

## **English Department Guidelines for Faculty Working with TAs**

The best educational outcomes for undergraduate lecture courses occur when faculty and teaching assistants work cooperatively and effectively together. It is the mutual responsibility of faculty and TAs to communicate about issues affecting their separate duties.

At UCSB, TA appointments are framed by a union contract that stipulates the total number of hours a TA with a standard 50% appointment may work during the quarter (220), as well as not-to-exceed limits for any single week (40) and for any single day (8) [ASE Contract Article 31.A.1.b; link below]. UCSB's Graduate Division emphasizes that Instructors of Record are responsible for ensuring that the workload they assign their TAs does not exceed the specified number and distribution of hours worked across the term. In English Department courses, a 50% appointment usually entails leading two sections of up to 25 students. Weekly, a TA for a typical lecture course spends three hours attending lecture; two hours leading two sections; and two hours holding office hours. In the remaining time, the TA undertakes other course-related activities (TA meetings; preparing for section; maintaining records; grading exercises, exams, and essays, etc.).

Instructors are expected to meet with their TAs before the first sections are held. At this meeting, instructor and TAs should discuss both instructional goals and time management for different elements of the course, as well as signing the Academic Student Employee forms and returning these to the Graduate Program Administrator. For example, how many hours might a TA allocate to preparing for section? How much time responding to student email and maintaining grade records? How long to evaluate and offer feedback on assignments and exams? Instructors might provide actual examples of how student work should be evaluated (scope, format), and discuss how to achieve this in regard to a deadline for getting evaluated work back to students (usually no more than two weeks). It's advisable to hold at least two further TA meetings throughout the quarter, targeting specific issues like grading assignments or presenting sensitive material.

While the Department encourages Instructors to discuss course materials, assessment models, and instructional goals with their TAs as part of the mentorship relation, TAs are not responsible for creating the instructional content of a course, assignments, or examinations (RB IV-6, III.B). TAs may be invited to offer plenary lectures, but should not be required to do so.

The Instructor of Record must visit at least one section for each TA and must provide written feedback on instruction (RB IV-6.V). (The Department is developing a template for this process.) The TA Advisor reviews student evaluations of all TAs employed by the Department.

Grade disputes and other concerns: If an undergraduate wishes to dispute a grade or raises another issue about section that isn't resolved after meeting with the TA, the student should speak with the Instructor. If the concern can't be resolved at that point, the student may request a consultation with the Department Chair. Title IX reports are not subject to this model.

Instructors and TAs should be aware of the university's information page on resources for distressed students: <http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/responding-to-distressed-students/welcome>

Link to current ASE Contract (in effect to 6/30/2022):

<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/bx/contract.html>

Note: The Department is developing a separate Guidelines document for Instructors co-teaching with Center RAs.