

Involving Teaching Assistants in Remote Teaching

This guide will profile some of the ways in which teaching assistants (TAs) can be involved in remote classes. It is intended for use by both instructors and teaching assistants and can be used in conjunction with other [remote teaching resources](#) provided on the Office of Distance Learning website.

Canvas Roles and Permissions

TAs have permissions equivalent to the Teacher role in Canvas. They have all course-level permissions, including the ability to add, edit and delete all content in a course, edit course settings, and manually add individuals with active Canvas user accounts.

Participate in Announcements

TAs can communicate with students through the Announcements. Consider sharing a friendly welcome, a weekly wrap-up, an accolade, a news article, a Canvas tip, or a reminder of an upcoming deadline. These don't always need to be written; TAs could record an audio or video announcement as well. Be sure to include a text equivalent (transcript, captions, etc.) on any recorded announcements.

Keep the Discussions Active

TAs can interact with students in weekly discussion forums by challenging opinions, asking questions to extend the conversation, making corrections, sharing resources and anecdotes, and encouraging civil discourse. In addition to actively contributing to the discourse, TAs could visit the discussion boards every day to keep an eye on ongoing or weekly discussions.

Get Involved in Remote Class Sessions

TAs can be involved in remote class sessions using videoconferencing tools. (Review the [Hosting an Online Class Session in Zoom](#) tip sheet.) They can help support an instructor in a remote class session by muting participant microphones to reduce feedback, monitoring the chat feature, and sharing their screen to display slides or demonstrate tasks. TAs could also lead their own remote class sessions by presenting content, guiding discussions, facilitating activities and study sessions, and fielding questions.

Participate in Evaluation

TAs are frequently involved in evaluation. Depending on the type of course, they may be giving detailed written feedback or grading technical or numerical work. Follow the same practices for involving TAs in grading as you would in a face-to-face course. What are the expectations for feedback content, tone, and length? Is a rubric being used to assess work? How will grading be consistent across multiple graders? To learn about options for posting grades through Canvas, see the [Assessments and Grading for Remote Teaching](#) tip sheet.

Figure Out the Logistics

Make sure the TA's contact information and office hours are prominently displayed in the syllabus or elsewhere in the course.

Review policy expectations for the course. For example, what components of the course is the TA clearly responsible or not responsible for? Should the TA copy the instructor when they message students? What should happen if the instructor or TA becomes sick?

Set expectations about the amount of time the TA should be spending in the course site, including any hard or recurring deadlines and expected turnaround time for assessment tasks.

This guide is based on [Involving Teaching Assistants in the Online Classroom](#).