Guidelines for TAs in the UConn Math Department  
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Teaching tips:

1. Know the content of your lessons very well in advance: work out planned examples before class, double-check calculations, and teach yourself anything that is new.
2. Visit your classroom before the semester starts to know its location and if it has whiteboard (markers) or blackboard (chalk). Bring markers or chalk, and correct eraser, to class.
3. Dress nicely on day one to make a clear distinction between you and your students.
4. Speak loudly enough for all to hear, and with enthusiasm! If students think that you’re bored or confused about the lesson, then they will stop paying attention.
5. Always write on a board starting at far left side, not the middle, and write horizontally.
6. If something is important, write it on the board (e.g., the name of a new topic). If you speak for a while and write nothing on the board, nothing will go in any student’s notes!
7. Look at students more than the blackboard. Remember to face the class often.
8. Illustrate new ideas with examples (wouldn’t you like your teachers to do this too?).
9. When you ask the class if there are any questions, wait (perhaps count to 5 slowly in your head) before moving on. Time goes slower than you think at the front of the room.
10. Get students to speak on the first day. If they don’t, it’s hard to make this happen later.
11. If a student asks a question or makes a comment, don’t criticize or make fun of it even if it conveys an elementary misunderstanding. We have all misunderstood simple things.
12. If you tell a student “I don’t know,” also say “I’ll find out.” And then find out.
13. Do not yell at or make fun of students. It’s hard to regain their respect once it is lost.

What to do, administratively:

1. Communicate! Reply in a timely manner to emails from instructors, other TAs, and students. In particular, you are expected to check your email regularly (at least twice a day).
2. Put exam dates on your calendar and do not go away those weeks.
3. Have (860) 486-3923 in phone and email Monique, Rachel, and Tammy in emergency.
4. If you can’t teach your class, seek the instructor’s approval in advance on your substitute.
5. Record exam and quiz grades before returning any exams or quizzes to the students.
6. If you are unfamiliar with a course topic, review it before the students see it in class.
7. Start class on time and end class on time: 15 minutes between classes on a big campus.
8. Maintain a professional relationship with students; ignore their Facebook friend requests.
9. If a student has medical crisis during class, call 911 and stay in classroom.
10. Tell students your office hours and include “by appointment” as an option.
11. If you leave office briefly during office hours (e.g., bathroom), put note on door or desk.
12. Speak with the course instructor or other TAs if you have questions about the course.
13. Speak with the course instructor if you have concerns about any students, especially if they miss class for a week or if you suspect student cheating.

What not to do, administratively:

1. Do not disappear.
2. Do not miss any TA meetings without discussing it in advance with the instructor.
3. Do not schedule travel that will take you out of town on exam (proctoring/grading) days.
4. Do not arrange makeup midterms/finals yourself; the primary instructor does that.
5. Do not cut special deals (e.g., on grades) with students before speaking to the instructor.
6. Do not accept excuses for missing major events (e.g., a midterm) without documentation.
7. Do not wait until the last minute to make copies of a quiz; the copy machine may be broken!