

Teaching Assistant Policies Department of Microbiology & Immunology

Degree Requirement

- To earn a MCRO Ph.D., Ph.D.-only students must serve as a TA in approved courses for two semesters.
- To earn a MCRO Ph.D., M.D./Ph.D. students must serve as a TA in an approved course for one semester.
- There is no TA requirement to earn a MCRO M.S. degree.

Timing of TA Service

- MCRO Ph.D.-only students typically perform their TA service once in their second year and once in their third year.
- MCRO Ph.D./M.D. students typically perform their TA service in their second year as a Ph.D. student.
- Students can request fall or spring TA service, but this is not guaranteed unless the Director of Graduate Studies agrees there is a compelling reason for a particular semester.
- The years in which TA service is performed can also be altered with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Approved Courses

- Our departmental priority is to staff MCRO251 labs. This is anticipated to require 18 students per year in 2022-23 and 20 students per year thereafter.
- For the foreseeable future, all MCRO Ph.D. students must TA in MCRO251 at least once. Therefore, the Student Services Specialist will keep a record of the specific courses in which each MCRO student serves as a TA.
- If there are more MCRO graduate students than needed for MCRO251, then TAs can serve in MCRO graduate courses. Students who serve as TAs in MCRO graduate courses may do so before or after serving as TAs in MCRO251.
- Due to BBSP financial arrangements, MCRO students in the labs of faculty with primary appointments in the College of Arts & Sciences (BIOL, CHEM) will likely be required to TA in BIOL or CHEM courses instead of MCRO251. Because TAing for such courses is a substantial obligation of time, serving once fulfills the MCRO TA requirement of serving twice.
- If we have sufficient TAs to staff MCRO251, and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, MCRO students may meet their TA requirement by staffing BIOL422 Microbiology & Laboratory.

Compensation

- No compensation is provided for TAing in MCRO courses.
- For students who meet their TA requirement by serving as TAs in courses that provide compensation (e.g. in the College of Arts & Sciences), the stipend, tuition, and health insurance funds paid for TA services replace payments normally made

by the student's research mentor. Compensation received by the student does not change due to TA service.

Non-Approved Courses

- Some senior students who have fulfilled their TA requirement for a MCRO degree may want more teaching experience for career development purposes.
- Such students may serve as TAs in MCRO or non-MCRO courses with permission of their research mentor.
- If a student receives compensation for extra TA service, then the TA commitment is expected to be in addition to (not in lieu of) the normal graduate student responsibilities for which students are paid a stipend.

TAs in MCRO Graduate Courses

- Each year, the Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the Director of Microbiology Teaching Labs to determine how many students are available to TA in graduate courses. The Director of Graduate Studies will ask Course Directors if they desire TAs for their graduate courses and then solicit volunteers for graduate course TAs.
- To serve as a TA in a MCRO graduate course, a MCRO student must have earned a P or H grade in the same course.
- Course Directors will choose TAs from among MCRO students who volunteer for the job. Course Directors also may use non-MCRO graduate students or postdocs at their discretion.
- The time commitment for MCRO students serving as TAs for MCRO251 labs or MCRO graduate courses should be comparable, currently ~40 hours per semester. An appropriate workload may be achieved by using more than one TA in the course.
- To maintain academic integrity and avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest in evaluating peers, grading in MCRO graduate courses remains a faculty responsibility and will not be performed by TAs.