

## Lab Assistant

A Lab Assistant is an advanced student hired by the Office of Accessibility and in partnership with content experts on campus, who assist with various lab requirements and procedures that students are unable to complete (e.g., retrieval of supplies or equipment). Students requesting a lab assistant must select the courses in which they need a lab assistant through STARS and are encouraged to request the accommodation as soon as they have made their final course selection. Once the student selects the course, the Lab Assistant memo will be emailed separately to the instructor.

The Lab Assistant memo explains to the instructor the process of hiring eligible lab assistants. There are three distinct lab assistant options:

1. Hiring a Lab Assistant – The academic department identifies a qualified candidate who has previously taken the course, performed well, and been approved by the instructor. Our office will cover the cost of the assistant, and they will be paid \$15.00 per hour on a bi-weekly basis.
2. Lab Assistant Volunteer – In this role, the tasks in which the student requires assistance are low maintenance (ex. Lifting things onto a table, grabbing and bringing equipment over for the student). Interested peer volunteers will be compensated with \$100.00 on their Zip Card at the end of the semester.
3. Utilizing a Teaching Assistant (TA) or Instructor – If the course has a teaching assistant, they could assist the student. Alternatively, the instructor could serve as the lab assistant. In this case, a lab assistant is most likely not needed for every class session, or the department is unable to identify a qualified assistant. This option is ideal for offsetting the hiring costs of a Lab Assistant.

### Lab Assistant Coordinator

Jake Darus, [jdarus@uakron.edu](mailto:jdarus@uakron.edu)

### Lab Assistant Qualifications

1. Must have taken the course and received a B grade or above.
2. Received a recommendation from their corresponding academic department
3. GPA requirement of 3.0 or above.

### Steps in Receiving Lab Assistant Services

1. Students receive a lab assistant accommodation approved by a Disability Specialist in the OA.
2. The Lab Assistant Accommodation memo will be sent to the instructor.
3. The Lab Assistant Coordinator will then reach out to the instructor to begin the coordination of the accommodation. There are separate emails for each option. Instructors will then receive 1 of 3 emails depending on the amount of lab assistance required.
  - a. Lab Assistant Volunteer – The instructors will begin the recruitment process and attempt to recruit a volunteer in the class. Volunteer qualifications will be verified, and they will be hired

once they sign the Lab Assistant Contract. After the contract is signed, the volunteer will receive the student's email to connect.

- b. Lab Assistant – The instructor will work with the academic department to find an eligible Lab Assistant candidate. The candidate will work with the Office of Accessibility to complete the hiring requirements. Once the instructor/academic department submits a recommendation, they will approach the student with the job offer. After the student confirms the position, the academic department/instructor will provide the lab assistant coordinator with the student's Full Name, Email, Date of Birth, and Student ID so the office can begin the hiring process.
  - c. Teaching Assistant – Instructors will provide the Lab Assistant Coordinator with their TA's contact information and the Lab Assistant Coordinator will email the TA with instructions. The Lab Assistant Coordinator will connect the TA and student via e-mail.
4. All new Lab Assistant employees must sign the Lab Assistant contract before assisting in all activities. Failure to sign this contract will result in removal from the position and a loss of compensation.

### **Lab Assistant No Shows**

1. If a Lab Assistant does not report to class, the student will notify the instructor and disability specialist.
2. If a Lab Assistant is absent from two or more consecutive classes, the student must notify the instructor and the Lab Assistant coordinator to determine whether a replacement lab assistant is needed.
3. Depending on where we are in the semester, we will either look for a replacement lab assistant or continue without one. If a replacement lab assistant is not available, the instructor/teaching assistant is expected to step in when the student needs help with any tasks.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Student:**

- Request the course needing a lab assistant through STARS four weeks prior to the start of the semester.
- Identify specific tasks they need assistance with.
- A student who wishes to obtain a lab assistant beyond the fourth week of the semester is required to meet with his or her Disability Specialist to review and discuss this request.
- Securing a lab assistant during an active semester may not be feasible and could lead to delays in accommodations. In some cases, students should anticipate that the accommodation may not be able to be fulfilled.
- Students must communicate with their assigned Lab Assistant if they plan to miss class 24 hours in advance.
- Students with a Lab Assistant are responsible for notifying the Lab Assistant Coordinator if the assistance they are receiving is not adequate or if they are not showing up to class.

#### **Instructor:**

- As experts within the discipline, instructors may be asked to identify a qualified lab assistant. Consult with the OA, lab assistant, and student to determine tasks that can be performed without impacting the fundamental outcomes of the course or program.

- Notify the OA if they feel that the lab assistants' help with tasks interferes with the fundamental requirements of the course.
- Step in for a lab assistant in instances they cannot attend a class; If the class utilizes a teaching assistant, they can also step in.

#### Lab Assistant:

- Know what tasks their assigned student will need assistance with.
- Perform tasks exactly how students instruct.
- Notify the Lab Assistant Coordinator and student if they will be unable to attend a class at least 24 hours in advance.
- A lab assistant is to be used as a tool, not a teacher or tutor.
- Will perform only those tasks directed by the student.
- Will not explain nor interpret lab assignments/questions.

#### OA:

- Contact instructors when a student requests a Lab Assistant to begin the coordination of assigning a lab assistant.
- Know what specific tasks in which the student will need assistance and communicate that with the instructor and lab assistant.
- Oversee the timecards of the Lab Assistant.
- It is the responsibility of the Office of Accessibility to determine if the Lab Assistant accommodation is warranted for each student's accommodation plan.