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What is a TA and what do they do?

A TA (Teaching Associate) is an Academic Student Employee covered by the Unit 11 Collective Bargaining agreement. This classification provides currently enrolled or admitted students employment offering practical teaching experience in fields related to their advanced study. Work assignments are closely associated with their program of study or the academic department in which they are enrolled. TAs are typically responsible for providing classroom and/or laboratory instruction, making assignments to students, preparing course materials, administering examinations, assessing student performance, tutoring students and determining course grades. TAs may also assist faculty with field experience, supervision, simulation exercise and/or research projects. TAs



are paid 6 equal monthly paychecks based on an appointment time-base. (See also [TA Classification and Qualification Standards](#))

What is a Substitute TA?

A substitute TA is a TA that is hired to work for 20 days or less, to cover for an absent TA. Substitute TA's can only serve as substitutes in classes they are qualified to teach. Substitute TA's can also only substitute for other TA's in the department/program in which they hold an appointment.

How do I verify TA Eligibility?

This document, [GA & TA Eligibility Verification](#), found on The Wiki, has instructions on how to verify eligibility.

Can a TA hold a Unit 11 appointment concurrently with staff appointment?

No, due to FICA restrictions on pay.

How are TAs appointed?

TAs are hired on a semester by semester basis with an Academic Appointment Form. See your College/Unit AA/S for details on hiring with an Academic Appointment form.

Should we rely on conversion of WTUs to establish time base for TAs?

Historically, we have relied on the number of weighted teaching units (WTUs) assigned to establish lecturer time base as well as time base for TAs, with 15 WTUs equivalent to full time. However, the WTU system is not recognized in the UAW agreement as the basis for establishing time.

Given the importance of establishing a realistic time base for your TA, we strongly recommend using WTUs only as a starting place for establishing time base. Generally, treating a 3-WTU class as the equivalent of a 0.2 time base would be reasonable for an experienced instructor, taking into account class meeting time, prep, grading, office hours, etc. However, for a TA appointment you may need to factor in additional hours for mandatory meetings with the supervising faculty member, ongoing training, class attendance if required, and any other factors that could add additional time.

Can TAs be appointed for more than 20 hours per week?

Yes. TAs can be appointed to any time base up to full time (40 hours per week). However, a TA who also holds a Graduate Assistant (GA) or Instructional Student Assistant (ISA) appointment can only be appointed up to a combined 20 hours per week, in order to comply with the restrictions on GA and ISA appointments.

What are the rules regarding mandatory orientations?

In general, orientations and training that occur during the period of a TAs appointment should be built into the TAs workload. For example, a TA appointed for the academic year would typically have some hours available in the period between the first day of the semester and the start of classes when he/she could be assigned to complete a mandatory orientation. Alternately, if a TA is required to take a one-hour online training, the TA could be released from a regular duty (office hour, meeting with supervisory) to do the training. This approach does not



incur additional costs. If the training/orientation is such that it cannot be accommodated within the student's workload, it will be necessary to pay the student for the additional hours worked.

If the university wants to schedule a mandatory training or orientation *outside* the period of appointment, it will be necessary to either create a separate appointment to cover the orientation or training or extend the period of appointment to cover the time.

How much time can we devote to orientations in the period between the start of the semester and the start of classes?

This depends on the time base of the TA. If you have a week, and the TA has an appointment at a time base of 0.5 (20 hours per week), then you have up to 20 hours, less any time that the TA might be expected to use to prepare for the start of classes.

Can I require a TA to enroll in the class they are TAing for?

Yes, as long as enrollment in the class does *not* increase their tuition.

Can a TA be required to take a course prior to working as a TA?

Yes, it is allowable to require appropriate disciplinary coursework as a qualification for a TA position (for example, specified organic chemistry courses prior to being hired to teach an organic chemistry lab.) It would even be allowable to require a pedagogy course before considering a person for a TA position, provided the requirement was consistently applied and written into the job posting.

How do I track TA hours?

TAs are hired at a specified time base and are paid in 6 equal payments per semester, according to the Academic Pay Plan. Units are encouraged to track time to ensure any excess hours worked are compensated, and in particular, that any overtime is paid. Overtime must be paid for hours worked in excess of 40 per week. Using a timesheet (Absence and Additional Time Report) is one way to track hours. If a timesheet is used, it should be for internal recording keeping only, it should not be submitted to payroll.

Are TAs supposed to have advance approval to work additional time beyond the time base stated on their Academic Appointment Form?

Yes, TAs must complete the Overtime Authorization form prior to working beyond their regular time base.

If a TA does not have advance approval, do we still have to pay them?

Yes.

How should I handle a situation where a TA works extra time without advance approval?

The supervisor should review the situation and circumstances on a case-by-case basis. At minimum, the TA should be reminded for the need to secure permission in advance. If you believe a reprimand or other disciplinary action is warranted, you **must** consult with the Office of Faculty Affairs, who will make the determination.



How should overtime be paid?

Overtime for TAs is paid using the same method as overtime payments for non-exempt staff. An Absence and Additional Time Report is completed.

How should the hourly rate for a TA (or substitute TA) be calculated?

This depends on whether the TA has an academic year appointment or a 12 month appointment. For a TA with a 12-month appointment, the hourly rate can be obtained by dividing the annual base pay by 2080 hours. However, TAs with an academic year appointment work fewer hours and dividing base pay by 2080 would produce a rate that is too low.

Here is the recommended method for calculating the hourly rate for academic year TAs:

Add the number of work days on the academic calendar to the number of holidays that fall within the academic calendar (see Unit 11, Article 12.1 and 12.2 for the list). Take the total and multiply by 8 to get hours worked if the individual was full time. Divide annual base pay by this number. This is the hourly rate that can be used for additional hours worked. (This can also be used to determine the rate of pay for a substitute TA.)

Example: the campus academic calendar has a total of 172 work days. In addition, 5 holidays are determined to fall within the dates of the academic calendar. The number of paid hours is 177 days x 8, or 1,416 hours. The TA's base pay is \$3,000 per month or \$36,000 per year. The hourly rate is \$36,000/1,416 or \$25.42 per hour.

What if a TA fails to work the expected number of hours or perform required duties?

If a TA fails to perform required duties or misses meetings or office hours, it is important to counsel the TA as to his/her obligations. If it is possible to make up the missed work within the same period, the TA can be allowed to do so, and we recommend informal resolution whenever possible.

What leave credits are available to TAs?

All TAs accrue sick leave at the rate of 8 hours per month, pro-rated based on time base; in other words, a half-time TA would accrue 4 hours sick leave per month. All TAs also have one personal holiday per year. In addition, TAs in 12-month appointments accrue vacation at a rate of 16 hours per month for full-time, pro-rated by time base. TAs who miss work due to illness should use their sick leave credits to cover the missed time.

What if a TA is required to travel as part of their duties?

If TAs attend field trips or meetings/events as **part of their duties**, they are to be compensated for the entire duration they are in attendance. Refer to the policy on [Compensable Time for Non-Exempt Employees Traveling on Official University Business](https://www.calstate.edu/HRAdm/pdf2013/HR2013-01.pdf). <https://www.calstate.edu/HRAdm/pdf2013/HR2013-01.pdf>

Travel to and from the location counts as time worked, as does time the TA spends "on duty" at the field trip/meeting/conference location. However, free time, when the TA is not under the "control" of the employer, is not compensable time.

This same rule applies if the TA is working off site for an extended period (for example, assisting with a study trip.)



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Teaching Associate (TA): Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

[Do I have to post through the Student Employment Center in JobCat to hire a TA?](#)

Yes, unless the position is:

- Used to fill a commitment of support made to a student at the time of admission
- Under an existing advising relationship with a faculty member(s).