

Laboratory TA Assignments

What is the purpose of labs?

- EXPERIENCE
 - First and maybe only time to use equipment
 - Helps student make connection between theory and practice
- APPRECIATION
 - Allows students to appreciate the subtleties of experimental work; firsthand view of all previous classes in practice

What is your role as a TA?

- GUIDANCE
 - Encourage students to think
 - Answer procedural question, guide conceptual questions
 - Make lab challenging without causing frustration
 - Ensure all students take an active role
- SAFETY
 - Make students aware of potentially dangerous situations
 - Make sure necessary protection is provided
 - Know location of emergency equipment
- GRADING
 - Clearly state the ground rules
 - Be consistent within your lab section and with other TA's
 - When assigning final grade, reward improvement
- HOW AND WHY YOU SHOULD PREPARE
 - Be able to explain why the lab is being done
 - Encourage students to question the procedure
 - Know exactly how everything works, and how to fix things
 - Perform the lab completely before you teach it
 - Know students' names
 - Be certain of all bookkeeping concerns

Difficulties You May Encounter

- GRADING
 - Do not jeopardize the grading criteria
 - Be firm with due dates
 - Do not be afraid to fail students
- OOPS!
 - If you make a mistake, admit it, correct it, learn from it and move on
 - Do not be afraid to say "I don't know"
 - If something breaks, do not assign blame