

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY LEARNING ASSISTANT GUIDELINES**  
**PREPARED BY OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND THE TLPDC**

**DATE:** February 5, 2021

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of these guidelines are to define the responsibilities and procedural guidelines for undergraduate students who serve as Learning Assistants (LAs) at Texas Tech University.

**1. Definition**

LAs are undergraduate students who, through the guidance of preparation sessions and conversations about pedagogy, as well as direction from the instructor of record, facilitate discussions and problem solving among groups of students in a variety of classroom settings to encourage active engagement.

**2. Role**

a. The LA (LA) role is to work with the instructor of record to transform courses by creating environments in which students can interact with one another, engage in collaborative problem solving, articulate and defend their ideas, and explicitly discuss aspects of the nature of teaching and learning within their specific disciplines. In other words, LAs work to elicit student thinking and helping each student participate in developing a shared understanding of course material.

LAs make an important contribution to the teaching mission of the university as they have a natural understanding of the needs and perspectives of other students, can provide feedback and insight into course design, and can promote interaction and engagement in the classroom community.

b. Administrative responsibility for the LA is with the instructor of record.

**3. Qualifications**

a. Every LA should be a student in good academic standing with the university and should have successfully taken and passed the course in which they will serve as an LA. Instructors of record may choose to require that students obtained an A or B in the course previously.

**3. Affirmative Action**

All selections of LAs shall be on the basis of qualifications, suitability, and student status without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, national origin, or Vietnam veteran status and in keeping with the laws and regulations of the state of Texas and the Board of Regents.

## 5. Duties

a. Duties may include a range of assignments from supporting students in various aspects of a course; including lecture, recitation, laboratories, office hours, and/or open help sessions, collaborating in weekly pedagogy meetings with faculty and instructional team members, and preparing independently for student interactions. LAs may be utilized in any class setting including face-to-face, remote, or hybrid environments. The exact duties will be defined by the instructor of the record but LAs will never be responsible for or participate in grading students including grading homework assignments, in-class assignments, tests, essays, or any other type of assessment.

## 6. Employment Status

a. It is recommended that LAs are employees of Texas Tech University. Ideally, it is recommended that departments arrange for LAs to receive course credit for their participation. This can be a sustainable option for including LAs. Regardless of their employment status, all LAs must complete FERPA training through the Office of the TTU Registrar (see 11.c. below).

b. All student employee appointments are considered temporary appointments and are not currently eligible for participation in the regular employee benefit programs made available to regular employees. Social Security and Workers' Compensation insurance benefits are provided to all student employees.

## 7. Rights and Responsibilities

a. Student employees are defined in OP 70.11, Appointment of Staff Employees, as follows: An employee performing part-time work incidental to his or her academic training in an occupational category that requires all incumbents to be students as a condition of employment. Accordingly, the first priority of all LAs should be satisfactory progress in their academic programs.

b. The LA is responsible for becoming familiar with course material as provided by the instructor of record. Other material that may be helpful includes: General academic procedures, published or online, in such documents as the *University Catalog*, the *Faculty Handbook*, and the *Student Handbook*. The university's *Operating Policy and Procedure Manual* may be accessed online at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual>.

c. In situations where LAs think that they have a legitimate grievance regarding any aspect of their service duties, they have a right to exhaust all proper channels in resolving the complaint. In order, these channels are the immediate instructor of record/supervisor, the Director of the STEP LA Program in the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center, the department chair, and the dean of the academic college.

## 10. Enrollment

- a. Each LA is expected to be making steady progress toward the completion of an undergraduate degree and be in good academic standing. Certain levels of enrollment are, therefore, mandatory. Students must be enrolled full time (at least 12 hours in each regular fall or spring semester to be eligible to become an LA.
- b. It is the responsibility of the LA's major department to see that the terms of the enrollment policy are carried out.

## **11. Orientation and Training**

- a. All new LAs will participate in an orientation session that may be facilitated by the instructor of record and/or the STEP LA Program through the Teaching, and Professional Development Center before beginning work. This orientation should include an overview of LA responsibilities and expectations as well as any relevant information about facilities and university policies.
- b. In addition, LAs will participate in weekly training sessions with the instructor of record to prepare for their participation in the class.
- c. If the instructor of record utilizes Blackboard as a course supplement or delivery mechanism and desires LA access to course materials, the instructor of record must contact the STEP LA Program through the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center before eLearning will grant access to Blackboard. LAs will not have access to student data, only to course materials.