DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY
UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA • IRVINE

Teaching Assistant (TA) Responsibilities for 2013/2014

Requirements

- For students whose first language is not English, a minimum score of 50 on the Test Of Spoken English (TSE) or the SPEAK test, or a score of 5 on the TOEP.
- Maintenance of a minimum 3.1 Grade Point Average (GPA)*
- Minimum of 1 quarter as a Teaching Assistant (TA)
- Maximum of 18 quarters as a Teaching Assistant (TA)
- Enrollment in Physics 269, Seminar in Teaching Physics (Physics graduate students only)
- Quarterly enrollment in University Teaching, Physics 399 is required for all TAs. In addition, lab TAs must enroll in Laboratory Teaching, Physics 395.
- Occasional exceptions are granted upon approval of the Graduate Division

Job Description

Definition: An academically qualified and registered graduate student in full-time residence chosen for excellent scholarship and for promise as a teacher, who is assigned to assist in the delivery of instruction under the active tutelage and supervision of a faculty member. The majority of graduate students who perform instructional functions are assigned to the Teaching Assistant title.

Responsibilities: Assist the supervising faculty member by conducting discussion, laboratory, or quiz sections that supplement faculty lectures; and by grading assignments or examinations. Teaching Assistants may provide input into the development of assignments or exams, and hold office hours. No prior teaching experience is required for appointment. The final responsibility for the content of the course rest with the supervising faculty member. A Teaching Assistant is not independently responsible for the instructional content of a course, selection of assignments, planning examinations, determination of student grades or decisions on grade appeals; and is not assigned full instructional responsibility for an entire course.

Salary

- A full time, 0.5 FTE, receives $1961.66 /month for the 9 month academic year. A 0.5 FTE assumes a maximum 20 hour/week average workload.
- Half time (0.25 FTE) and two-third time (0.33 FTE) appointments are also available, with salary based on the 0.5 FTE noted above.

Many of your responsibilities as a TA will depend on coordinating your efforts with those of the instructor and administrative staff. Below are guidelines to help you accomplish this.

Assignments

The Graduate Student Affairs Officer, My Banh, will inform you of your assignment. Verify that there are no time conflicts between your academic coursework and your assignment. My Banh must approve any change in your assignment no later than the date of the quarter tuition deadline. Eileen Powell (epowell@uci.edu) will authorize you to access rosters at http://webster.reg.uci.edu/cgi/WebRoster.

At the department's discretion, a Head TA may be appointed for Physics 3 or Physics 7 lecture courses. The Head TA responsibilities vary slightly from those of the other TAs and are specified below. It is the instructor's responsibility to fairly substitute an equal number of hours of Head TA tasks for hours normally assigned in the Tutoring Center.

Contact Information

Introduce yourself to the course instructor and provide e-mail address and home phone number.

Course Administration

The instructor will provide you with a course syllabus. This will give you an overview of the course schedule and indicate the dates for midterm and final exams. These dates will allow you to determine when your grading responsibilities are likely to be heaviest.

Grading

- **Lab Courses (3L, 7L, and 52)**
  All grading is done by the TAs. Please keep an Excel spreadsheet of scores for each of your sections. Be prepared to forward these scores to your instructor during the quarter for review, as well as at the end of the quarter. Establish with the instructor a specific scoring scheme for all quizzes, lab reports, and exams. When available, use grading keys provided by the instructor to assure objective and uniform grading. Use red ink while grading, indicating exactly where any deductions have occurred. Any correction to student scores should be initialed and dated by you. Keep a duplicate record of all scores.
- **Lecture Courses (3, 7, and 51)**
  Ask the instructor to specify your grading responsibilities for quizzes, homework, and exams. Currently, Physics 3 and 7 lecture courses have graders assigned to them for scoring quizzes and discussion work in some or all discussion sections. TAs and possibly graders score the midterm and final exam. TAs and graders may also help create quizzes and tutorial problems, proofread quizzes and tutorial problems, and photocopy quiz and tutorial assignment problems, and maintain Gradebook (typically online at EEE). TAs may also be asked to administer EEE Messageboard. The exact duties of the graders and TAs are to be determined by the instructor in keeping with the maximum number of hours allowed by the FTE assignments. For all grading, establish with the instructor a specific scoring scheme (*better to ask questions BEFORE you begin than after all the hard work of grading!)*. When available, use grading keys provided by the instructor to assure objective and uniform grading. Use red ink while grading, indicating exactly where any deductions have occurred. Any correction to student scores should be initialed and dated by you. If your course instructor requests you, rather than the grader, to compile and submit scores, please ask him to direct you on how to enter scores in an electronic database. Keep a duplicate record of all scores.
- **Tutorial Based Courses (Physics 2)**

TAs will help create quizzes and tutorial problems, proofread quizzes and tutorial problems, and photocopy quiz and tutorial assignment problems. TAs will grade the tutorial work during class for their own sections. They will also grade the weekly quizzes. Please keep an Excel spreadsheet of scores for each of your sections. Be prepared to forward these scores to your instructor during the quarter for review, as well as at the end of the quarter. Establish with the instructor a specific scoring scheme for all tutorial work. When available, use grading keys provided by the instructor to assure objective and uniform grading. Use red ink while grading, indicating exactly where any deductions have occurred. Any correction to student scores should be initialed and dated by you. Keep a duplicate record of all scores. Homework is scored electronically. TAs score the final exams. Other duties for TAs may include administering EEE Messageboard and maintaining EEE Gradebook. The exact duties of the graders and TAs are to be determined by the instructor in keeping with the maximum number of hours allowed by the FTE assignments. Ask the instructor to specify your full responsibilities.

Proctoring

Confirm with your course instructor whether you will be expected to proctor the midterm and final exams. If the proctoring conflicts with the scheduled examinations for your own course work, *it is your responsibility to arrange with another graduate student to be your substitute*. E-mail your instructor and My Banh to inform them who will substitute for you. If you are unable to find a substitute, contact My Banh as soon as possible. Given your workload and the broader demand for proctoring for Physics 3 and Physics 7 courses, you may also be assigned proctoring duties for courses *other than* those included in your TA assignment. My will inform you of any such assignments.

Pick -Up and Delivery of Materials

Lockable drop boxes outside of FRH 4129 are to be used as an easily accessible and secure storage site. Keys for these boxes are available through the main office in FRH 4129. Normally, the lecture TAs will deliver collected quizzes or homework to these boxes for pick-up by the graders, and the graders will return the scored materials here as well. The TAs will then collect the scored materials and return them to students in discussion section.

Office Hours/Tutoring

Verify with the course instructor the number of office/tutoring hours expected of you (see below under Workloads for guidelines). Normally, instructors combine your office hours with your tutoring so that both take place during your Tutoring Center assignment. However, they may elect to require you to conduct office hours in addition to tutoring center hours if workload limits permit. Your assignment information provided by My Banh will include the number of hours you are expected to be in the Tutoring Center in RH 142. Your scheduled attendance will be posted on the Web at UCI Physics & Astronomy Instruction and Student Links. E-mail your office hour schedule to the course instructor, Eileen Powell (epowell@uci.edu) and your students. Physics 3L and 52 TAs should schedule their office hours in their assigned lab rooms for the half hour preceding their lab class meeting.

Absences

Get to know your fellow TAs assigned to the same course and determine who would be able to substitute for you in case of emergency or illness. Inform the course instructor by e-mail and phone as soon as you know you will be unable to meet any of your TA responsibilities. *Always confirm with your*

instructor the dates and times he will expect your availability for performing your course responsibilities.

Holidays

Monday, Thursday, and Friday lab sections may fall on a holiday. In this case, you will need to teach a make up section on Saturday the same week during the regularly scheduled hours. The annual schedule for all observed holidays in Physics 3LB-C, 7LD, and 52A-B-C are posted on the doors to the MSTB classroom in which these courses are conducted.

Finals Week

Be prepared to perform your TA duties, including proctoring, during Finals Week (Week 11) and possibly the following week. If your course instructor has not informed you of obligations during Finals Week, and the following week, contact him/her in advance to verify his/her expectations.

Evaluation of Teaching Performance

Your students and the course instructor will evaluate your teaching performance toward the end of the quarter. The summary of results and individual comments will be made available to you sometime the following quarter. Performance evaluations are used as a basis for future assignments, letters of recommendation, awards, and as documentation of performance that may require correction.

Unacceptable Conduct of Teaching Assistants

The Department of Physics and Astronomy holds its Teaching Assistants to the same standards of instructional conduct as those defined for faculty in Academic Personnel Manual APM-015, Faculty Code of Conduct. Types of misconduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to meet the responsibilities of instruction, including:
   (a) arbitrary denial of access to instruction;
   (b) significant intrusion of material unrelated to the course;
   (c) significant failure to adhere, without legitimate reason, to the rules of the faculty in the conduct of courses, to meet class, to keep office hours, or to hold examinations as scheduled;
   (d) evaluation of student work by criteria not directly reflective of course performance;
   (e) undue and unexcused delay in evaluating student work.
2. Discrimination, including harassment, against a student on political grounds, or for reasons of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical condition, status as a covered veteran, or, within the limits imposed by law or University regulations, because of age or citizenship or for other arbitrary or personal reasons.
3. Violation of the University policy, including the pertinent guidelines, applying to nondiscrimination against students on the basis of disability.

Misconduct of Teaching Assistants will be cited by a Letter of Warning in which the misconduct is specified and its immediate correction required. Any subsequent misconduct will result in a Letter of Disciplinary Action. Such action may include an unsatisfactory grade in Physics 395 or 399 (Lab or University Teaching), termination of the current Teaching Assistant appointment, and/or disqualification from future employment as a Teaching Assistant.

Teaching Assistant-Student Conflicts of Interest

Consensual relationships between Teaching Assistants and their students are inappropriate. The following excerpt from the Academic Personnel Manual APM-015, Faculty Code of Conduct applies to the relationship between Teaching Assistants and their students, as well as to faculty-student relationship:

> The integrity of the faculty-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the faculty member, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The pedagogical relationship between faculty member and student must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with learning consistent with the goals and ideals of the University. Whenever a faculty member is responsible for academic supervision of a student, a personal relationship between them of a romantic or sexual nature, even if consensual, is inappropriate. Any such relationship jeopardizes the integrity of the educational process.

Definition of consensual relationship and policies concerning its treatment can be found at www.policies.uci.edu/adm/pols/700-16.html. Teaching Assistants should advise any student with whom they have a consensual relationship to enroll in a discussion or laboratory sections other than that conducted by that Teaching Assistant. Should a consensual relationship develop during the quarter, the Teaching Assistant should immediately inform the course instructor of the circumstance, and the course instructor should coordinate an enrollment change on the student's behalf. Should a consensual relationship exist between a Teaching Assistant and a student who is not enrolled in a discussion or lab section of the Teaching Assistant, but whose work is to be graded by the Teaching Assistant, the course instructor should be informed and arrangements made to avoid this circumstance.

Activities and Workloads

A fulltime TA (= 0.5 Full Time Equivalent or FTE) workload is based on a weekly average ranging from 15 to 20 hours. The average workload may vary from quarter to quarter depending on the number of laboratory and discussion sections the department schedules in order to accommodate varying enrollment demands.

A Teaching Assistant with a 50% appointment shall not be assigned a workload of more than 220 hours per quarter (eleven week period including finals week) or 40 hours per week. The number of hours worked in excess of 20 hours per week may not total more than 50 hours per quarter. This standard shall apply proportionately to other percent appointments. Periodically, partial time assignments are made, and are based on 2/3 or 1/2 of a fulltime assignment. In addition, a Teaching Assistant with an appointment of 50% or less shall not be assigned a workload of more than 40 hours in any one week or more than 8 hours in any one day.

Teaching assistants conduct discussion and/or laboratory sections. The various activities and workload for lower division courses are described below for a fulltime assignment. Because the load for the different activities may vary each week, the following hours represent expected weekly *averages* over an entire quarter, including finals week.

Physics 2

(*2-3 sections*)* **

Attend Monday preparation sessions	1 hr
Attend Friday lectures	2 hr
Prepare and create problems for tutorials	2 hr
Conduct tutorials (2 hr/section x 2-3 sections)	4-6 hr
Grade homework and in-class quizzes	3-4 hr
Conduct office hours and tutoring (including message-board)***	3-5 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**
Proctor final exams (Week 11 only)	10 hr

* *Sections vary from 30 person sections for a single TA to 180 person sections for a team of 4 TAs and 2-4 undergraduate tutors.*

** *A head TA may be assigned to a group of tutorials with reduced tutoring center hours in exchange for extra duties. Duties may include monitoring the message-board to ensure timely responses to questions and helping the instructor maintain grade-book online.*

*** *Tutoring center hours are determined based on the style of sections assigned to the TA and the amount of hours associated with the section duties.*

Physics 3 and 52 Laboratories

(*2–3 sections*)

Attend Monday preparation session	3 hr
Conduct office hours	1 hr
Conduct laboratories (3 hr/ section x 2-3 sections)	6-9 hr
Grade quizzes and lab reports (~ 2.5 hr/section)	5-7 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**
Prepare course scores and grades (Week 11 only)	10 hr

Physics 3 and 7 Discussions

(*4-5 sections*)*

Prepare for discussion sections, incl. quiz/exam preparation	3-4 hr
Grading quizzes	4-6 hr
Conduct discussions (1 hr/section x 4-5 sections)	4-5 hr
Conduct office hours and tutoring (1hr/discussion section)	4-5 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**
Proctor and grade midterm and final exams (Weeks 5 and 11 only)	10 hr

***** *A Head TA may be appointed, at the department's discretion, for Physics 3 or Physics 7 lecture courses (he/she must be assigned at least 3 discussion sections to qualify). Some instructors may, and some may not, elect to utilize a Head TA. A Head Teaching Assistant's responsibilities may include, but not be limited to:*

- *supervising the accuracy and promptness of the grader's processing of scores*
- *assisting the instructor in the administration of quiz / homework preparation and scoring*
- *assisting the instructor in disseminating student information via the Web*
- *assisting the instructor in the processing of course grades*

Physics 7 Discussions and Laboratories

(*Any combination of discussion and lab sections totaling 4-5*)

A) 3-4 Discussions and 1-2 Labs

Prepare for discussion sections, incl. quiz/exam preparation	3-4 hr
Conduct discussions (1 hr/ section x 3-4 sections)	3-4 hr
Conduct office hours and tutoring (~ 1hr/discussion section)	3-4 hr
Grading quizzes	2 hr
Prepare for lab sections	2 hr
Conduct laboratories (2 hr/section x 1-2 sections)	2-4 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**
Proctor and grade midterm and final exams (Weeks 5 and 11 only)	9 hr
Prepare lab course scores and grades (Week 11 only)	1 hr

B) 2-3 Discussions and 2-3 Labs

Prepare for discussion sections, incl. quiz/exam preparation	3-4 hr
Conduct discussions (1 hr/ section x 2-3 sections)	2-3 hr
Conduct office hours and tutoring (~1hr/discussion section)	2-3 hr
Grading quizzes	2 hr
Prepare for lab sections	2 hr
Conduct laboratories (2 hr/section x 2-3 sections)	4-6 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**
Proctor and grade midterm and final exams (Weeks 5 and 11 only)	7 hr
Prepare lab course scores and grades (Week 11 only)	3 hr

C) 1-2 Discussions and 3-4 Labs

Prepare for discussion sections, incl. quiz/exam preparation	3-4 hr
Conduct discussions (1 hr/ section x 1-2 sections)	1-2 hr
Conduct office hours and tutoring (~1hr/discussion section)	1-2 hr
Grading quizzes	2 hr
Prepare for lab sections	2 hr
Conduct laboratories (2 hr/section x 3-4 sections)	6-8 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**

Proctor and grade midterm and final exams (Weeks 5 and 11 only) 6 hr
Prepare lab course scores and grades (Week 11 only) 4 hr

D) 4-5 Labs

Prepare for lab sections	2 hr
Conduct laboratories (2 hr/section x 4-5 sections)	8-10 hr
Conduct tutoring for lecture course	3-6 hr
Grading quizzes	2 hr
Weekly Total	**15 - 20 hr**

Prepare lab course scores and grades (Week 11 only) 5 hr