2019 UNIV 100 Peer Instructor Info Sheet

We’re so glad that you are considering becoming a peer instructor! This rewarding role allows you to mentor incoming students, develop your leadership skills, and give back to the Highlander community. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions. If your question isn’t on here, please feel free to contact the Office of New Student and Family Programs for more information. Find us at:

101 Whitt Hall | (540) 831-5923 | www.radford.edu/nsfp/univ100

UNIV 100—I know what it is, but I want to hear you say it.
It’s a class that teaches incoming students the skills and resources they need to be successful here at Radford University. We cover academic skills, university policies and resources, and personal topics. The classes are meant to be interactive with lots of discussion, small group activities, and field trips (a.k.a., campus engagement events) to help students make friends and feel comfortable doing what they need to as a student here.

I heard that some sections have themes?
That’s right. While most of the sections are general (no theme), lots of other sections are based on a certain major, a program (e.g., Honors or MASH), a learning community (e.g., Makers or Schoolhouse), or even just a personal interest of the instructors (e.g., running, baking, or wellness). All sections accomplish the same course goals and many of the same assignments, but each class reaches the finish line in its own way.

So UNIV 100 is taught by instructors, as in plural?
Yes—every section is co-taught by a faculty instructor (FI) and a peer instructor (PI), a.k.a., a student who applies and is trained on how to teach. Things should average out to a 50/50 effort by both instructors over the course of the semester. The FI will probably take the lead in the beginning while the PI is still learning the ropes, but the PI should be sharing their student perspective and advice all along, and they should gradually take a greater role in lesson planning, communicating with students, leading discussions and activities, and even grading.

This sounds like a lot of work. What kind of time commitment are we talking about?
Yes, it can be. We suggest thinking of it as equivalent to another three-credit class, meaning that you probably shouldn’t do it if you are already taking any more than 15 credits. (Reminder: Anything over 18 credits requires approval for a course overload.) We hate to see enthusiastic students burn out from taking on too much. Take care of yourself and your education, and we’ll be right here waiting for you when you have more time.

Okay, I’m interested and I have the time to do this. How am I going to learn to teach?
We’ve got you covered. All peer instructors participate in UNIV 200, Peer Education Practicum, in the fall semester while teaching. This is a three-credit class (hence the time commitment) that blocks out time for training as well as face time with an instructor and about 15 other peer instructors. You’re all in this together—you’ll help each other solve problems and get new ideas. You’ll try out teaching techniques and sit in on each other’s classes a couple of times. Bottom line: This class is your safety net, and it gives you academic credit for everything you were going to be doing as a PI anyway.

Is this class optional?
Nope, all peer instructors have to take this class in order to get training and support while teaching. Even returning PIs—you’ll have a new group of students and an updated curriculum. However, there are a lot of benefits of taking UNIV 200! In addition to basic job training and support, you’ll learn awesome leadership skills, meet fellow rock-star students, and get to know university faculty as colleagues. Not to mention, a three-credit class that goes well can do wonders for your GPA. And if all that’s not enough, UNIV 200 also gets you a head start toward completing a leadership minor, so you can be extra professional when you graduate.
I’m sold. How do I apply?
Fill out the online application that will be open until February 17. You’ll get an e-mail about it, and the link will also be on our website. Next, we’ll bring folks in for interviews during late February and early March. Our goal is to send out decisions by late March.

What are you looking for in a PI?
Most important is someone who wants to be there for incoming students to help them handle challenges and get settled, ready to be happy, successful students. You’ll be great at this if you are approachable, adaptable, organized, patient, and empathetic; if you have excellent skills in time management, communication, and problem solving; if you know a lot about Radford policies and resources; if you have experience in peer leadership; and of course, if you have your own life together in terms of grades, conduct, and generally being a good role model. And did we mention having the time to do it? That’s important, too.

I reeeeeeeally want to teach with someone specific. Can you make that happen?
We’ll try our best! Coordinate with your faculty member about when you could both teach in the fall. Then share that info with us in the availability survey (already available for faculty, TBA for students). Keep in mind that getting all 70+ sections covered according to 150+ people’s schedules is already like doing a 3-D puzzle blindfolded, so if we can’t pair you together, we’re really sorry, and it’s nothing personal.

So I totally read all of this, but can you just remind me of the takeaways?

**UNIV 100**: First-year seminar about academic skills, university policies and resources, and personal topics for success at Radford. Discussion-based, small-group activities, field trips, classroom community. Co-taught by an FI and PI (see below).

**Section Types**: General, themed, or restricted by major, program, or learning community.

**Faculty Instructor (FI)**: Faculty member, administrator, or other professional who co-teaches UNIV 100.

**Peer Instructor (PI)**: Student who applies and is trained to teach UNIV 100 with their faculty instructor.

**Time Commitment**: Equivalent to a three-credit class (UNIV 200). Best for students taking 15 or fewer credits in the fall semester. (Reminder: Going over 18 credits requires approval of a course overload—yikes.)

**UNIV 200**: Three-credit class required for all PIs (even returners) providing training and support while you teach. Benefits include leadership and professional skills, elective credits, credit toward leadership minor, GPA boost if it goes well, and networking with faculty and student leaders.

**Application Process**: Apply online by February 17. Interviews late February. Decisions by late March.

**Selection Criteria**: Good role models who want to help new students. Also: approachable, adaptable, organized, good communicators, in good standing with the university (grades and conduct). Leadership experience and Radford knowledge also help. Make sure you have the time to do this!

**Teaching Partner Request**: Coordinate amongst yourselves and submit preferences in Availability Survey. Same goes for section preferences. No guarantees, but we promise we’ll do our best.

**Other Training**: Spring orientation (intro for new instructors, syllabus workshop), summer course prep, pre-semester training in week before classes start.