



Department of Linguistics
American Sign Language Studies Program

Instructional Assistant Manual

INTRODUCTION

Instructional Assistants (IA's) support students enrolled in courses within the ASL Studies program through tutorial support as well as assisting faculty. This manual is designed to provide an overview of the expectations and responsibilities for IAs and to better help you work with students in an effective and professional manner. Students who are interested in serving as an IA must apply by the last day of March. Application forms are available online at the [ASL Studies Program](#) website. Appointment as an IA is not guaranteed for the following semester or anytime during your UConn career.

Experiential Learning Supervisor: A designated member of the ASL faculty who supervises the tutoring program and works closely with the Instructional Assistant Coordinator(s). The supervisor provides training and support, assigns grades, and generally supervises all aspects of the program.

Faculty: Instructor for a course where an IA is assigned to provide academic and tutorial support.

Instructional Assistant Coordinator: A student who oversees the scheduling of IA's, works with the supervisor in providing training and orientation for IA's, and serves as a communication liaison between IA's and the Experiential Learning Supervisor for any emergency needs. The coordinators solicit applications and conduct interviews for IA position vacancies.

Instructional Assistant: A student who provides academic and tutorial support.

QUALIFICATIONS

Instructional Assistants must be an undergraduate student and have completed the course in which they will assist with a grade of B or better. In rare cases, an IA may be assigned to a course they have not taken if they are recommended and approved by one of the faculty within the ASL Studies program. While no specific overall GPA is required, the IA is expected to be in good academic standing.

CREDIT

IAs must enroll in **ASLN 3292** Experiential Learning for two or three credits each semester they serve as an IA. This course has the following requirements:

- Credits are based on class time and the amount of office hours signed up for during the week. Upon signing up for the course, the student should change the number of units for the credits desired.
 - For 2 credits, students will sign up to hold 1 hour of office hours a week
 - For 3 credits, students will sign up to hold 3 hours of office hours a week
- Permission numbers must be obtained from the Experiential Learning Supervisor including the appropriate section number:
 - If you will be working exclusively online, register for ASLN 3292-**001**.
 - If you plan to work anytime at the ARC, register for ASLN 3292-**002**.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IAs will attend a training at the beginning of the semester including additional IA meetings throughout the semester. The IA Coordinator or Experiential Learning Supervisor will inform you of any meeting or training. The training will review the information within this manual as well as additional information.

Responsibilities During Class

Responsibilities in class vary based on the discretion of the ASL professor. Start each class by taking attendance. Follow what the professor asks of you during each class.

You are not expected, and not permitted to teach or sub for any class in any way.

Make sure students are not talking during class. Encourage them to sign. Do not allow them to talk to you as the IA. An exemption can be made for students in ASLN 1101 who have limited or no skills in ASL. With the consent of the professor, you may speak to students for instructional purposes only.

IAs may help proctor quizzes and exams. You are there to help make sure no one is cheating including quizzes and exams that are delivered online.

Introduction to Students

At the start of the semester, an email should be sent to the students in your assigned class introducing yourself as the IA, your Co-IA (if applicable), and the professor. Explain your role as the IA, the ARC (ASL Resource Center), and your available office hours. Also include any policies or information requested by your professor. Within the first few weeks you should monitor the addition of students into your class and make sure they are updated on any important information.

Preparation

You should be able to tutor with a minimal amount of preparation, but you must be certain you come to every tutorial session thoroughly familiar with the topics discussed in class. You have every reason to expect that students will come to the session prepared, with all relevant texts and papers and having worked through as much of the material as possible (it is important that you let the Experiential Learning Supervisor know if this is not the case.) Students have the right to expect that you will be prepared as well. Be honest when you are not sure of an answer and feel free to ask for help or refer students to the professor of their section.

Tutoring in the ARC or online

The American Sign Language Resource Center (ARC) is located in Oak, 357. Tutoring sessions will be held at ARC or online. The purpose of the tutoring sessions is to provide further explanation or clarification, to answer questions related to course content and to practice and review what was learned in class. Tutorial assistance is provided for students at their request and/or the advice of their professors or academic counselor. Students who wish to meet with a tutor can view the tutor schedule and meet with a tutor when desired. The schedule for office hours should be provided to all students at the beginning of the semester and should be posted on the ARC door. Because it is such an important role, it is asked that IAs commit to the program from the inception of the assignment through final exams. The IA must be present for class time and assigned office hour time, any other times working shall be at the discretion of the IA themselves. In some cases, tutoring is also available during the summer and winter sessions.

Planning a Session

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the IA or IA Coordinator(s) within a timely fashion to arrange tutoring sessions. You are responsible for responding to students within 48 hours of receiving any requests. Students are also welcome to attend any of the open scheduled office hours arranged by the IA Coordinator and posted on the ARC door and website.

If you cannot attend class or your scheduled office hours due unforeseen circumstances such as illness or family emergency, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure your hours are covered by another IA. If you miss class, then you need to inform your professor and co-IA, if applicable, as soon as possible. If you need help with getting your shift covered, ask the IA Coordinator for assistance.

Reporting a Tutoring Session

Make sure students sign in when they visit the ARC for office hours. A paper form can be found in the ARC and should be filled out by both the IA and student. The form should be placed on the desk in clear view. Should the forms be filled, let the IA coordinators know and they can print additional copies. If the professor requests a list of their students who have attended the ARC, provide them with the appropriate documentation. An electronic recording of sign-ins should be created in the event of an accidental loss of the paper copy from the ARC.

Grading

IAs and Coordinators are not responsible, nor are they allowed to issue or determine grades. You may evaluate the student's work in terms of the progress based on the tutorial sessions. Avoid guessing what kind of grade the student may receive on a specific assignment or test and refer the student to their professor for more specific assessment of their progress.

IAs may assist with correcting student work using a key provided by the professor. Follow the guidelines of the instructor when correcting and ask about anything that is not completely clear. If the time required or expectations asked by any instructor interferes with your personal academic responsibilities, make this known to the instructor.

PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is understandably of the utmost importance and is essential in a tutoring relationship. Never do any work for any student. If you are ever asked to do more than help a student understand the material, you must make it clear that you cannot and will not do so. Any conversation of this nature should be reported to the Experiential Learning Supervisor.

Conduct

IAs must conduct themselves in a professional manner in all aspects of their role as IA's. In addition, you must be honest and upfront with the professor(s). Please keep in mind that,

while the relationships in our program will end up feeling more like a family, you must maintain a professional demeanor; this means complaining about students or professor(s) is unacceptable! If you notice other students doing so, try to diffuse the situation. If any students are having an issue with one another, please intervene in a professional manner and try to alleviate the situation immediately. If you do not feel comfortable with the situation, contact the IA coordinators or the Experiential Learning supervisor for assistance.

Professionalism

IAs are expected to behave in a professional manner. Professionalism ensures a comfortable environment for all IAs, students and Professors. Inappropriate behaviors will not be tolerated at any time. Inappropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, physical or verbal abuse, inappropriate language, and drug and/or alcohol use before/during appointments. If any of these behaviors are reported and verified, the IA will be terminated and may face additional disciplinary action. If an IA feels as though any student is acting inappropriately, the Experiential Learning Supervisor is to be contacted immediately.

IAs must be punctual and prepared for all tutoring sessions. Be aware of what is currently being taught and any current assignments. It is critical that all IAs maintain good communication with other IAs and to answer students' questions to the best of your ability. If you are unsure of a sign, DO NOT guess what it is and relay it to the student. If this happens to you, be honest and let the student know that you will get back to them about the sign if a professor is not available to ask at the time.

If you find yourself in a relationship with another IA or a student, we expect professional behavior in the ARC and/or in the classroom. The Experiential Learning Supervisor will determine the impact, if any, of the relationship on the program and the service being provided. In addition, it is advised that IAs do not tutor or supervise roommates or suitemates.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is one of the most important aspects in your role as an IA and of your relationship with the student. Mutual respect and trust are at the heart of any tutoring relationship. If a student feels that they can trust you, they are more likely to cooperate fully and learn from you. Therefore, you must be particularly careful in your conversations not to discuss the students you work with, either their academic progress or their personal lives. Even the most harmless remark may be perceived as a form of invasion of the student's privacy and betrayal of trust. Any lapses in confidentiality may be viewed as grounds for dismissal.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER (ARC) RULES

- The ARC can only be accessed by IA's, Coordinators and faculty
- The ARC can only be used for ASL program related activities.
- Please keep in mind, the ARC is located next to faculty offices, so please remind IAs to try to prevent noise from becoming disruptive (use ASL instead).
- For students who are studying ASL or enrolled in an ASL course, encourage the use of only ASL as the mode of communication. Remember, you are within sight of faculty offices and therefore must be considerate towards them and their involvement in our communication.
- Under no circumstance are students allowed to be alone in the ARC.
- Books and materials are considered property of the university. All textbooks must be returned to the ARC or IA Coordinator at the end of each semester.
- The computer and printer are not for personal use and are to be used only by the IAs or IA Coordinator for work-related needs.
- The door to the ARC must remain open while occupied.
- If you are the last person to leave the ARC, turn off the computer and lights.
- Please make sure the ARC stays clean.

NOTE: Due to the COVID pandemic and with departmental approval, the ARC can be used for after hours meetings (ASL club officers, Alternative Spring break committee, etc.). Please notify the Experiential Learning Supervisor and schedule requests through the IA coordinators.

SELF ASSESSMENT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Self Assessment

Each IA must complete a self evaluation at the end of the semester and is included at the end of this manual. The Experiential Learning Supervisor and/or course instructor will do the same for each IA. The purpose of the self assessment is to see if expectations and responsibilities were met, to determine your overall grade for your experiential learning course requirements and to provide feedback and suggestions for individual performance and any program needs. You must also satisfy the requirements stated above in the "credit" section of this manual in order to receive full credit. The IA coordinator may provide the Experiential Learning Supervisor with information, but will NOT evaluate or grade their fellow student.

Disciplinary Actions

This program is a benefit and a privilege, therefore, it will not be tolerated if any of these rules or privileges are taken advantage of or disregarded. Disciplinary action may include but not be limited to, loss of access to the ARC, grade reduction and may result in termination of your responsibilities as an IA.

CONCLUSION

As an IA, you are a valuable resource for the ASL Studies program. This manual has been designed to provide an overview of the expectations and responsibilities for IA's including specific policies and procedures. The manual also includes a contract and IA self assessment.

ASLN 3292 Experiential Learning

Contract

IA Name: _____

Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Semester: _____

Hours per week: _____

Days and Times: _____

Units of Credit: _____

I have read and understood the Instructional Assistant Manual and agree to abide by all its content.

I understand that as a student at the University of Connecticut that I am responsible for upholding the [University's Community Standards](#) and appropriate student behavior.

I have read and understood the [Student Policy](#) on Sexual Harassment and Misconduct, Student Policy on Alcohol and Illegal Drugs, and Rules of Student Confidentiality.

I have read and understood the provisions of the [Family Education Rights Privacy Act](#) (FERPA).

I understand that my performance as an IA will be monitored and evaluated.

I, _____, hereby state that I have reviewed / received and understand the policies and responsibilities governing the position of IA Coordinator, and agree to all the conditions and requirements stated therein. Note: This contract must be completed and signed by the second week of the semester.

Signature of Student: _____ (Date): _____

**INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT
SELF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Instructional Assistant Name: _____

Course: _____ Semester: _____

This form is to be completed separately by the IA and the Experiential Learning Supervisor and/or course instructor at the end of the semester. How would you rate yourself for the following attributes:

	Needs Significant Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Satisfactory	Very Good	Exceptional
Punctual					
Attentive in class					
Organized					
Professional					
Knowledgeable of this course					
Prepared					
Patient and understanding					
Able to tutor at appropriate level					
Available to work with students					
Supportive and respectful					
Overall Effective and Qualified					

How were you most effective as an IA?

What areas do you feel you can improve upon ?

What suggestions would you like to make, if any, to improve the service provided to students?

What grade would you give yourself, and why?

Please make any additional comments if desired?

Comments from IA Coordinator, course instructor and/or Experiential Learning Supervisor: