

Community Norms and Expectations for HPM Teaching Assistants

We are pleased to select you to be a TA for HPM. As you are no doubt aware, being a TA is a position of responsibility and trust, on the part of the professor, the department, the School, and especially your fellow students. We wish to emphasize that, in your role as a TA, you are expected to maintain appropriate standards of professional conduct and communication.

In particular, we note that it can be awkward and difficult to be a TA for people who are also your classmates and/or friends. It is important that you realize this and take extra care with regard to professional conduct and observing boundaries. Below are some of HPM's expectations of you in this role:

- When you communicate directly with individual students about their academic work, please do so in a discreet, constructive, respectful, and professional manner.
- Other than with the individual students you work with, do not communicate (talk, write, electronically message/email) about the class, the students in the class, the performance of anyone in the class, or your reactions or feelings about anyone in the class with any others except the professor and, when as a necessary part of your duties, other TAs in the class.
- It is important to be impartial and to not show any preference or dislike toward any student or group of students.

Techniques that can facilitate adherence to these community standards:

- If you are going to grade student work, ask the professor if it is possible to adopt an anonymous grading policy so you don't know whose work you are grading. If this isn't possible, ask to not grade the work of anyone whom you do not believe you can treat fairly and professionally.
- If the professor asks you to grade papers/exams with subjective content, ask for a "grading rubric" and try to use it on 2 – 3 papers along with the professor to be sure you are using it as the professor intended. This will help ensure consistent grading across the papers/exams.

Please consult with the professor on any issues that are unclear or where you might need help and guidance.

While violation of these standards is rare, please note that TAs who do not behave in a manner consistent with these community standards could be subject to action by the School's Disciplinary Board. (See <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/academics/student-handbook/appendix/appendix-c-disciplinary-procedures/index.html>)

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand this policy.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Course instructor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Course number and name: _____