Undergraduate Learning Assistant Policy

Definition
The term Undergraduate Learning Assistant (ULA) used herein refers to any undergraduate student who assists the faculty-of-record in that faculty member's assigned, for-credit course(s) at Michigan State University. A ULA can, under the mentorship and supervision of the faculty-of-record, assist in class preparation; objective grading; and active and collaborative learning exercises within lecture, laboratory, and discussion sections. No undergraduate student may perform activities requiring professional judgment such as determining course content, conducting lectures or seminars, performing subjective evaluations of student performance, or assigning grades for any for-credit course at Michigan State University.

The position of ULA is typically a paid position. However, in some instances, following consultation with the courses’ faculty-of-record, the ULA may exercise an option to enroll for course credit rather than receive pay. A ULA may not receive both course credit and pay for a single course to which they have been assigned: in no case may a student be enrolled in a course for which they serve as a ULA.

Selection Process
Individuals serving as ULAs must have demonstrated knowledge of subject content by either completing and excelling in the course (or its equivalent) in which they assist, or through a high level of performance in more advanced courses that depend upon knowledge of relevant course content.

Training
Each faculty-of-record utilizing ULAs must provide ULAs with appropriate guidelines and information necessary to carry out their assignments and responsibilities. These shall take the form of a written guide or handbook, which must reference relevant University policies.

ULA Responsibilities
Expectations and specific tasks necessary for the execution of ULA assignments and responsibilities must be provided in writing to the ULA. If ULAs are assigned to grade student work, it is the faculty-of-record’s responsibility to provide a framework for objective evaluation of student work, to train the ULA on the appropriate use of this framework, and to ensure that the ULA is using this framework correctly and reliably. The faculty-of-record also must inform ULAs about the importance of maintaining student confidentiality with regard to student work.

Evaluation of ULA Performance
The faculty-of-record has the responsibility for the performance and evaluation of ULAs serving in that course. ULAs must be systematically evaluated during and at the end of each semester. Feedback must be shared with the ULA, with the goal of improving the learning experience, developing better ULA performance in the future, and ultimately in developing skill sets and attitudes needed in the workplace.

Administration and Oversight
Any questions concerning the administration of this policy should be referred to the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

Tutors, who are not part of the instructional team of a specific course, are not the subject of policies contained within this document.