

**UC SAN DIEGO
DEPARTMENT of MUSIC
TEACHING ASSISTANT HANDBOOK**

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GUIDELINES AND POLICY

TA Duties and Responsibilities:

- To assist in the instruction of an upper or lower division course at the University under the supervision of a course instructor. The TA primarily assists the faculty member in charge of the course by conducting discussion or laboratory sections that supplement faculty lectures and by grading assignments and examinations.
- To assist with the development of assignments or exams as needed, hold office hours and proctor examinations. The general instructional content of the course, as well as the official assignment of student grades and decisions on grade appeals, are the responsibility of the instructor in charge of the course. Teaching assistants may not be assigned responsibility for the entire instruction of a course.
- To realize both carefully and thoroughly, by using explanation, exposition, and dialogue, the course content as laid out by the Music Department and the instructor.
- To add personal insight into the topic relevant to the students' understanding.
- To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UCSD strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism among faculty, staff and students. UCSD faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice the **UCSD Principles of Community** (<http://www.ucsd.edu/explore/about/principles.html>) as individuals and in groups. TAs should become familiar with the principles, as well as campus policies on sexual harassment, confidentiality of student records, and academic dishonesty (see later section). These are available in TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS handbook as well as on the web at <http://commons.ucsd.edu>
- TA, Reader, and Associate positions are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the University and the UAW. The agreement, including applicable benefits, is found at: http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/collective_bargaining_units/academicstudentemployees_bx/agreement.html.

TA TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Campus & Department Training Requirements

Participation in departmental and campus TA training, for both first-time and continuing TAs, is **MANDATORY**. Meeting times are scheduled and communicated well in advance so that all can attend. Although excellent instructional support and services are offered on an on-going basis by TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS (see section below), the following training constitutes minimum department requirements:

- Welcome Week departmental training meeting (All TAs)
- Teaching & Learning Commons for Teaching Development (TEACHING & LEARNING CENTER) campus orientation (first-time TAs)
- Two additional Fall quarter training sessions (All TAs)
- Fall quarter WLH Stereo/AV use presentation (All TAs)
- Quarterly departmental TA Faculty Advisor meeting (All TAs)

In addition to these group meetings, the faculty TA faculty adviser will visit a section meeting of each first-time TA, usually during spring quarter; (s)he is also available for other observations on request.

The Teaching & Learning Commons

The Teaching & Learning Commons gives each new TA a complimentary copy of their **Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook**. It contains important and useful suggestions for improving teaching skills, grading procedures, etc. New TAs are required to attend orientation meetings held at the start of Fall quarter. This handbook and another useful and extensive one put out by UC-Riverside are available for reference in the Grad Lounge. TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS has a very friendly and helpful staff who can suggest teaching techniques and offer useful advice. It is a UCSD requirement that a TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS consultant contact every new TA to make arrangements to observe you teach and to meet with you to suggest ways in which you can improve your teaching. TAs should take advantage of this useful service! Also, the faculty TA Adviser and especially the Senior TA are always available for questions or advice. TAs who have taught in the same course in past years can also be very helpful with feedback and advice.

MUSIC TA RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY

What is Essential:

- TAs should contact the faculty instructor of their course before the first day of the class, to find out if (s)he has particular things the TA needs to know before the course begins.
- TAs should attend all lectures in order to keep abreast of current course content and take notes on lectures and discussion (if applicable to section preparation, or to assist students with special accommodations). They may also be asked to assist with lecture in whatever ways the instructor finds helpful.
- For courses with TA discussion sections, TAs should be prepared to discuss all reading and listening material provided by the instructor.
- Any expected absences from a section should be discussed with the course instructor well in advance of the section you anticipate missing. Please notify the course instructor and graduate advisor if there is a chance you will be unable to hold a scheduled discussion section. Be sure to arrange for coverage if you know you will be missing a section. To the best of your ability, please avoid scheduling personal commitments at times you are expected to teach a section.
- Accurate Record Keeping: Grading criteria should be clear and easily substantiated. Grading and attendance become even more significant when class discussion and demonstration cover material not available in textbooks, class reserves, or in the library.
- Office Hours: TAs should establish fixed weekly office hours (at least 2) that are convenient to their own schedules as well as for their students; these can be at any fixed location. There are two TA offices in the CPMC building available for you to reserve for regular hours (sign up early!).
- Time Requirements: Actual time spent on TA work and the number of hours you are contracted for should be equivalent. Be sure to pre-arrange your work time with your faculty to coincide with your agreement with the department. Hours and percentages are covered in the **Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook**. (In general, work times are stated as quarterly totals, allowing for significant week-to-week variation.)

What is Expected:

- In labs, discussion sections, or office hours, TAs should try to illuminate, or expand if necessary, details of the professor's lecture. Open discussion, demonstrations, assignments, notebooks or journals, quizzes, additional study guides, reserve materials, other media presentations, library references, and any other resources imaginable can be utilized by the TA within the framework of the course developed by the professor. Take note of any informational or philosophical differences and discuss them in private with the course instructor. A variety of views may be welcome and interesting if presented clearly as such, with a focus the students can follow.
- Be prepared to be a *Go-fer*. The TA will often have to handle menial administrative tasks and media arrangements. Pleasant expedition of these jobs will, in the end, leave more time for the more gratifying interaction with students. Some faculty may be open to more input by the TA, particularly when arrangements are made before the term, so meet with your faculty early. In

classes with several TAs, taking charge of a class lecture on your subject interest or expertise, or even co-teaching may be welcomed. Weekly meetings with the professor are recommended for problem prevention. This will also help improve consistency between TA sections in presenting and grading course materials .

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

(The nuts and bolts of the job)

- Be informed about academic and health-related resources available to students both within and outside of the department such as: department forms and procedures, academic counseling, personal problems and health, extra tutoring, the OASIS writing center, and other university business. The UCSD web site (<http://www.ucsd.edu>) and the department Undergraduate Advisor (Melanie Ronten, mus-ug@music.ucsd.edu), can also guide you to important resources. Please also see the UCSD Contacts list on page 8 for information on getting in touch with some of these offices.
- You may be asked to arrange for **ALL** technical and equipment needs for your instructor. (This can include A/V, recording, room set-up, etc.). This may involve checking out equipment from Brady at ... <http://music-intranet.ucsd.edu/request.php?form=AV>.
- As a group, TAs represent the eyes and ears of the department. Please contact Neal Bociek, Facilities Manager, facilities@music.ucsd.edu, when you see anything that needs attention or appears unusual.
- TA Offices are 243 and 245. The offices have an electronic lock. Contact Neal Bociek at facilities@music.ucsd.edu for the code. These are shared spaces that can be reserved for office hours. Office hours may be reserved on the sign-up sheets posted on the TA Office doors.
- Confer with the course instructor on return policies regarding exams and papers
- Get grades in **on time**. This often means being prepared to process many grades all at the same time at the end of the term when your own course load and obligations are heavy. Prepare for this ahead of time! In the first week of classes, practice logging on to eGrades to ensure you have access. Please be very careful and accurate, and try to avoid the need for any subsequent grade changes. Final grades are due the Tuesday following the final day of a quarter.
- Exams and/or course papers may NOT be left outside TA offices. No exceptions. Arrangements for returning exams and papers should be made by the instructor and TA. Possibilities include using TA offices.
- Photocopying for small course-related jobs may be done using the department copier in the grad mailroom – room 159, or in the Staff break room – room 174, see Linda Higgins in Rm. 193 if permission is required. Large jobs (tests, handouts, final exams, etc.) should be ordered in advance from IMPRINTS or FedEx. You may use the Departmental Resources Request Form to request funds for such a job.

ELEMENTS OF TEACHING PARTICULAR TO MUSIC

- The range of students' musical background in a class varies from a complete lack of musical vocabulary, to a working one, to very experienced musicians. This will present difficulties in keeping the group progressing equally with the course material while continuing to stimulate and challenge the group as a whole. Be aware of including all students regardless of the perceived level, and take special care not to embarrass those lacking in previous knowledge of the subject.
- Concert reviews are often a significant part of many courses, and generally are not a familiar means of academic work for most non-music students. Standards and suggested forms for critiques should be discussed early in the term and developed throughout.
- Journals, reviews and other regular written work often need extra emphasis and encouragement for students to improve their writing skills. Of course, this kind of work requires extra grading time, so plan accordingly.
- An important component of most music courses is the teaching of critical music listening. This is a difficult skill both for the students to acquire and for the instructor to teach, and strategies for achieving it are a recurring topic of discussion in TA meetings. Success in this project can often be attained by some trial and error, through which you can develop strategies that you are comfortable with.
- It is often helpful to collect some personal information from your students at the first section meeting: name, major, year in school, previous musical background, course expectations, etc. This can be done on a sign-up sheet or on individual cards or slips of paper that you pass out.
- There are many concerts and other activities in the Department that may relate to students' courses of study or simply to their general interests. Part of your role is to promote their awareness of such events, and to encourage their attendance (remember that today's students are our future audiences).

SOME CLASSROOM TIPS

- Articulate the most basic concepts and explain points clearly, then expand or develop as vocabulary and comprehension permits.
- Encourage questions, but stay on course track. Use office hours for tangential discussions.
- Be prepared with a wide variety of analogies and approaches for explanations. Everyone has a different frame of reference from their life experiences.
- Develop concepts with a musically descriptive vocabulary.
- Accept non-technical terms rather than mis-used technical ones.
- When using performance to demonstrate musical concepts don't force reluctant or shy individuals to perform solo. Group participation is easier for some.

- For demonstrating some concepts students may need to perform tasks as simple as changing pitch direction, or maintaining a pulse to move toward the basic comprehension of other elementary musical concepts. Some students with or without good academic skills may have difficulty physically demonstrating these tasks. Solutions may need to be found outside of the classroom setting.
- Make very clear your procedures for evaluation and grading. Evaluating students' ability to grasp musical concepts may be different than in other areas of academia. Try to offer specific guidelines and expectations.
- Many TAs are experienced one-to-one teachers, however, find the classroom challenging and requiring a different technique. At TEACHING & LEARNING CENTER, there are helpful resources available for checkout, which specifically address teaching styles. Being a TA offers the opportunity to see many teaching styles and to pick up tips from other graduate students and faculty.
- Flexibility and Patience are necessary attributes of a successful TA. Whenever possible, TAs are encouraged to make the educational process a fun one, both for themselves and their students. The Senior TA and TA faculty adviser are always available to discuss your problems and help with possible solutions.

PROMOTING AND SUPPORT A CULTURE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is essential that all TAs familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of the Academic Integrity Office <https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>. If you have any concerns about academic integrity in the classroom or with respect to student work, you must notify the course instructor immediately, and you may also wish to consult with the faculty teaching advisor. UC San Diego's policy on integrity of scholarship is also available here: <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

The TA should receive at the beginning of each quarter a thorough introduction to the course topic/content by the assigned instructor, and should consult with him/her regularly throughout the course. The faculty TA Advisor is available throughout the year for confidential consultation and advice about all matters of teaching assistantship, including teaching challenges, issues regarding individual students, and matters involving teaching faculty. TA workshops are held each quarter, to address issues which may arise during the academic year and to provide a forum for discussion of topics of general interest. At the end of the quarter, both students and faculty submit written reviews of the TA's performance.

In recent years, funds for two \$200 "TA Excellence Award" stipends have been granted to recognize superior performance, service and commitment to teaching. In addition, there may be a "First-Year Excellence Award" for an outstanding first-year TA. The recipients are recommended by

the faculty on the basis of student and TA performance evaluations and selected by the department Chair.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE AS A TA

For continued service, a TA must meet university eligibility criteria. For academic year employment at 25-50% time, a student must be registered full-time (12 units or more). A student enrolled in less than 12 units, with departmental approval, is eligible for a maximum of 25% time employment. Any employment outside of the student's academic (home) department must have prior approval from the home department. Any exception to the minimum qualifications listed may be granted at the discretion of the University. However, international students are limited to a maximum of 50% employment at all times.

- A graduate student must be in good academic standing, i.e.;
- Meet departmental standards including a satisfactory annual spring academic progress evaluation;
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 in upper-division and graduate course work
- Must not have more than a total of eight units of F and/or U grades overall.

- A graduate student must be within the departmental time limits. Each department has established Pre-Candidacy and Support Time Limits. A doctoral student must advance to candidacy by the Pre-candidacy Time Limit (PCTL) and also be within the Support Time Limit (SUTL) to remain eligible for campus employment or to receive other University funds. In addition, no one may be employed as a teaching assistant for more than 18 quarters. MA students are eligible for 6 quarters of music department employment.

- An international graduate student whose undergraduate degree is not from an English-speaking college or university, or who has serious pronunciation problems, may not serve as a TA until s/he has been certified to have the requisite English language skills. (This English language policy does not apply to a student who serves as a TA in a course which is conducted in his/her native language.) Evaluation and certification will be arranged by the Music department and TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS. For further information, contact the TEACHING & LEARNING COMMONS International Teaching Assistant Language Program, (858) 534-3981, Teaching & Learning Center@ucsd.edu.

All TAs enroll for MUS 500 with the course instructor each quarter. Participation in the undergraduate teaching program is required for a minimum of 25% time for three (3) quarters or 33% for two (2) quarters [6 units total]. Units correspond to hours of work per week. Enroll as follows: 25% TA - 2 units, 33% TA - 3 units, 50% TA - 4 units. If TAs are not assigned, it is the student's responsibility to seek out equivalent classroom teaching experiences.

NOTE: New TAs should also enroll in MUS 501 in FALL quarter (only) with Prof. Sarah Hankins for New TA Training.

UCSD DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Music Department:

Dimple Bhatt	Graduate Advisor	CPMC 197	534-3279	mus-grad@ucsd.edu
Sarah Hankins	TA Faculty Advisor	CPMC 249	822-0092	shankins@ucsd.edu
Barbara Jackson	MSO	CPMC 188	534-3231	b1jackson@cloud.ucsd.edu
Miguel Ramirez	HR Manager	CPMC 189	534-5404	maramire@cloud.ucsd.edu
Trevor Henthorn	Systems Administrator	CPMC 181	822-1034	trevor@cloud.ucsd.edu
Linda Higgins	Fiscal Manager	CPMC 193	534-3273	lhiggins@cloud.ucsd.edu
Neal Bociek	Facilities Manager	CPMC 177	534-2769	facilities@music.ucsd.edu
Andrew Munsey	Recording Engineer	CPMC 173	534-8868	amunsey@cloud.ucsd.edu
Jessica Flores	Production Manager	CPMC 185	822-3725	j3flores@cloud.ucsd.edu
Melanie Ronten	Undergraduate Advisor	CPMC 195	534-8226	mus-ug@ucsd.edu

Teaching & Learning Commons Geisel Library 822-1992 commons@ucsd.edu <https://commons.ucsd.edu>

Oasis Tutorial Center Center Hall, 3rd Floor 534-3760 oasis@ucsd.edu <http://oasis.ucsd.edu>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Galbraith Hall 534-3755 <https://caps.ucsd.edu/>