

2-1c Supplement: Tips for Successfully Balancing Teaching and Research

Prepared by Cathie Overstreet, Adrienne Williams, and Diane O'Dowd from comments provided by each of the 14 TA who participated in the HHMI teaching fellow program, Fall 2006

Time management is key!

I. Schedule all responsibilities on 3-month calendar.

Teaching

1. On a calendar, schedule time for all the commitments for your teaching (discussion sections, lecture, TA training, exam proctoring, exam grading, making up activities, office hours, reading the text and answering student emails).
2. Decide how much time you can allot toward making activities and then schedule that time allotment and stick to it.
3. Schedule office hours so that they don't break up a block of time you can be doing research.
4. Plan to answer student emails only once each day. Let the students know your schedule.

Research Plan

1. Write out detailed weekly research goals for the quarter. Be realistic. Write down the purpose of the experiment and include approximately how much time it takes. Plan every experiment as though the results were going to be published.
2. Make sure you allow adequate time to do your experiments. Rushing through an experiment can cause poor results.
3. Think about the results of each experiment. How does the experiment you just did contribute to your next experiment and ultimately to your publication? Don't waste time repeating experiments that you don't really need to do.
4. Move your research forward every day. Do something daily to keep your research foremost in your mind. Even if you make media or wash glassware, these activities keep you active in the lab. Research is the reason we are in graduate school and should be the main focus.
5. Be prepared to come in early, stay late, work weekends. Success comes from consistency.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

1. Seminars are an important part of graduate school. Select seminars wisely and then schedule the time to attend important or mandatory ones.
2. Lab meetings/responsibilities should to be added to your calendar.
3. Schedule any coursework commitments you may have.
4. Schedule any talks or presentations you may be required to give during the quarter. Make sure you schedule preparation time.

Personal Time

1. Events with family and friends should be scheduled so that you have time to enjoy them without feeling you are taking away from something else.

II. Learn to say "No."

Put a high priority on your time and don't accept additional responsibilities.

If you can postpone taking a course or a journal club until the next quarter, do so.

III. Don't Procrastinate

Grade student assignments quickly and enter them into gradebook immediately

Try to find ways to save time when you do daily tasks.

