

Graduate Teaching Assistant Absence Policy
Department of Mathematics
Michigan State University

As a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in the Department of Mathematics, your duties will include teaching class(es) as an instructor of record, leading recitations, and/or MLC shifts.

1. According to University policies, instructors are not allowed to cancel classes. In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, etc.) the University will send an official announcement for class cancellation.
2. If you are unable to teach your class, for one week or less, due to a short term illness or other circumstances, please follow the following procedures:
 - a. Find a qualified GTA or instructor/faculty member in the mathematics department to substitute for you (preferably a GTA who has the same teaching assignment for the semester). Provide the substitute instructor with a clear lesson plan.
 - b. Inform the course supervisor AND lecturer(s) (if you teach recitations) that you will be missing a class; provide the specific reason and the name of the person covering your section, together with their contact information.
3. If you are unable to teach your class for an extended period of time (more than one week) for medical reasons, please
 - a. inform the course supervisor AND lecturer(s) (if you teach recitations)
 - b. provide the Graduate Coordinator (or the Graduate Director) and the HR representative in the department with documentation from your doctor.
 - c. Duration of medical leave with pay is determined by the collective bargaining agreement between the University and the GTA union.
4. If you are planning travel for scientific reasons (conference, workshop, etc.), please follow the following procedures:
 - a. Your academic advisor should inform the Graduate Director, in writing, at least 3 weeks in advance. Students who do not yet have an academic advisor should inform the Graduate Director themselves, in writing, at least 3 weeks in advance. Approval should be given in writing by the Graduate Director or Department Chair.
 - b. Find a qualified GTA or instructor/faculty member in the mathematics department to substitute for you (preferably a GTA who has the same teaching assignment for the semester). Provide the substitute instructor with a clear lesson plan.
 - c. Inform the course supervisor AND lecturer (if you teach recitations) that you will be missing classes; provide the specific reason and the name of the person covering your section, together with their contact information.
 - d. Absences due to scientific opportunities that take place during a fall or spring semester should be no more than 2 weeks long. Absences due to scientific opportunities that take place during a summer term should be no more than 1 week long. The total allowed absence for scientific opportunities is 2 weeks per semester in the fall and spring and 1 week per summer term.
5. Any other absence not covered by the previous sections must be approved, at least 3 weeks in advance, in writing, by the Graduate Director or Department Chair.

Your instructional duties may include proctoring and grading of exams, as well as MLC duties. Absence from proctoring/grading duties should be treated following the same procedures as absence from instructional duties (as outlined above). Please refer to the MLC manual when missing a scheduled MLC shift.

At the end of each semester an official letter will be sent to all GTAs summarizing MLC shift deficit and any teaching infractions. A copy will be sent to the student's academic advisor and Undergraduate/Graduate Director. The Office of the Graduate Director will prepare a written letter that will be placed in the student's file. The GTA has the right to submit a rebuttal.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.