

Kyoto University
Teaching Assistant (TA)
Handbook

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Introduction

In the Teaching Assistant (TA) system, talented students in the Kyoto University graduate schools engage in educational support tasks in lecture, laboratory, seminar, and practical training classes under the principle of providing educational accommodations for students in undergraduate and Master's degree programs. The overall aims of the TA system are to offer graduate students opportunities for teaching skills training, furnish them with financial support for learning, and thereby enhance education at Kyoto University.

This Teaching Assistant (TA) Handbook covers the various work-related responsibilities and obligations that you need to be aware of as you undertake educational activities as a TA, a member of the university's teaching staff. Please read through this handbook carefully and pursue your duties with a full understanding of its content.

A TA is expected to be a partner to the class instructor, a sympathetic supporter of students, and a conduit for communication between the instructor and students. Sometimes TAs need to put themselves in the students' shoes and respond to their learning needs; at other times they need to adopt the viewpoint of the instructor and think about what kind of assistance they can provide in order to improve the class; occasionally they also need to play the role of an observer, and critically analyze the instructor's approach to the class.

The knowledge and skills that you acquire as a TA will prove useful not only if you are aspiring to become a researcher or university faculty member, but also if you wish to pursue a career in business, public service, or other professions.

We hope that playing a part in the educational activities of Kyoto University as a TA will prove to be an elevating experience for you personally, as well as contributing to the advancement and enrichment of the university's education.

January 27, 2021

Educational Systems Committee

Office of GST Promotion

Note: The Office of GST Promotion is a body that promotes GST (Graduate Student Training) under the direction of the Executive Vice-President for Education. It aims to assure the quality of TAs at Kyoto University through university-wide education and training and to support the career development of graduate students themselves.

Contents

1. Education at Kyoto University	1
(1) Kyoto University’s mission	1
(2) Kyoto University’s educational mission	1
2. Examples of TA Work	1
3. Types of Work that TAs Cannot Do.....	2
4. Attitude Towards Work as a TA.....	2
(1) Self-awareness as an educator	2
(2) Career development.....	2
(3) Class preparation	3
5. Points to Note when Working as a TA.....	3
(1) Compliance with employment regulations	3
(2) Management of work attendance.....	3
(3) Health and safety training sessions when assisting in seminar or laboratory classes	3
(4) Handling of students’ personal information.....	3
(5) Harassment prevention	5
(6) Accessibility measures.....	7
(7) Safety and health	8
(8) Enrollment in Liability Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (Gakkenbai)	8
(9) Handling of classes and exams in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency	8
6. TA Appointment Process ⁹	
7. Payment of TA Salary.....	9
8. References.....	9

1. Education at Kyoto University

To be appointed a TA means to be responsible for part of the education conducted at Kyoto University. Firstly, therefore, it is important to understand the university's mission and educational mission which underpin its education.

(1) Kyoto University's mission

Kyoto University states its mission "to sustain and develop its historical commitment to academic freedom and to pursue harmonious coexistence within the human and ecological community on this planet." (from the preamble to the Mission Statement)

(2) Kyoto University's educational mission

Kyoto University has established the following two points as the basis of its educational mission.

- Within its broad and varied educational structure, Kyoto University will transmit high-quality knowledge and promote independent and interactive learning.
- Kyoto University will educate outstanding and humane researchers and specialists, who will contribute responsibly to the world's human and ecological community.

2. Examples of TA Work

TAs assist in lecture, seminar, and laboratory classes under the supervision and direction of the class instructor. TA work can be divided broadly into activities related to preparation for the smooth operation of classes, and activities related to support for in-class teaching and learning activities. Specific duties may include:

- (1) Providing learning advice and consultations
- (2) Chairing debates (including facilitating discussion)
- (3) Helping to lead off-campus excursions
- (4) Collecting and collating exam papers, reports, assignments, etc.
- (5) Assisting with the grading of exams, reports, assignments, etc.

*TAs may provide assistance in grading exams, reports, assignments, etc. on the precondition that the instructor will conduct a final check and be responsible for the final grades awarded (assistance may include such tasks as simple grading where the standards are clearly provided by the instructor, checking of collated grades, and checking of answer papers and reports).

- (6) Assisting with the supervision of final exams

*TAs may be involved in supervision under the direction of the class instructor and in accordance with

the procedures prescribed by the faculty/graduate school.

- (7) Preparing and operating teaching equipment and devices
- (8) Checking and recording student attendances and absences

*TAs may manage the attendance book related to grading. However, the class instructor is to perform the actual grading of student attendance.

- (9) Printing and distributing handouts
- (10) Assisting in the preparation of teaching materials and the production of handouts
- (11) Securing a health environment
- (12) Other forms of assistance in class

*The above are examples of typical TA work. Actual duties vary from instructor to instructor and across different faculties and graduate schools, so please be sure to confirm your duties with the class instructor.

3. Types of Work that TAs Cannot Do

- (1) Academic grading (evaluating student performance, managing academic grades, recording marks, grading exams, reports, assignments, etc.)

*TAs may provide assistance in grading exams, reports, assignments, etc. on the precondition that the instructor will conduct a final check and be responsible for the final grades awarded.

- (2) Teaching as a substitute when the class instructor is absent
- (3) Duties not associated with the class (clerical work for academic conferences, research assistance, maintenance of web pages unconnected with the class, etc.)
- (4) Collecting personal information from students, except where directed by the class instructor

*The above are examples; if you are unsure, please consult with your graduate school office.

4. Attitude Towards Work as a TA

- (1) Self-awareness as an educator

TAs are graduate students, but they participate in classes from a “teaching” standpoint. Please be aware that the undergraduate students who are “learning” in the class view you as a member of university staff, and conduct yourself responsibly.

- (2) Career development

TA work is expected to contribute to TAs’ self-development. It also provides experience that is valuable in planning your future career. Please apply yourself to your work with a view to making the most of this opportunity to gain meaningful experience.

(3) Class preparation

As well as confirming your specific duties and syllabus details, please consult with the class instructor in advance on matters such as the educational goals of the course and approaches to student guidance.

5. Points to Note when Working as a TA

(1) Compliance with employment regulations

Pursuant to the Kyoto University Employment Regulations for Hourly Employed Faculty and Staff Members, in the course of your work as a TA you must comply with the directions of the class instructor, maintain order in the workplace, perform the work in cooperation with co-workers, and avoid unreasonable absences. Please be careful not to be late or absent without reason. If you must be absent, please be sure to notify the class instructor in advance.

(2) Management of work attendance

Work attendance is managed using an attendance record. Please record your work attendance details accurately.

Website reference:

Kyoto University Employment Regulations for Hourly Employed Faculty and Staff Members
http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/uni_int/kitei/reiki_honbun/w002RG00000904.html



(3) Health and safety training sessions when assisting in seminar or laboratory classes

If you are assisting in seminar or laboratory classes, please consult with your administrative office and, if required, attend workplace-specific safety and health training sessions the university holds each academic year in accordance with the Industrial Safety and Health Act.

(4) Handling of students' personal information

The Kyoto University Regulations Concerning the Handling of Personal Information stipulate, as an obligation of employees, that “employees involved in the handling of personal information, or individuals who have been in such a position, must not, without due cause, inform other persons of personal information of which they become aware in the course of their work, nor use such information for improper purposes.” This stipulation applies to TAs as well; accordingly, you are prohibited from informing any other person of personal information, including but not limited to students' academic

results, which you became aware of in the course of your TA duties, and from using it for any improper purpose. This prohibition applies to talking about it to other people where there is no work-related need to do so, and sharing it via social media. If any problems do happen to arise, please report immediately to the instructor in charge of the class and to the relevant administrative office.

Website reference:

Kyoto University Regulations Concerning the Handling of Personal Information
http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/about/disclosures/request/open_kitei.html



<Main prohibited matters>

- Acquiring personal information when not directed to do so by the class instructor
- Using personal information acquired in the course of work for the purposes other than the work
- Removing any personal information data acquired in the course of work to locations off campus*
- Taking any documents or other materials containing personal information acquired in the course of work to locations off campus*
- Informing other people about personal information acquired in the course of work
- Disclosing personal information without confirming identity

*Except where essential for the conduct of the class, for example when doing fieldwork off-campus.

<Prohibited matters in the use of social media>

(extracts from the Kyoto University Official Instagram Account Operational Guidelines)

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/about/public/sns/instagram>

- Conduct that identifies, discloses, or leaks personal information of any other user or third party, without the authorization of the individual concerned
- Conduct that causes harm to the university, any other user, or a third party
- Conduct that infringes copyrights or other intellectual property rights of the university, any other user, or a third party
- Conduct that insults or defames, or causes damage to the reputation of or trust in the university, any other user, or a third party
- Conduct contrary to public order and morals, or conduct that provides information that contravenes public order and morals
- Other conduct judged by the university to be inappropriate

<Responsibilities of individual TAs and/or the University>

Infringements, inappropriate responses, errors and the like may have the following consequences

for individual TAs and/or the university.

- Identification of the personal information leaked and provision of apologies and/or compensation to the individuals or organizations affected
- Loss of public confidence in the university and legal sanctions
- Holding individuals and supervisors responsible for failing to institute or follow appropriate/proper measures
- Reporting to relevant authorities, provision of public explanation/apology in press conferences, etc.
- Costs of response, provision of measures for non-recurrence (development of management systems, production/review of regulations and manuals, education and training, etc.)

(5) Harassment prevention

Relationships between instructors and those being instructed, and between those giving directions and those receiving them, can occasionally develop into inappropriate power relationships, not only impeding study and work but also causing serious personal harm to the victims (students, faculty members, TAs, administrative staff, general public). Conduct motivated by sexual desire or interest can also damage the study and work environment for the target of such conduct, and causing him/her serious personal harm.

Please keep the following points in mind, and consult with those around you or the university Counseling Service if you have any concerns. For more details, please refer to the “Preventing and Coping with Harassment at Kyoto University” booklet.

Website reference:

Preventing and Coping with Harassment at Kyoto University

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/about/human-rights/harassment-policy-at-kyoto-university>



<In order to avoid becoming a perpetrator of harassment>

In order to avoid becoming a perpetrator or victim of harassment, you should take full precautions to treat others' feelings and standpoints with respect, and not to impose your personal feelings or value outlooks on your studies or work. The standard for judging “harassment” is whether or not there have been inappropriate words or actions, regardless of the intention or awareness of the individual who committed the act in question. The scope of inappropriate words/actions extends not only to those within regular study and work hours, but also to those off campus.

To prevent unnecessary trouble, especially when providing students with guidance, try to avoid situations where you are working one-to-one with a student where nobody else is present; ensure that

the instructor in charge of the class, another TA, or a student is nearby.

(Examples of harassment)

- A graduate student employed as a TA causes harm to the work and/or study environment by engaging in acts or words of a sexual nature toward a faculty/staff member, another TA, or a student.
- A graduate student employed as a TA uses his/her relationship with a student unreasonably to impede that student's studies or subject the student to disadvantageous academic treatment, thereby damaging the student's motivation to study or causing harm to the environment.
- A graduate student employed as a TA uses his/her relationship with another TA or student unreasonably to insult, defame or psychologically abuse that TA or student, thereby damaging the TA or student's motivation to work or study, or causing harm to the environment.

<If you are a target of harassment>

- Do not endure the harassment alone – discuss the matter with someone you can trust.
- Through your words and actions, make it clear to the person who is harassing you that their behavior is disagreeable to you. If you merely ignore or endure the harassment, the situation will not improve. In some cases of harassment, the perpetrator is unaware that their actions are causing offence.
- Make a written record of the instances of harassment. If there are witnesses, confirm the occurrences with them.
- Discuss the matter with the university Counseling Service.

<If you witness someone being harassed>

When you are aware that someone is being harassed, please offer assistance to the target of the harassment, even if you do not know them.

- If you witness disagreeable behavior, caution the perpetrator about it.
- When necessary, act as a witness
- Listen to what the target of the harassment has to say and be supportive. Don't place the blame on them.
- Encourage the target of the harassment to visit the university Counseling Service. Offer to accompany them.

Due to the very nature of harassment, it is difficult for targets of harassment to come forward. The

university Counseling Service is open, not only to the targets of harassment themselves, but also to third-party witnesses of harassment.

<University-Wide Counseling Service>

Counseling Office in the General Student Support Center

Telephone: 075-753-2515 e-mail: counseling@mail.gssc.kyoto-u.ac.jp

URL: <http://www.gssc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/counsel/index.html>

Opening hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (closed on national holidays)

Labor Affairs Management Office, Personnel Division, General Affairs Department

Telephone: 075-753-2090 e-mail: 830madoguchi@mail2.adm.kyoto-u.ac.jp

Opening hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (closed on national holidays)

<Departmental Counseling Service>

*Please refer to the web page below.

https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/about/foundation/human_rights/harassment/documents/2020/harass.j-20205-2.pdf

(6) Accessibility measures

There are many students at Kyoto University who require accommodations owing to visual or aural impairment, difficulties in writing or mobility, and other issues relating to accessibility (ease of use or participation). In the event that you find a student experiencing difficulties in their studies, please provide accommodations and support as necessary. If a student with a disability is accompanied by a student supporter (mobility aide, note-taker, etc.), consult with the supporter if appropriate.

<Examples of cases where accommodations are necessary>

- Accommodations pertaining to information and communication: students who have impaired vision, hearing, speech, or memory function
- Physical and spatial accommodations: students who have limited use of limbs, or use a wheelchair or crutch
- Situational accommodations: students who have unstable health, are prone to overstrain or seizures, or have difficulty in responding to sudden changes or unforeseen events

<University-Wide Counseling Service>

Disability Support Office in the General Student Support Center

Telephone: 075-753-2517 e-mail: s-sien@mail.gssc.kyoto-u.ac.jp

URL: <http://www.gssc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/support/information.html>

Opening hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (closed on national holidays)

(7) Safety and health

(i) Fundamentals of safety and health

Be thorough in your approach to organizing, tidying, and cleaning to maintain clean and orderly conditions. Make these things habitual, thereby sustaining a pleasant education and research environment.

(ii) Managing safety in class

Classes operated by the university include laboratory and practical training classes that make use of such things as chemicals and machine tools. Please confirm the properties of the chemicals to be used, machinery operating procedures and the like in advance, and perform your duties in appropriate safety attire. Specific precautions vary from class to class, so please check with the instructor in charge in advance, and follow his/her instructions when managing safety in laboratory and practical training classes.

Should a problem occur, notify the instructor in charge immediately and follow his/her instructions.

(8) Enrollment in Liability Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (Gakkenbai)

In the course of your TA activities, you may accidentally cause injury to another person or damage laboratory equipment or the like. We recommend that you take out Liability Insurance for Students Pursuing Education and Research (Gakkenbai) to protect against such unlikely events. This insurance indemnifies you against personal claims for compensation in the event that somebody is injured or their property damaged in the course of your TA activities.

(9) Handling of classes and exams in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency

In order to ensure the safety of students, there may be changes to operation of classes and final exams in the event of an earthquake (intensity of Lower 6 or above), issuance of an emergency weather warning or storm warning, or suspension of public transportation services. Please refer to “Class cancellations in the event of a disaster or other emergency.”

Website reference:

Class cancellations in the event of a disaster or other emergency

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/current/campus-life/class-cancellations>



6. TA Appointment Process

Examples of documents required are shown below. Please follow the instructions of the relevant faculty, school or institute with regard to specific requirements.

- (1) Application form prescribed by the faculty, school or institute
- (2) Copy of student ID card *may not be required if identity can be confirmed separately by reference to internal student lists, etc.
- (3) Work schedule
- (4) Request for bank transfer of salary (except if continuing to use an existing identification number)
- (5) Application for deductions for dependents, etc. (except if already submitted)
- (6) Copy of residence card (international students only)

7. Payment of TA Salary

Almost all of the funds used for education and research at Kyoto University are derived from taxes paid by the Japanese public. Receiving such valuable funds improperly cannot be justified under any circumstances.

The types of conduct listed below constitute improper receipt of TA salary. Please refrain from engaging in them at all costs.

<Examples of improper receipt>

- Receiving salary for work not actually undertaken
- Receiving salary based on a work record that differs from the actual work undertaken
- Complying with conduct involving a research lab collecting, in part or whole, salaries paid by the university, for the purpose of redistributing them to other students

*Salary payments from the university will be transferred directly into the TA's bank account in principle. Research labs are prohibited from making the above type of redistribution.

In the event that you have been asked to engage in acts of the types listed above, or are unsure of the administrative procedures required, please consult with a member of the administrative staff in your faculty or graduate school office.

8. References

- Risk Management

In the event of an incident, accident, or other emergency situation, please follow the directions of the class instructor and act appropriately with composure. If you cannot obtain directions from the class instructor, contact the administrative staff of your graduate school.

Website reference:

Earthquake Safety Manual

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/sites/default/files/inline-files/Earthquake-Safety-Manual-ja-aa56d4b5c5ffee2f0fbd40ccab1f892d.pdf>



- Campus Life Information

This is a compilation of information of various services and supports provided by Kyoto University in relation to aspects of student life beyond the formal curriculum. Please read through this information in full.

Website reference:

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/about/public/issue/binran>



- University Academic Calendar

Website reference:

<https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ja/education-campus/curriculum/calender>



- Learning Support Systems

PandA (People and Academe)

This is the LMS (Learning Management System) used at Kyoto University. It can be accessed not only from the computers on campus, but also from your own computer, smartphone, or other internet-enabled device. PandA supports essential class activities, such as provision of class handouts, submission, grading, and return of assignments, and implementation of quizzes. It is sometimes used during class under the instructor's directions, while on other occasions it may be used by students for preparing and reviewing at home.

Website reference:

PandA: Gateway

<https://panda.ecs.kyoto-u.ac.jp/portal>



KULASIS

The university operates an academic information system known as KULASIS (Kyoto University's Liberal Arts Syllabus Information System). After logging in on a computer or smartphone either on or off campus, students can use KULASIS functions such as checking academic information (class cancellations, changes, reports), registering for courses, and checking their grades. Instructors can use KULASIS to perform online tasks such as recording grades, making entries in the syllabus, and registering class cancellations and make-up classes.

*To access KULASIS, log in to the Common Portal for All Students and click on "KULASIS."

Website reference:

Common Portal for All Students

<https://student.iimc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>



• Protection of Copyright

Classes make use of many copyright materials authored by the class instructor and third parties, such as academic papers, books, figures, images, data, newspaper articles, and videos. As a TA, you need to gain a proper understanding of how such works are handled and take care to avoid infringing copyright.

The Copyright Act sets out the rights of authors and rules for the use of copyright materials, in order to protect the interests of authors. Article 32 of the act prescribes "legitimate quotation."

In principle, permission from the copyright holder is required when making use of copyright materials, but educational institutions, in light of their public character, are granted a special exemption under Article 35 of the Copyright Act that allows them to make use of a certain portion of copyright materials without the author's permission.

A 2018 amendment of the Copyright Act established a Compensation System for Public Transmission for Educational Purposes to promote the use of ICT in education. Under this system, educational institutions pay a lump sum compensation to the Society for the Administration of Remuneration for Public Transmission for School Lessons (SARTRAS), which is composed of copyright holders in different fields, which enables the public transmission of copyright materials up to the minimum scope required for teaching purposes and to students only (this includes the sending of class materials by email and their uploading to LMSs such as Panda). Under this compensation system it is possible to use copyright materials without the need for individual permission from the copyright holder, not only for face-to-face classes in lecture rooms, but also for so-called studio-style synchronous interactive/one-way remote classes, and on-demand remote classes. Kyoto University makes use of this system too.

It goes without saying that the use of copyright materials, whether in face-to-face or online classes,

is only permitted to the extent that it does not improperly harm the interests of the original author. As a TA, you need to give thought to copyright protection yourself, as well as bringing it to the attention of your students, under the direction of the class instructor.

Website reference:

The Importance of Copyright Protection (what to tell students)

https://www.highedu.kyoto-u.ac.jp/connect/teachingonline/indication_to_students.php#copyrights

Online Learning Notification for Students (internal university access only)

<https://www.highedu.kyoto-u.ac.jp/connect/teachingonline/limited/all/online-learning-notification-for-students-200428.pdf>

Agency for Cultural Affairs Copyright page

<https://www.bunka.go.jp/seisaku/chosakuken/>

