End-of-semester Evaluation of TAs

Each GTA is evaluated by three sets of people: themselves (self-evaluation), the lab coordinator (faculty member running the lab), and the students in the labs (student evaluations). The Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) will use these three sets of evaluations to provide an overall evaluation of each GTA's performance and will make recommendations, if necessary, about how to help each GTA improve. Lab coordinators will receive copies of the self-evaluations and student evaluations and will also be active in helping improve teaching.

A summary of the GTA's performance will appear on the continuing-student progress report that comes from GAC in the summer at the end of each academic year. We comment on the overall teaching performance as well as the number of responses on the student evaluations. We let each GTA know what kind of action(s) they should take to improve their teaching.

Student evaluations (Appendix A):
Each GTA will be evaluated by students in their labs. There are a special set of questions for these GTA evaluations (Appendix A) that are different from those administered for faculty. The questions are focused on how well the teaching assistant was able to explain material, answer questions, and run the lab. Students also comment in text blocks on what they perceive are the GTA's strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The portal for students to conduct all evaluations is Canvas. The evaluations are automatically scheduled for the last 3 weeks of the semester. Each GTA should check that they have been assigned the correct sections of lab before the evaluations are open and encourage students to fill out the evaluations. We aim for at least 85% of each section to evaluate each GTA. Instructions are sent to GTAs by email at the end of each semester about how to download and report the evaluations.

GTA self-evaluations (Appendix B):
Each GTA self-evaluates themselves after reading the student evaluations (see Appendix B). They send it to the head of GAC (Saara DeWalt) and their lab coordinator in the same document as their student evaluations. GTAs will be able to respond to what they feel are accurate as well as inaccurate assessments of their teaching.

Lab coordinator evaluations (Appendix C):
Each lab coordinator also evaluates each GTA using their experience with the GTA during prep meetings, seeing the GTA teaching (if applicable), and reading the student evaluations and the GTA's self-evaluation. Lab coordinators will comment on how well-prepared TAs were for prep meetings, whether they reported grades on-time, whether they acted professionally with students, and how effective of a teacher they were.

Rolling it all together:
In summary, all of these evaluations go into GAC's evaluation of the student. We do not make evaluations just on student evaluations, as we know that students often evaluate GTAs poorly because of things out of the GTA's control (lab content, design of the lab, availability of materials, difficulty of the material, etc.). We also realize that few people are stellar GTAs the first or second semester that they teach. We are looking to see that GTAs are improving and actively trying to improve.

Any questions? Email: Saara DeWalt (saarad@clemson.edu)
Appendix A
Evaluation Questions for Student Evaluation of Graduate Teaching Assistants in Biological Sciences
(implemented through Canvas)

For 1-10: Scale 1: 1: Not at all to 5: Very Much

1. This graduate teaching assistant displayed adequate knowledge of the material presented.
2. This graduate teaching assistant was well prepared with lecture material for every class session.
3. For in-class activities, this graduate teaching assistant provided clear directions and helped students focus on the important concepts being illustrated.
4. This graduate teaching assistant was enthusiastic about the subject.
5. Expectations for student participation and performance in class were clearly communicated by this graduate teaching assistant.
6. This graduate teaching assistant was able to explain difficult concepts.
7. This graduate teaching assistant was able to understand and respond to student questions in a clear and accurate manner.
8. This graduate teaching assistant was able to assist me with understanding the subject.
9. This graduate teaching assistant was interested in helping students.
10. This graduate teaching assistant treated students with respect.
11. Overall, how would you rank this graduate teaching assistant? (Scale 1: Poor to 5: Excellent)
12. What suggestions do you have to improve this graduate teaching assistant's ability to teach? (Essay)
13. What do you consider to be this graduate teaching assistant's greatest strength? (Essay)
14. What do you consider to be this graduate teaching assistant's weakest characteristic? (Essay)
Appendix B
Department of Biological Sciences
Teaching Self-Assessment Fall 2017

- Please fill out this self-assessment after examining your student evaluations from the semester.
- Compile your student evaluations and add them to this file using instructions sent to you in a separate with this self-assessment.
- Rename the file with your last name, the course you TAed, and the semester (e.g. “DeWalt BIOL_3080 Fall 2017.docx”).
- Email this file to Saara DeWalt (saarad@clemson.edu) and your lab coordinator by 5 pm on XXXX. The sooner you can send it, the better.

1) Your name: ______________________
2) The course you TAed this semester on which you are reporting (e.g. BIOL 1101 or BIOL 1050):__________
3) How many semesters have you been teaching in your current degree program (e.g. MS or PhD) at Clemson? Include this semester in your total. _____
4) Did anything particularly unusual or noteworthy, either positive or negative, occur this semester? Elaborate.

5) What do you feel was/were your greatest strength(s) in the classroom this semester?

6) To what area(s) do you feel you need to give more attention in the future?

7) Do you think the student evaluations accurately reflected what you think were your strengths and weaknesses? If not, why?

8) Are there ways you think we, the teaching faculty, could help you improve?
Appendix C
Lab coordinator evaluations

Lab coordinators are asked to evaluate each GTA on a scale: 1 (not at all/lowest/strongly disagree) to 5 (very much/highest/strongly agree)

1. The GTA appeared to have an adequate background in the material he/she was teaching.
2. The GTA was well-prepared and arrived on-time for lab prep meetings.
3. The GTA acted professionally with students.
4. The GTA prepared adequately for teaching.
5. The GTA graded assignments and reported grades in a timely manner.
6. The GTA does NOT need more training before being put in a lab again.
7. Overall, this GTA was an effective teacher.
8. I would like this GTA to teach this lab again.
9. Please provide any comments you have about this teaching assistant’s performance including any suggestions for improvement.