

About Teaching: The New GTA Conference

August 19, 2019—8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Register at 8 a.m. at the northwest entrance of Budig Hall

New KU graduate teaching assistants are required to participate in this conference, sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence. The conference is designed to introduce you to the University's support of undergraduate and graduate instruction and provide examples of excellence in teaching.

What do you need to do to get ready for the conference?

We make it simple for you. You just need to:

- **Have your KUID number and arrive on time.** Registration begins promptly at 8 a.m. at the northwest entrance of Budig Hall. You may want to come a bit early to park (see below). Since we have to report attendance, be sure to go through registration before you go to any sessions.
- **Park in a yellow-zoned area.** On August 19, you can park in a yellow-zoned area without a permit. To avoid a fine, check signs to be sure you are not in a gold, blue, red, or metered zone, or in a handicapped parking spot. Check www.parking.ku.edu for more information.
- **Be ready to interact.** We have designed the conference so you will have lots of opportunities to interact with facilitators and other new GTAs.

What will you learn about at the conference?

Everyone will attend sessions that give you background information about teaching at KU:

“Who Are KU’s Students?” informs you about the students you will have in your classroom, lab, or studio, so you will be prepared to teach them.

“Teaching Essentials” sessions will help you understand learning objectives, evaluating learning, inclusive teaching, and using active learning.

Preparing for your role

You can choose sessions to help you prepare for the type of teaching you will be doing:

Lecturing—You may not lecture all class period, every day, but if you will teach a class where at some point you will be in the front of the room and deliver information, this session is for you.

Teaching in Science Labs—Do your responsibilities include beakers and burners, rocks and minerals? If so, attend this session.

Dynamics of Engineering Teaching—Engineering GTAs might lead a discussion, facilitate problem-solving, or work with lab scenarios. Find out how to handle your unique teaching role.

Guiding Discussions—Some GTAs lead discussion sections that augment large classes taught by a professor. This session focuses on the role you have and ways to succeed in it.

Teaching One-On-One—Music, art, and practicum supervisors have a unique relationship with students that differs from lecturing or grading. Join a professor who understands conditions you will face and hear ideas about making it work.

Problem-Solving in Technical Classes—Learn how to use problem-solving techniques in lab settings and experience a “lab practical” where you can try out some of these techniques.

Great beginnings

A little nervous about how you will do as a teacher? That’s a typical concern for new GTAs. Besides assuring you that you will survive, these sessions will help you finesse the skills you have, whether or not you have had experience teaching:

Succeeding in the First Two Weeks—What’s most important to take to class: a good syllabus or a practiced demeanor? Or should you consider other issues to get off to a good start? In this session, you will hear some suggestions about how to begin the semester well.

Establishing Credibility—A short while ago you were an undergrad, and now you will be the one at the front of the class. Get some ideas for being comfortable and successful in your position.

Teaching in the US—If your education background is from a country other than the United States, you may have ideas already about how US classroom expectations differ from those in your country. We will talk about these expectations and the realities you will be facing, and you will also get ideas about communication if English isn’t your native language.

Young Age as an Asset—Teachers who are close in age to their students may wonder how much students will respect them. You will discuss how you can tap into your recent experiences and familiarity with student culture to positively impact the class.

The Inclusive Classroom—Find out how to make your classroom a welcoming environment that facilitates learning for the unique mix of students that you have.

What else?

In addition to the August 19 conference, you will need to complete two other parts of the New GTA Preparation Program:

1. Online tutorial—After your contract is processed, and between August 1 and August 20, complete an online tutorial on Blackboard (courseware.ku.edu). The tutorial gives you an opportunity to learn about and demonstrate your understanding of KU policies and procedures related to teaching, professional expectations the University has of new GTAs, and academic integrity.
2. Follow-up seminar—From mid-September to early October, CTE will offer follow-up seminars for new GTAs. These sessions will allow you to study your teaching in some depth, after you have had experience teaching. You will receive information about the seminars on August 19.

Questions?

If you have any questions, call the Center for Teaching Excellence at 785-864-4199, e-mail us at cte@ku.edu, or visit our web site at www.cte.ku.edu.

If you require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this event, please contact Judy Eddy at jeddy@ku.edu by August 12.