

About Teaching: The New GTA Conference

January 15, 2019

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Register at 8:00 a.m. at the northwest entrance of Budig Hall

As a new KU graduate teaching assistant, part of your required preparation is to participate in the New GTA Conference, sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence. The conference will introduce you to best practices and provide examples of excellence in teaching. Here's what it will include:

Getting started

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

"Who Are KU's Students?" informs you about the students you'll have in your classroom, lab, or studio, so you'll be prepared to teach them.

"Teaching Essentials" sessions will help you understand:

Learning objectives—What are they? What kinds of assignments help students achieve them?

Evaluating student learning—How do you measure learning? What are various ways to evaluate it?

Fostering learning and engagement for all your students—How do you establish an environment that encourages inclusion, engagement, and learning for all students? What teaching approaches motivate and support success in students from a wide range of backgrounds?

Preparing for your role

You'll participate in sessions to help you prepare for the type of teaching you'll be doing:

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

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

Leading 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, preparing group work, or grading essays. Join a professor who understands conditions you'll 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'll do as a teacher? That's a typical concern for new GTAs. Besides assuring you that you'll survive, and in fact thrive with time, these sessions will help you finesse the skills that you have, whether or not you've 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'll hear some suggestions about how to begin the semester well.

Establishing Credibility—A short while ago you were an undergrad, and now you'll 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'll talk about these expectations and the realities you'll be facing, and you'll 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'll 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.

Structuring Your Course for Student Learning—In this session, you'll consider the ideas behind your syllabus and lesson plans and discuss the enduring goals that you want your course to impart to students. (This session is one of several designed for GTAs with previous teaching experience.)

What do you need to do to get ready for this 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. If you have a preferred name you want to use on your nametag, send it to jeddy@ku.edu by January 11.
- **Park in a yellow-zoned area.** On January 15, 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've designed the conference so you'll have lots of opportunities to interact with facilitators and other new GTAs.

What else?

In addition to the January 15 conference, you'll need to complete two other parts of the New GTA Preparation Program:

1. **Online tutorial**—After your contract is processed, and between January 2 and 16, complete an online tutorial available through 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 of new GTAs, and academic integrity.
2. **Follow-up seminar**—Between mid-February and early March, plan to attend a one-hour follow-up seminar for new GTAs. These sessions will allow you to consider your teaching in depth, after you've had some experience in the classroom, lab or studio. You'll receive information about the seminars on January 15.

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 website at www.cte.ku.edu.