

TA Handbook

Department of Statistics and Applied Probability at UCSB

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1 Preface

Welcome to the TA Handbook, prepared for Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the Department of Statistics and Applied Probability (PSTAT) at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB).

Part I

Preliminaries

2 Teaching Mission Statement

Text will go here. This is a test of editing the text of the website, and checking that the changes are reflected on github.

3 Staff and Faculty Leadership

- **Student Affairs Manager:** Myranda Flores [she/her] (studentaffairs@pstat.ucsb.edu)
 - Oversees hiring and payroll for academic employees in the department.
 - Coordinates the assignment of Teaching Assistants to sections
 - Has copies of textbooks that TAs can borrow for use in their course during the quarter
- **Undergraduate Advisors:** Ellery Wilkie [she/her] and Yan Laschev [he/him] (undergradadvisor@pstat.ucsb.edu)
 - Coordinates classroom scheduling for departmental courses
 - Assists with DSP exam accommodations
- **Academic Coordinator:** Jessie Priestley [she/her] (academic-coordinator@pstat.ucsb.edu)
 - Hires and onboards ULAs
- **Department Chair:** Tomoyuki Ichiba [he/him] (ichiba@pstat.ucsb.edu)
 - Oversees planning and budgeting for the department,
 - Hires instructors including Graduate Student Teaching Associates.
- **Director of Graduate Studies:** Drew Carter [he/him] (carter@pstat.ucsb.edu)
 - The DGS is responsible for assigning TAs to courses,
 - Makes hiring decision regarding Teaching Assistants and Reader,
 - Interprets policies for academic employees.
- **Teaching Assistant Training Coordinator:** It would be really nice if we had someone with a title like this.
- **Lead TA:** Ethan Marzban [he/him] (epmarzban@pstat.ucsb.edu)

- Leads the TA Training program
- Acts as a liaison between graduate students and departmental leadership

Part II

Expectations for Teaching Assistants

4 Description of TA Duties from Instructor

Text will go here.

5 Communication between TAs and Instructors

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6 Workload Expectations

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7 Discussion Sections

Text will go here.

8 Office Hours

Text will go here.

9 Grading

Text will go here.

10 Creation of Course Materials

Text will go here.

Part III

Hiring Procedures

11 Teaching Assistant Applications

During the Summer before the new academic year begins, the department will send the annual Teaching Assistant Application. Graduate students who would like to be considered for a teaching assistant position must complete this form.

Please be as detailed as possible, especially for the following sections.

- *Workload Expectations* It is common for graduate students to work at 50% full time employment (FTE) which equates to 20 hours per week as well as two sections of a course. It is important for the Department to know your availability per quarter as section assignments are made. For example, if you anticipate having a Graduate Student Research position and would like to split your time between that appointment and the teaching assistant position, the department can make adjustments to your TA course assignments.
- *Prior TA Experience* If you have been a teaching assistant for the PSTAT department in the past, you may list your experience here. You can list which courses in the department you have previously taught.
- *TA/Reader Assignment Preferences* This section will allow you to pick which courses you would like to be assigned to teach. While first choice classes may not be guaranteed, the department tries to accommodate as many preferences as possible.
- *Other skills and qualifications* Students may list other qualifications that may be helpful when assigning TAs to courses. Additional information such as proficiency in software packages, previous graduate degrees, passed actuarial exams would be important to note here.

The information from the teaching assistant application will be used by the Director of Graduate Studies to assign graduate students to courses for the entire academic year. You should receive information about the courses that you will be assigned at the beginning of the year. Assignments to the specific sections of their courses and finalization of the schedule will occur at the start of each quarter. You should receive this information from the Student Affairs Manager (Chapter 3).

12 Section Assignments

Once course assignments are completed, the Student Affairs Manager (SAM see Chapter 3) will assign TAs to sections of their course. Instructors and all teaching assistants will have the schedules communicated to them by the SAM via email before the quarter starts.

12.1 Schedule Conflicts

If TAs have a time conflict with their assigned section, it is recommended to try to switch sections with another TA in that same course, if possible. After exhausting all options (another way to say this?) then the next step would be to communicate with the DGS to be switched into a different course.

12.2 Confirming Section Assignments

If there are no conflicts with your assigned section, please confirm with the SAM that your assignment is finalized. This will trigger the SAM and UPA to assign you to the section in GOLD and eGrades, which will grant you access to the course website in Canvas. In addition, your end-of-the-quarter ESCI evaluations will be assigned based on what is listed in eGrades.

Part IV

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

13 Electronic Resources

13.1 Canvas

Currently, UCSB utilizes **Canvas** (canvas.ucsb.edu) as the primary learning management system on which most course sites are built. **LSIT** (Letters and Sciences IT) offers several resources for students and instructors that are new to the Canvas learning system at <https://help.lsit.ucsb.edu/hc/en-us/categories/5360081368475-Canvas>; additionally, you can submit a “help ticket” for one-on-one (virtual) help using the following link: https://help.lsit.ucsb.edu/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=1260809796629

13.2 Gradescope

Many instructors also utilize **Gradescope** to aid in the uploading, management, and grading of student assessments. You can log into gradescope by navigating to <http://gradescope.com/> and logging in with your UCSB credentials- please note that your @umail.ucsb.edu address and your @ucsb.edu address will have separate Gradescope accounts unless you physically merge them; we encourage you to merge these accounts as soon as possible to avoid any future confusion when logging in to specific Gradescope course sites. You can find information on how to merge your Gradescope accounts at <https://help.gradescope.com/article/ipjyg27lg5-student-merge-accounts>.

14 Office Supplies

14.1 Canvas

You will not be expected to purchase office supplies that directly relate to your teaching duties; e.g. chalk, whiteboard markers, etc. Rather, the department provides supplies like these to graduate students in the so-called “Supply Drawer”, located in the PSTAT Main Office (SH 5607). Please note that the office is always locked outside of business hours and also on days when the Staff are remote, so please plan accordingly.