Policies Regarding Teaching Assistants  
University of Colorado Denver  
Department of Mathematical & Statistical Sciences  
October 2004  
(Revised June 2011)

1. Definitions

A. A Teaching Assistant (TA) is a student enrolled full time in a graduate degree program at UC Denver who contracts to teach courses, and/or assist in teaching, for the Department of Mathematical & Statistical Sciences during an academic year.

B. A regular teaching assistant is a TA whom the department expects to rehire for up to a total of five years subject to availability of funds and subject to the student meeting the requirements specified in section III below. Regular teaching assistantships are awarded only to Ph.D. students.

C. A temporary teaching assistant is a TA who is given a one semester contract, but without any expectation by the department to rehire for subsequent semesters.

II. Hiring Procedures

A. Applications for a TA position can accompany the student application, or it can arrive separately, before February 1 preceding the Fall semester to which the TA will apply. To be considered for a teaching assistantship the application packet must be accompanied by a letter indicating interest in an assistantship and citing prior teaching or tutoring experience. When the Graduate Committee considers requests for teaching assistants, the primary criterion that is used is academic excellence. Other factors that may be considered include ability to teach lower division mathematics courses, residency consideration (as it relates to tuition costs), quality of faculty recommendations, and outside employment (candidate cannot be employed off-campus while holding an assistantship). Any outside employment must have the written approval of the Graduate Committee with the exception of in-department grading of 4 hours per week or less.

International students follow a different application process and timeline – see our admissions web page for forms and more information.

B. The Graduate Committee will review all applications, interview applicants (if possible), and decide together with the department chair on TA offers. Most TA decisions are made before the end of the spring semester.

C. Students hired as regular TAs will be hired for the nine-month academic year and will be paid in nine equal payments each month, beginning the last day of September and ending the last day of May. Summer school employment as a lecturer may be possible, but is not guaranteed.

D. Renewal of Teaching Assistantships: Subject to availability of funds, a student appointed as a regular TA will generally be rehired for subsequent academic years provided that i) the student is adequately fulfilling the responsibilities of the position (as defined under section III), ii) the student is making satisfactory academic progress (as defined in the Graduate
Handbook), and iii) the student is performing at a level that demonstrates a reasonable probability of completing the Ph.D. degree within five years. Students who have not completed their degree within five years are not eligible for regular teaching assistantships, but may be eligible for temporary teaching assistantships.

E. Students hired as temporary TAs will be hired one semester at a time at the discretion of the department. Temporary TAs may apply for a regular TA position according to section II A. above.

III. Responsibilities

A. A teaching assistant will teach one course per semester, which may be a three (3) or four (4) credit hour course. TAs may have additional duties, such as working in the Math Education Resource Center (MERC) or grading.

TA courses will usually be at the freshman level, but a TA may be assigned a higher level course at the discretion of the department chair. Normally, the enrollment in a course assigned to a TA is 15-35 students. In instances where class size is significantly larger, a reduction in the number of lab assignments and/or grading assistance is possible at the discretion of the department chair.

Responsibilities of teaching will include the following:

1. Meet classes regularly and promptly.
2. Hold regular office hours (typically four hours per week).
3. Prepare and distribute a course syllabus the first day of class that states course requirements and grading policies, and adhere to the syllabus.
4. Return graded papers promptly.
5. Complete all reports required by the University of all teachers.
6. Present course material and conduct discussions in an organized and enthusiastic style.
7. Participate in the proctoring and grading of uniform examinations.
8. Participate in training programs or course coordination meetings that may occur during the semester.
9. Be familiar with the software programs used in the MERC and in lower division math courses.

B. Course Materials – The department will provide each TA with a course syllabus and necessary textbooks and instructor’s manuals for each course to be taught. Other supporting material for all courses (exams and quizzes from previous semesters) are on file in the department.

C. Progress Toward Degree – Unless an exception is granted, TAs are required to register for a minimum of 6 credit hours during their first semester and then 7 credit hours for each subsequent semester until nonthesis coursework has been satisfied. For students early in their studies, this may consist of 3 courses for a total of nine (9) credits. For students further along in their studies, a typical course load often consists of 2 regular courses along with a 1 credit readings course for a total for seven (7) credits. Each TA is expected to make
satisfactory progress toward a degree. All Graduate School requirements must be met.

D. Other Responsibilities - Each TA must be available the week prior to the start of each semester for course preparation and possible advising. **Attendance at all orientation meetings, teaching workshops and lab training sessions is required.** TAs are also expected to attend course meetings called by the course captain during the semester.

E. Off-campus Employment – To ensure students are able to make satisfactory progress toward the degree, teaching assistants are strongly discourages from accepting other employment. Other employment must have the written approval of the Graduate Committee.

IV. Intradepartmental Communication Procedures

A. The Graduate Committee serves as liaison between the department and TAs. This Committee will advise the department and the department chair on matters of rehiring and dismissal. Final decisions on dismissal will be made by the department chair. The Committee will conduct an evaluation of each TA during each semester. This may include: (1) in-class observation by a Committee member or another appointed faculty member; and (2) course evaluation forms completed by students.

B. All new TAs will be assigned to a full-time faculty member, who will act as a teaching mentor. It is the responsibility of the TA to meet with the faculty mentor at the beginning of each semester and throughout the term as the need arises. Mentors are available to discuss teaching techniques, course content, grading policies, and exams. In case of classroom difficulty, the first person a TA should contact is the faculty mentor. If this is not possible, either the department chair, the Graduate Committee chair, or the Undergraduate Committee chair should be contacted. Continuing TAs may be assigned a mentor if the TA or the department so desires.

C. If a TA becomes ill and cannot meet with a class, every attempt should be made to notify the department chair or administrator so that the class can be covered. At the very least, messages should be left with the department administrator.

D. Complaints from students in a TA’s class will be referred to the department chair. While confidentiality will be maintained, the TA will be advised that a complaint has been made. Any resulting action will be made by the department chair.

V. Other Information

A. A TA appointment is usually made for one academic year. Continuation in the second semester of the academic year depends upon the satisfactory completion of duties during the first semester as well as satisfactory progress toward a degree (see section III. C above).

B. Each year the Graduate Committee selects an outstanding TA as the recipient of the **Lynn Bateman Teaching Award.**
C. The Graduate Committee awards a limited number of fellowships to doctoral students based on scholarship and promise of completing the Ph.D. degree. The maximum duration of a fellowship is one year. The recipient is expected to make significant progress toward the Ph.D. by taking courses, passing the preliminary and comprehensive exams, and conducting research. Additionally, the student may be required to grade homework/exams or teach a class.