Job Description for Physics & Astronomy Student Graders

Responsible to: Instructor and department chairperson

Primary functions:
- To prepare keys for all homework sets, suitable for posting if instructor desires that.
- To grade all submitted problem sets following instructor’s guidelines.
- To complete assigned grading in a timely manner so problem sets can be returned on a regular schedule.
- To maintain records of all student scores on homework sets.
- To raise concerns and provide feedback to the instructor regarding students’ performance.

Necessary skills, abilities, and qualifications:
1. Completion of course in which student is assisting, or higher-level course, with minimum grade of B.
2. Understanding or capacity to learn course content at a level sufficient to be able to solve all the problems independently, and to evaluate student work fairly and objectively.
3. Sufficient interpersonal skills for writing constructive comments on problem sets.
4. Must be able to maintain confidentiality.
5. Must be respectful, courteous, prompt, and completely dependable.

Basic Expectations
It is important for student assistants to remember that their employment is precisely that: employment. With it come responsibilities and expectations. To avoid misunderstandings, the department has agreed to the following general considerations.

Student assistants are an important component of the department’s pedagogical efforts, and we expect to student assistants to act responsibly and professionally. Very basic expectations include:
1. being polite and courteous at all times
2. seeking to be helpful, both to the faculty member and to students in the class
3. being prompt in meeting scheduled appointments
4. completing all requested work in a timely and conscientious manner.

Specific Expectations for Student Graders
1. It is recommended that student assistant and faculty supervisor meet to determine the best schedule for when problem sets should be due and when they should be returned. It is expected that the grader will set aside sufficient time for grading and complete it by the pre-determined date. Being busy is not an excuse for failing to complete grading by the pre-agreed time.
2. Details of the student assistant’s responsibilities will be worked out by the student and supervising professor. In some cases the professor may prepare a key for the student to use in grading. In other cases the assistant will prepare a key that the professor will examine before the assistant grades the papers. (In this case it is essential that the student assistant submit the key prior to the class due date, so that the assistant can pick up the key and problem sets together soon after the class turns them in.) In some cases with advanced student assistants, the intermediate step of having the professor examine the key may be skipped.
3. During the grading, student assistants are expected not only to evaluate whether the final answer is right or wrong, but also whether the method is correct and whether the procedure is adequately explained.