

Graduate School - Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Teaching Assistant Training for New US Graduate Students

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

1. Program Dates for US Students:

- **Teaching Assistant Training** - Friday, August 21, Monday, August 24.
- **Department Orientation Dates** – Tuesday, August 25 & Wednesday, August 26
 - Please check with your department for scheduled activities.
- **General Graduate Orientation** - Thursday, August 27
 - All new students must attend the program in its entirety.

2. Travel, Housing, Language Testing, Employment Verification

Rensselaer is located in the city of Troy in New York State. Troy is about twenty minutes away from the city of Albany. Albany is about one hour from New York City by plane or 3 hours by bus, train or car.

Housing

ON-CAMPUS: On campus housing is available to matriculated full-time students. If you have not applied for on-campus housing and would still like to, you can contact the Residence Life Office at 518-276-6284 or by e-mail at res_life@rpi.edu. Residence halls will open August 26, at 11 a.m. Check-in for housing assignment will take place from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., Wednesday through Friday (location to be determined – monitor <http://reslife.rpi.edu> for updated check-in locations and times), and 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday at Residence Life in the Commons West building. Beginning on Monday, August 31, check-in will be in Residence Life from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please notify your department, the Office of Residence Life, and Dennis Gornic if your arrival on campus is delayed.

OFF-CAMPUS: Plan an earlier arrival so you can find housing. An off campus apartment list, updated biweekly, can be accessed through Rensselaer Union Student Services located on the Rensselaer homepage at <http://offcampus.union.rpi.edu/>.

Language Testing

The Graduate School requires all International students and U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents for whom English is a second language to take a language test. Please send an email to Jeannie Steigler, Associate Director, Advising and Learning Center at stegj2@rpi.edu if English is not your first language.

Employment Verification - The Reform and Control Act of 1986

As a Teaching Assistant you are considered by the United States government to be an employee of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In 1986, a new Employment Verification System (EVS) was passed by the Congress of the United States and signed by the President. Under this law, Rensselaer (as an employer) will be required to examine original documents needed to establish, identify and authorize employment. You must present the originals to your department; photocopies will be retained for University records. Therefore, it is necessary that you arrive in Troy with the acceptable documentation. An "EVS" Documentation Acceptability List is enclosed. The department must certify that it has reviewed these documents before we can pay your approved stipend.

3. Microteaching

All International Teaching Assistants should follow the schedule for New International TAs and review the Program Information for New International TAs. Please Note that the Speak Test is required.

Currently enrolled Rensselaer graduate students who are first time TAs and have previously attended the General Orientation for Graduate Students, may be excused from the Thursday, August 27 program by contacting Celia Paquette at paqucec@rpi.edu and confirming prior attendance. Please note: This is not applicable for undergraduate students who will begin their first semester of graduate study.

The "Microteaching" assignment, for ALL NEW Teaching Assistants, will be held on Monday, August 24. You will need to present a five minute "mini-lecture" to your group. Please do not exceed 5 minutes. A portion of your presentation will be videotaped and replayed in the classroom for group review. This exercise will give you a sense of how effective you are as a teacher and may alert you to facets of your communication style that you like, want to keep, enhance or eliminate.

We suggest that you select a topic that you know in depth, preferably of academic interest. Blackboards and overhead projectors will be available for your use; however, computer projectors will not be available.

These short sessions are amazingly constructive. Although you may feel somewhat anxious about your presentation at first, once you've completed it, you will almost certainly feel that you have benefited from the experience.

Contact us with any questions:

The Graduate School

Dennis Gornic, Associate Dean

Celia Paquette, Sr. Student Services Administrator

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