The purpose of this guide is to provide you with best practices and resources for supporting and effectively working with your teaching, laboratory, and instructional graduate assistants through a rapid move to virtual instruction. During this time, your students – including your TAs – will be looking to you for guidance. The key is clear communication, patience and understanding for the additional barriers and stressors faced by your TAs, and a willingness to adjust on the basis of the skills and availability among your TAs.

Initial Considerations

With a rapid shift to online instruction, the role of graduate students in instructional roles must also shift. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you work with your TA through this disruption:

- **Check with your department** to make sure you are aware of their expectations and guidelines for working with your TAs.

- **Check with your TAs** to find out about any barriers they may face in contributing to your course, as well as any specific skills they may be able to leverage in their role. Take stock of their access to (and familiarity with) UGA resources and tools. Help them acclimate to being on video, if that will be part of their role going forward.

- **Remind yourself about your TAs' hours.** How many hours are they expected to work? What changes will be needed in the way they put in those hours, under the current circumstances?

- **Communicate your expectations and needs** to your TAs. Be clear about what you need from them in terms of availability, communication, and other expectations related to your course. Prepare to communicate course changes to them in summary form, being explicit about what you need from them. Consider providing separate information for the transition phase and for the period of return to classes.

Remember that it is not the role of TAs to move entire courses into eLC or to independently make decisions about changes to the content, delivery, and assessments. However, they can be invaluable in assisting with this new teaching context if you clearly communicate with them about how they can assist. In a nutshell: reach out and check in, protect the time and energy of your TAs, clarify expectations, share resources and access, and be patient.

Communication with TAs

- Check in with your TAs. Ensure they are safe and have access to basic necessities and direct them to available resources as needed. This will help position them to TA effectively.

- Provide information to your TAs as quickly as possible, even if all the details are not in place yet. Let them know when they can expect more specific information, and where they can find it.

- Remind your graduate assistants (and yourself!) that this is a triage situation: we are not expecting perfection, and we will need to be open to adaptation as the remainder of the semester unfolds.

- Set up a tentative communication plan for the semester, confirming their availability, and providing instructions for what to do if that availability changes. Remember that – just like you – their availability may have shifted as they navigate changes in their course work, their research, their own health, and their personal commitments (e.g., caring for children, travel restrictions, etc.). Be direct but flexible and consider sharing your own limitations and challenges as well.
- Consider implementing a weekly check-in with your TAs. You can use this time to both make sure they understand what you need from them, and to get feedback from them on how the course is progressing.

Tools and Access

Confirm your TA(s) have access to the tools necessary to complete TA-related tasks, including the following:

- **Internet.** Many companies are offering WiFi hotspot access for free.
- **Hardware.** Check with your unit to find out if there is equipment that can be lent to TAs who need devices, and only assign work that they have the tools to complete.
- **Software.** Be aware of software access (disciplinary specific and general, e.g. Zoom, Adobe Acrobat) that your students may or may not have access to. Check with your department and your TA if you are unsure.
- **eLC Access and Permissions.** For students to help with eLC related tasks, they may need to be added with higher permissions. This help page tells you about the different roles you might assign to someone in your eLC course.

Clarify Revised Learning Goals

Transitioning from face-to-face to virtual instructional will mean revisiting what the goals of the course are, what has already been accomplished, and evaluating what is left to be done in this new teaching context. As you adjust, be sure to share your revised goals with your TA(s) so that they can continue to support you and your students on this path. In addition:

- Share instructor resources with your TAs, including the UGA Teaching and Learning Continuity page, our eLC course for rapid transition to the virtual classroom (they can request access to the course via https://ctl.uga.edu/contact/), and the CTL's guide for instructors.
- Clarify the difference between regular online instruction, and virtual instruction under current circumstances. Be clear about what you are and are not trying to accomplish.
- Be clear and straightforward with your TAs about the specific tasks you would like them to do.
- Make sure your TAs know how the syllabus has changed, and where to find that information for reference. Include information about new or revised course policies, changes to assignments and tests, adjustments to grade distribution, and so on.

Sample Tasks for Teaching & Lab Assistants

Below are some examples of the types of tasks that might be pertinent for your TA(s). This is not exhaustive nor meant to be a comprehensive task list for all TAs:

- After you have decided on the assignments your students will complete, including due dates, descriptions, expectations, and grades, have your TA create Assignment Submission Folders in eLC and create Announcements or Checklist items.

- If your eLC gradebook needs to be adjusted to reflect your revised course plan, your TA can help by updating your gradebook setup.

- If you have quizzes or tests that will be moved directly online to eLC, have your graduate assistant help with this transition. This might include rewriting some tests questions (e.g., shifting multiple choice to short answer or vice versa) or creating eLC Quizzes

- If you have some videos that need to be captioned, have graduate assistants help with the auto captioning and editing auto caption corrections in Kaltura or Zoom

- If you have students handing in assignments, provide detailed instructions/rubrics for your students on how to grade. Even if TAs were grading in the first part of the semester, the rubric may have changed, make sure you are sharing these changes with your TAs.

- Consider having your TAs create short, relevant videos to support student learning, such as single concept videos, an instruction video for an assignment, a demo, a video of them solving math or engineering problems while annotating what they are doing and why, a single lesson, or lesson sequence. Ensure they have appropriate resources to help them such as Kaltura, Zoom, or PowerPoint.

- Have TAs create a resource/tips page for students (in eLC or as a PDF). Resources might include suggestions for how to be successful in the virtual environment and/or resources for times of disruption (e.g. Student Care and Outreach, Division of Academic Enhancement, Bulldog Basics, etc.)

- In a synchronous environment, designate specific tasks to the TAs, such as managing and activating tools, troubleshooting with students that are having tech problems, muting students with background noise, monitoring the chat for comments/raised hands, and typing written instructions or prompts into the chat while you are speaking.

- If you will be using eLC Discussion boards, have your TAs monitor and facilitate online discussions on your course Discussion Board. Help them determine a participation rubric that could contribute to grades, if necessary.