

FAQ: GTA 30-Day Return of Student Course Materials

Background

The following are university guidelines for interpreting a new requirement agreed during the 2018 renegotiation of the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA) between the University of Kansas and the Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition at KU (GTAC). KU must facilitate the return of student course materials (hereafter referred to as “documents”) no later than 30 days after the deadline to turn in grades.

MOA statement:

Section 2b: ...Work requirements for each semester (not including summer session) shall end on the deadline date for turning in course grades. Student work, including assignments and exams, will be returned to the department within thirty (30) days of the deadline.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do we have to do this?

Yes. The MOA is a grievable document that governs, among other things, the working conditions for all GTAs at KU. All units that hire GTAs must establish an internal procedure that:

1. Complies with the requirements of the MOA statement above
2. Includes a specific site or sites for GTAs to deposit the documents
3. Includes a notification to GTAs in writing regarding the process and deadline

How long does the department have to keep the student documents?

KU’s [Records Retention Schedule](#) policy requires the following:

Series Title	Description	Official Copy	Retention	Disposition
Coursework - Students	Student quizzes, tests, exams, papers, homework, and projects	Department or Office	If not returned to student, retain 1 calendar year after grades assigned, then destroy.	Secure destruction

Where are these documents supposed to be stored?

Departments should store the documents in a secure (locked) location within a centrally managed office or space that is used primarily for department administration or storage. Documents should be accessible if requested; however, a system for archiving or filing (e.g.

alphabetically, by course, etc.) is not necessary. HRM advises that documents not be stored in unit offices used primarily by GTAs.

How is the 30-day deadline date calculated?

GTAs have 30 calendar days after the instructor grade deadline to turn in student documents. The instructor grade deadline can be found on the KU [Academic Calendar](#) for each semester.

What if the department offices are closed, e.g. for holidays or weekends, on or leading up to the document return deadline?

GTAs may be instructed to return documents during office business hours. If your office will be closed for an extended period of time during the 30-day return period, GTAs should be notified of those closures via email in advance.

The department may also, as a matter of practice, establish a specific week to turn in the materials that falls within the 30-day window. If that is the established process, GTAs should be notified of the deadline well in advance as a part of your “general instructions” (Article 5, Section 7) that are supposed to be provided to GTAs in your unit “at least 5 week days in advance of the first meeting of the assigned class, or given orally, then reduced to writing & provided to the GTA within a reasonable time thereafter.”

If a GTA wishes instead to retain the documents, are they are free to do that?

No. The MOA says “WILL”. It is not discretionary.

What if a GTA needs to retain student documents in order to resolve incompletes, show students the final exam, resolve grade disputes, etc.?

Student documents should only be returned after the 30-day return deadline in cases where there is a specific, documented (e.g., email) request from the GTA to do so. The GTA’s request should state the academic reasons for the request and provide detail about the documentation being retained (i.e. student names, types of documents kept, etc.). The department chair should review the request and, if approved, convey approval in writing. The approval should include a new submission deadline for the materials. Both the student’s request and the chair’s approval should be retained by the department for documentation.

What if a GTA doesn’t return the documents by the deadline?

Departments should establish a clear procedure for return of documents, make the procedure and deadline clear in writing, send reminders, and retain all notifications and reminders for documentation. However, it is not necessary to log the return of every document by each GTA or to follow up individually with those who have not returned documents by the deadline. If you notice a pattern of GTAs failing to return their documents by the deadline or at all, please contact central HRM for guidance at hrdept@ku.edu.