

Piano Area Teaching Assistant (TA) Guidelines and Expectations

Teaching Assistants (TAs) serve essential functions within the Setnor School of Music community. Throughout the academic year, TAs will interact with faculty members, students, and staff in a variety of professional settings. Therefore, all TAs are expected to conduct themselves ethically, responsibly, and with the highest level of professionalism.

Receiving a teaching assistantship is more than earning a merit-based scholarship—it is a professional appointment. As a TA, you are compensated for the services you provide to the school while gaining valuable professional experience that will benefit your future career.

Along with these opportunities comes the responsibility of balancing your teaching assistant duties with your own artistic, academic, and personal goals. You must also develop the judgment and professional intuition necessary to navigate difficult situations and avoid unnecessary conflicts. As you grow into these responsibilities, your TA supervisor will be available to guide and support you.

Classes

Teaching Assistant

As a Teaching Assistant, you will assist a faculty member in teaching a course. Your responsibilities may include carrying out instructional or administrative tasks assigned by the instructor, assisting students, and occasionally participating in classroom lectures or demonstrations.

Primary Instructor

As a Primary Instructor, you are responsible for every aspect of the course. This includes preparing a clear syllabus, planning and delivering lectures, creating assignments, projects, and examinations, evaluating student work, and submitting grades. You should become proficient with Blackboard and familiarize yourself with the MySlice system for grading and other administrative responsibilities.

Collaborative Piano

Collaborative piano is an essential component of many TA assignments.

TAs are expected to prepare all assigned repertoire thoroughly and punctually while contributing thoughtfully to the artistic decision-making process with their partners and ensembles. Once repertoire has been assigned, begin learning it immediately so that rehearsals and lessons can progress efficiently without unnecessary delays.

Degree Recitals

TAs may be assigned to collaborate on required degree recitals with singers and instrumentalists. Recitals may be either half recitals (approximately 30–35 minutes of music) or full recitals (approximately 50–60 minutes of music). You are expected to participate in all essential stages of the recital preparation process, including weekly lessons, rehearsals, the Pre-Recital Jury (PRJ), the dress rehearsal, and the recital itself.

Your load sheet includes an estimate of the average number of hours you should devote to each recital assignment per week. However, these hours will naturally fluctuate depending on the recital date. For example, if a recital occurs early in the semester, you should expect to front-load your preparation, requiring more hours each week than the estimated average. Conversely, once the recital has taken place, your workload will become significantly lighter.

During the preparation process, you may occasionally encounter situations in which a student collaborator or faculty member makes requests that create unreasonable expectations or scheduling conflicts. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Requests for excessive numbers of rehearsals or lessons
- Frequent or last-minute schedule changes
- Unreasonable expectations regarding your availability
- Unprofessional communication or behavior

If you encounter situations such as these, remain professional while establishing appropriate boundaries. Politely decline requests that exceed your assigned responsibilities when necessary and offer alternative solutions whenever possible. If you are uncertain how to handle a situation, contact your TA supervisor as soon as possible.

Please note:

- TAs are assigned to collaborate only on repertoire included on the student's assigned recital program.
- TAs are **not** assigned to perform for juries, masterclasses, studio classes, school events, or outside engagements unless those activities are specifically included in their assignment. If a student requests services beyond your assigned duties, you are free to establish a separate private arrangement if you choose.

Choir

The Setnor School of Music offers several choral ensembles. If assigned as a choir pianist, you will work closely with one of the choir directors. Responsibilities may include reading open scores, isolating vocal lines during rehearsals, demonstrating individual parts, and collaborating with the ensemble. Each conductor has a unique rehearsal style and conducting approach. Make an effort to learn the director's rehearsal routine, warm-up sequence, and communication style as quickly as possible. Clear communication and flexibility are essential to a successful working relationship.

By signing and returning your TA load sheet, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the expectations outlined in this document.

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Teaching Assistant Supervisor

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