

DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS

Job description

Post title:	Teaching Assistants
Grade:	Junior Demonstrating – paid as claimed (current hourly rate £14.49)
Accountable to:	Practical Courses Organiser (currently Professor Sergio Lozano-Perez)
Supervision given:	None

Introduction: The Teaching Assistants (TAs) support the operation of the undergraduate practical class. **The typical arrangements when practical classes are in-person are as follows:** the practical class is open 2.00-5.00pm, Monday to Friday during full term. TAs will be assigned either 1st or 2nd year practicals or both. The precise number of hours you will work depends on which practicals you are assigned. Typically, a first year practical in Michaelmas or Hilary term will take up to 6 hours per week and a second year one up to 9 hours per week. First year practicals are held on Thursdays and Fridays, whilst second year practicals are run Mondays – Wednesdays. Michaelmas and Hilary term practicals are run twice over a two week period. In that period, TAs must be available for M – W (or Th – F) for each week. In Trinity term, practicals are run throughout the term, and the hours for each practical will be up to 21hrs for a 1st year practical and up to 27hrs for a 2nd year practical.

Each TA should be completely familiar with the experiments that they are assigned (typically one TT practical and one from either MT or HT, but there are exceptions to this). Two afternoons (6 hours) per practical are allowed for the TAs to carry out the experiments to which they are assigned and to produce a set of model results for the SD. Further hours, up to a total of 120 per year, may be available as directed by the Practical Courses Organiser or Teaching Lab Technician to assist in the development, setting out, putting away and maintenance of experiments, to provide emergency cover if other TAs are ill and to assist with other similar activities in support of the Department.

Brief description: As directed by the Practical Courses Organiser (currently Prof. Sergio Lozano-Perez) and the Teaching Laboratory Technician (currently Ms Diana Passmore) to assist the classroom environment with the demonstration of experiments and training of undergraduates and others in experimental skills and methods.

Core tasks

- a) Assist the Practical Courses Organiser and Teaching Lab Technician in the preparation of experiments before the start of each term and assist in commissioning new apparatus.
- b) Assist the Practical Courses Organiser and Teaching Lab Technician in the setting up and dismantling of your designated experiment.
- c) Advising the undergraduate students on the experimental methods used and their safe application.
- d) Assist training in general lab skills (e.g. sample preparation, microscopy, mechanical testing), including health and safety in the laboratory.

- e) Produce a set of model results for the assigned practical(s).
- f) Assist in the quality control of experimental materials and samples.
- g) Such other duties in relation to these matters, and to the smooth running of the Undergraduate Practical Laboratory as the Practical Courses Organiser and Teaching Lab Technician deem appropriate.

Qualifications, training and experience

General:

Candidates will be judged on the basis of the following criteria, and should try to ensure that their application shows how they meet the criteria:

1. Experience of undergraduate practicals in a Materials-, Physics-, or Chemistry-based subject is essential.
2. Proven experience in teaching, of a non-practical or a practical subject is desirable. This may include previous experience of demonstrating practicals, or something from your outside life, such as teaching a musical instrument, or a sport.
3. Prior attendance at the Teaching Skills Workshop: Junior Demonstrating run by the Department in Michaelmas Term of each year.

Criteria for Specific Practical:

Each practical requires different skills; some of these will be transferable from one practical to another. For the specific background / skill set for each practical, please see the "Practical Descriptions" document on the Departmental website at

<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pgta.html>

In your application form, you are asked to identify 4 first year practicals and 4 second year practicals that you wish to be considered for (please list in order of preference). It is **desirable** that you meet some or all of the specific selection criteria for these practicals.

For further information, the protocols for each practical can be found at:

<http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/ug/ugpracticals.html>

How to Apply

Normally, Teaching Assistants are appointed for a period of three terms, in the first instance, beginning in Trinity term. Continuation of this position for subsequent years is likely but will depend both on performance and on the needs and finances of the Department, and will be reviewed before the start of the following Trinity term. Subject to a good level of performance, it is likely that your employment will be continued for a subsequent three terms, although your duties may change.

Due to the covid pandemic, the TA recruitment for the academic year 2021-2022 will likely only be for two terms (MT21 and HT22), thereafter will return to the regular three terms as mentioned above. Please still include TT practicals in your preferences if you are interested in them.

It should be noted that the Department is undertaking a general review of the undergraduate practicals which may result in some changes to the current structure.

Teaching assistantships are open to first and second year students; however, applications from first year students will be given priority. It is current Departmental practice that normally postgraduate students do not act as Teaching Assistants past their 7th term.

Applicants wishing to apply should download and complete the Application Form from the Departmental website at <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/teaching/pg/pgta.html>

Completed application forms should be sent via email to **Diana Passmore** (diana.passmore@materials.ox.ac.uk) – **a letter of reference from your DPhil supervisor will be required and may be emailed to Diana Passmore directly by the supervisor.** Applications without such a reference will not be processed. The deadline for applications is **5.00 pm on Tuesday 25th May 2021.** Late applications will not be accepted. If your supervisor is currently unavailable to provide you with a letter of reference by the deadline please let Prof. Sergio Lozano-Perez know in advance by email (sergio.lozano-perez@materials.ox.ac.uk).

Informal enquiries about the role should be made to Prof. Sergio Lozano-Perez (sergio.lozano-perez@materials.ox.ac.uk).

Selection Process

Applicants will be judged on their completed Application form, and supporting reference letter. The panel is not expecting to hold interviews.