

# Teaching Assistantships

- [TA Union Contract Agreement \(pdf format\)](#)
- [Academic Employment Opportunities](#)
- **Applying for Teaching Assistantships**

## Note:

*It is expected that all currently employed and prospective Teaching Assistants for the Department of Computer Science and Engineering have fully read, understood, and agree to the guidelines set forth in this document. The Union Contract Agreement is the authoritative document for any questions about the differences between this document and the Union Contract Agreement.*

## Compensation

Students typically work for 25% (10 hours/week) or 50% (20 hours/week) as TA's. These appointments usually come with a fee subsidy of approximately \$2500/quarter. The projected salary for 2007-2008 will be \$910/month (25% appointment) and \$1820/month (50% appointment.) When guaranteed financial support offers are made during admissions, the department will pay for fees and tuition (first year only.)

## TA Work Rules

These rules are intended as a general job description for students employed as Teaching Assistants in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. Teaching Assistants should be sure to discuss any academically related matters (e.g. curriculum, teaching methods) with the instructor, the master TA and/or the departmental TA advisor. Teaching Assistants will be given 30 days notice and an opportunity to comment before any substantive changes are made to the CSE Teaching Assistants' job description or responsibilities.

## The Role of the TA and the Instructor

Teaching Assistants enhance the learning experience of UCSD students by complementing the activities of the course instructor. TAs receive training under the mentorship and supervision of the instructor.

## Duties

Specific job responsibilities will vary with teaching assignment, and the instructor will communicate the specific responsibilities expected of the TA at the beginning of the quarter. The TA and the instructor share joint responsibility for ensuring that each understands the division of work responsibilities. TA duties may include, but are not limited to, the following: facilitate a discussion section or tutorial; hold weekly office hours; e-mail contact; grade homework, programming assignments, exams, or projects; keep records; distribute and copy reading materials; prepare answer keys or supplementary notes; and act as course web-master. TAs may be required to attend the instructor's lecture regularly.

## Training

In accordance with University rules, all TAs are required to participate in the TA training program provided by the Center for Teaching Development. This requirement will not be waived regardless of prior teaching experience.

In addition to the training above, CSE students are encouraged to sign up for CSE599 (Teaching Methods in Computer Science) prior to or during their first quarter as a TA. This course is made available each fall.

Faculty should periodically evaluate the TA's performance and provide the TA with constructive feedback. Faculty and senior TA may provide training in developing teaching skills in relations to the duties stated above.

## Workload

A TA with a 50% appointment shall not be assigned a workload of more than 220 hours per quarter. This rule applies proportionally to 25% appointments. In addition, a TA shall not be assigned a workload of more than 40 hours in any one week. The number of hours worked in excess of 20 hours per week may not total more than 50 hours per quarter.

A TA may not be employed as a substitute instructor, where the effect is to relieve the instructor of his or her teaching responsibilities. (This is specifically prohibited by University Policy.) In case an instructor is absent from school, they will normally ask another faculty member to act as a substitute. However, in the event of an emergency, the Department Chair may ask the TA to substitute for the instructor. A TA may decline to substitute for the instructor if doing so would interfere with their studies (e.g. a class), or if they feel unprepared to lecture. *Whenever a TA serves as a substitute lecturer, a faculty member shall be appointed to supervise.*

Disputes regarding workload are not subject to Article 11, Grievance and Arbitration of the Union Contract Agreement. For workload complaint procedure, please see Article 30, Workload.

## Course Credit

The CSE Department requires TAs to take between two or four credits of CSE 500 each quarter they are employed as a TA. CSE 500 should be taken for S/U grade only. The number of credits should be discussed with the faculty supervisor and the Student Affairs Coordinator. Credit is awarded for instruction a TA receives under the mentorship of a faculty advisor. Such instruction will enable the TA to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance the learning experience of students. Areas of instruction include, but are not limited to: organizing discussion sections or tutorials, writing homework or test questions, setting grading policies, communication and teaching skills that promote learning. Instruction will entail regular faculty contact hours, and may also include visits by the faculty supervisor at the discussion sections given by a TA. Lastly, instruction may include outside preparation to gain specialized knowledge required by a particular course.

Starting with the incoming class in the Fall quarter 1998, all CSE students enrolled in the PhD program must have one quarter of training as a Teaching Assistant. This is a formal degree requirement and

must be completed before the student is permitted to graduate. The requirement is met by student serving as a 50% TA with pay (Student must also be enrolled in 4 units of CSE 500).

## **Work Attendance and Preparation**

TA course responsibilities begin at the start of the academic quarter and continue until the final grades have been turned in-usually the Tuesday after the end of final exams. TAs are responsible for contacting the instructor for their course prior to the first day of instruction and for determining when their responsibilities have finished for the quarter.

TAs are expected to be present during scheduled office hours or sections. If a TA must cancel office hours or sections due to illness or another conflict, they should notify their students as soon as possible preferably by an announcement in the course lecture, but at least by having a notice posted at the appropriate location. The instructor should also be notified. Cancelled office hours or sections should be rescheduled, if possible, in consultation with the instructor.

TAs are expected to be adequately prepared for office hours and sections. (For sections, it is common to spend as much time preparing examples or other notes as in the section itself.)

## **Compliance with Academic Appointment Guidelines**

TA's have academic appointments and must comply with all the regulations relating to such a position. These include regulations prohibiting Sexual Harassment, misuse of University property, substance abuse, and any violations of the law. The definitive source about such regulations is the [UCSD Policies and Procedures Manual](#) .

Graduate students who accept an offer of a teaching assistantship have a professional obligation to teach during that period. Students who are not able to fulfill their commitment to teach should notify the Department as early as possible in order that a qualified replacement may be found. Only students with equal to or greater than a 25% teaching appointment are eligible for a partial fee remission; students who elect not to teach, or who reduce their workload to less than a 25% appointment must obtain tuition support from another source, (i.e., Graduate Student Researcher).

## **Confidentiality**

All completed assignments, exams, grades, correspondence, and other information about individual students in the class shall be kept confidential except where the student has given written consent. In particular:

- No student in the class should ever be allowed access to a TA computer account or to TA files. Grade files on the computer should be kept protected.
- Grades should never be posted by name, nor by any identifying number such as a student ID or social security number.
- Graded assignments should not be left in a public place.
- Answer keys or exam materials should be kept secure in a locked drawer.

These provisions are consistent with Federal and State privacy laws.

## **Use of Authority**

Decisions made by TAs have a significant effect on their students' grades. TAs should carry out their responsibilities professionally, and be especially careful not to abuse their authority. TAs should evaluate student work objectively and fairly. In particular:

- TAs may not agree to be paid as tutors for students in their class. These students would by definition receive preferential access to the TA.
- TAs should not become romantically involved with students in their class. Such involvement makes objective evaluation difficult and also raises questions of sexual harassment.
- If a TA has a friend or partner who is a student in the class, then they should not grade that student's papers.

## **Safety**

On rare occasions, a TA may be threatened or harassed by a student, either in person or by electronic mail. These problems should be taken seriously. The TA must immediately report the incident to the instructor and to the Master TA, who will attempt to resolve the problem.

## **Grievances**

Please refer to the Grievance Procedures as outlined in the Union Contract Agreement, Article 11. Disputes regarding workload are not subject to Article 11, Grievance and Arbitration of this Agreement. For workload complaint procedure, please see Article 30, Workload.