or down depending on the discretion of the TA Allotment committee based on the prevailing circumstances.

The determination of the person to be allotted to a particular duty will be based on the following inputs in decreasing order of priority:

- (a) Student preferences: Every student gives a prioritised list of duties he/she would like to perform. If there are duties not in the prioritised list it is assumed that they are of the lowest priority and the student has no particular preferences between them.
- (b) Faculty preferences: Every faculty gives a prioritised list of students for each duty they oversee. If there are students not in the prioritised list it is assumed that they are of the lowest priority and the faculty has no particular preferences between them.

In practice, the above lists will be partial. The TA allocation committee based on the following information can extend it to a complete list.

- (a) A student is assigned to a guide if possible
- (b) A student is assigned to a duty he/she is better equipped to be a TA for (equipped is defined by the concerned faculty in terms of what knowledge/skills he/she expects the student to possess)

These lists can then be used to come up with a assignment that is satisfactory.