Faculty Recommendations for Online Course Assistants (OCAs)

For Fall 2020, faculty can request an OCA to help with the facilitation of large online courses. Students will be trained by the Office of Online Learning and Instructional Technology & Research Support. If an OCA will serve as a tutor, they must complete additional training with Student Academic Services.

Recommended Practices for OCAs

- As soon as an OCA is assigned to your course, schedule a time to meet with them to outline your specific needs for the semester.
- Communicate or meet with your OCA regularly to ensure expectations are being met on both sides.
- Set clear and specific roles, guidelines, and expectations for both you and the OCA, recognizing the suggested uses and limits of OCAs outlined below.
- Introduce your OCA to students in your course if they will be interacting, and let your students know how the OCA will be operating in the class.
- OCAs can tutor only if they have completed training provided by the Office of Student Academic Services.
- OCAs can assist in grading only if they are graduate students with appropriate content knowledge in the field.

Recommended Uses for OCAs

Assisting with synchronous sessions in Zoom

Faculty will need to verify that OCAs are alternative hosts for Zoom meetings and manually make OCAs the host during those meetings to perform many of the below functions.

- Troubleshoot Zoom issues
- Monitor the Zoom chat to troubleshoot issues or route content questions to instructor
- Share screen or whiteboard, or annotate a shared screen
- Create and manage breakout rooms for small-group discussion

Assisting with Sakai

- Create and manage student groups for group assignment submission and/or discussion
- Monitor forums
- Grade assignments, forums, and/or assessments (graduate students only)
- Add course materials to the Resources tool
- Edit Lessons pages

Recommended Limits for OCAs

- OCAs should not be asked to lead a class period or stand in for an instructor
- OCAs should not be asked to grade unless they are graduate students with appropriate content knowledge in the field
- OCAs should not be the primary point of contact for the course