

Guidelines for MA Blackboard English Assistants (BEAs) in online English composition courses, 2020.

- BEAs must have completed at least 6 credits of graduate work at Mercy College prior to the semester in which they assist in an online classroom.
- BEAs must submit the proper forms and demonstrate through the forms that the applicant meets the criteria for assisting in a classroom (determined by Director and/or Chair).
- BEAs must complete Blackboard training before starting to assist in a classroom.
- BEAs may not be employed in any way by the instructor of record as a substitute instructor, where the effect is to relieve the instructor of record of any of his or her teaching responsibilities. The helper is only to assist and supplement the instructor in select areas.
- BEAs are not allowed to interact with students in a real-time synchronous environment in or outside of Blackboard. All correspondence with students must be had within the Blackboard shell whether in discussions, in Blackboard email, or in documents exchanged within the shell.
- BEAs should devote three to five hours per week, on average, to assisting the instructor. BEAs should keep a record (dates, times) of when they are tending to course responsibilities, whether within the Blackboard shell (for example, when reading + responding to discussions) or outside of the Blackboard shell (for example, when reading + generating feedback for student writing).
- Prior to entering the course the BEA, instructor of record, and Program Director and/or Department Chair must converse through email (so that it is in writing) and agree upon the BEA duties and general scheduling of them for the semester ahead. Generally speaking, the instructor should begin by prioritizing the items from the list below (and can propose and prioritize different items than those listed below), and should devise a plan for how specifically they would like the BEA to assist each week of the semester. The BEA and Director and/or Chair will review and as necessary propose changes to the instructor's proposal to ensure that it is reasonable, and works within the previous guidelines listed on this form. All parties need to signal their agreement to the plan prior to the BEA assisting during the semester.

Possible duties include:

1. Tutor/mentor students on sentence mechanics (e.g. grammar, punctuation, etc.)
2. Tutor/mentor students on essay mechanics (thesis statement, topic sentence, paragraph structure, development and flow of ideas, etc.).
3. Responding to student discussion posts, blog posts, or journal assignments.
4. Tutor/mentor students on research activities and effective/accurate implementation of research elements in an essay.
5. Respond to drafts of student essays or of other writing assignments.
6. Other tasks that the instructor might propose.