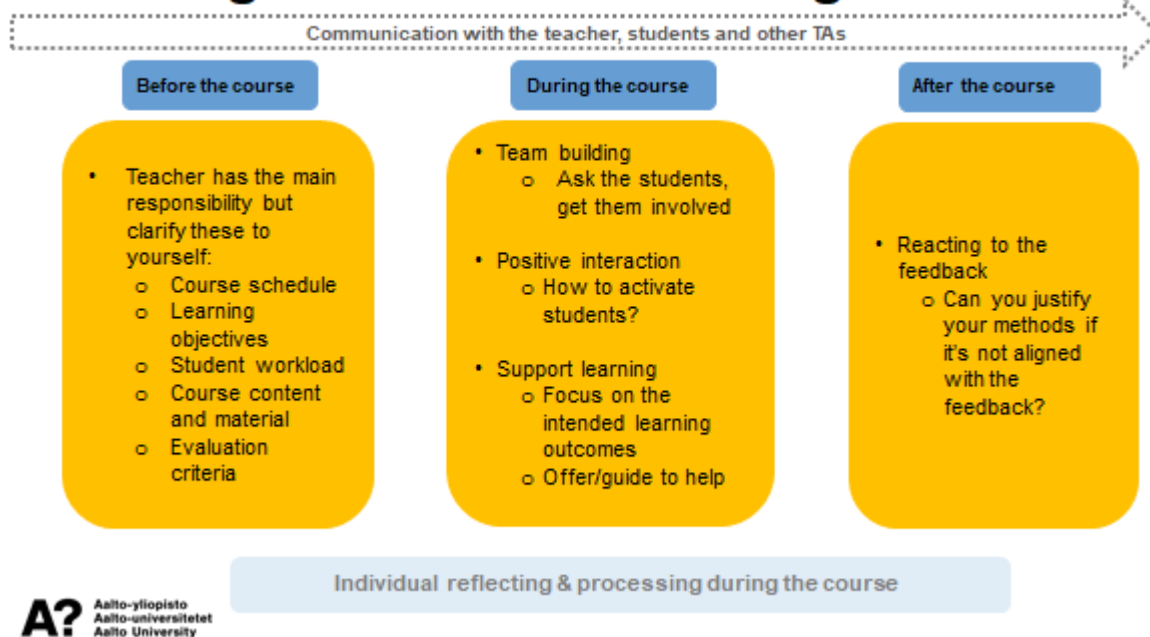# ADVICE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

General about these advice and instructions

We have written and collected these instructions and ideas for anyone working as a teaching assistant (TA). The role and responsibility of a TA can vary between schools and departments, so you can use or apply these depending on your own course and situation.

We have tried to consider particularly how to work in remote teaching circumstances. If you have any improvement ideas for these instructions, please contact your own school's pedagogical specialist (check the link https://www.aalto.fi/en/teaching-and-learning/contacts)

Teaching assistant as a learning instructor

Communication with the teacher, students and other TAs

Before the course

- Teacher has the main responsibility but clarify these to yourself:
  - Course schedule
  - Learning objectives
  - Student workload
  - Course content and material
  - Evaluation criteria

During the course

- Team building
  - Ask the students, get them involved
- Positive interaction
  - How to activate students?
- Support learning
  - Focus on the intended learning outcomes
  - Offer/guide to help

After the course

- Reacting to the feedback
  - Can you justify your methods if it's not aligned with the feedback?

Individual reflecting & processing during the course

A? Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University

The importance of communication in teaching and learning

TA's are very important! It is not so long ago when you were in the same situation as a student. You as a TA are closer to the students' life and thinking why learning something in your course can be difficult.
- remember to ask and listen and try to get students involved
- think about students' need in order to learn better

- you can be a messenger between the teacher in charge and students
- As an assistant you can display admirable initiative by proactively informing the teacher about your activities in the course and asking questions whenever necessary
- if the course has many assistants, a joint weekly meeting helps all the partners (teacher and all the assistants). In the meetings, you can discuss about exercises, assessment, practical arrangements. In a large course, this is invaluable!
- In your capacity as a course assistant how can you further enable student interaction with the course activities?

Before the course starts
- Agree on responsibilities between you as TA and a teacher-in-charge
- If there are many TA's in the course, agree on each TA's responsibilities
- Likewise, if there are many TA's, decide upon a proper communication channel to use – peer support helps you

After the course
- In order to get feedback from the students, together with the teacher-in-charge, try to organise a session to discuss and give constructive feedback and ideas for the next course implementation
- You can help the teacher to collect the written feedback and formulate it for the next term's course

Practical tips and advice with remote teaching tools

How to activate the students in a positive way online

- Try to build positive interaction in the sessions as one possibly can - it leads to positive attitude
- Thank students whenever it is appropriate and give positive feedback
- Notice students' progress
- Don't compare students - they are all individuals with different backgrounds
- Be accepting and open minded - be aware of your own attitudes to remote teaching

Involve students
- Give everyone a chance to introduce themselves at the beginning of the virtual meeting voluntary
- In this, you can use, for instance, Zoom's breakout rooms.
- Depending on the course size, you can ask them to use the audio so that they see each other in the beginning
- Ask students their own ideas
- Accept different kind of ways to participate
- Proactively ask for better tools or help in increasing interaction

Clarity builds trust
- Clarity and understandability support all kinds of students in their learning

- Clarity also supports accessible learning
- Make sure, don't assume
- Remember – you don't have to know the substance 100%, but with difficult questions, you can say you will find out and get back to the topic in the next session (or online)

Useful websites:

Tips and tools for remote teaching and learning: [Tips and tools for remote teaching and learning - OPIT - Aalto University](#)

Digital services for teaching: [Digital services for teaching | Aalto University](#)

Recorded webinar sessions and info how to set up remote teaching: [Wikihttps://www.aalto.fi/en/news/for-teachers-webinar-sessions-and-info-how-to-set-up-remote-teaching](#)

About digital accessibility in Aalto
https://www.aalto.fi/en/aaltofi-website/digital-accessibility

MyCourses instructions: https://wiki.aalto.fi/display/mchelp/MC+help
Panopto instructions: https://wiki.aalto.fi/display/OPIT/Panopto
Zoom in MyCourses: https://wiki.aalto.fi/display/mchelp/Online+video+meeting
Zoom Quick Guide: https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/zoom-quick-guide
MyCourses and Zoom help: mycourses@aalto.fi
Electronic survey system Webropol: [Webropol - Electronic survey system | Aalto University](#)
Panopto help: panopto@aalto.fi
For feedback collection: [Presemo EDU - Aalto University](#)
Flinga whiteboard: https://aalto.flinga.fi/
Help with exams: exam@aalto.fi, mycourses@aalto.fi

Aalto Study Psychologist's Services: opintopsykologi@aalto.fi
Into portal for the students https://into.aalto.fi/display/enopisk/Support+for+studying