
4011: GENERAL GUIDELINES

This section outlines policies and procedures governing appointment of matriculated students to academic positions related to instruction. At UC Merced, students may be appointed to the following titles:

- Teaching Assistant
- Teaching Fellow
- Reader
- Tutor

which are covered by a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) with the United Auto Workers. This section should be used in conjunction with the MOU and with [APM-410](#) and [APM- 420](#) as well as the [Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook](#).

Appointment as an Academic Student Employee (ASE) is intended to provide a qualified student¹ with relevant training experience for academic and academic-related careers. An appointee must be a full-time registered graduate student at the University (12 units) during the entire period of appointment to the titles covered in this section. In exceptional cases, a highly qualified undergraduate student or non-student may be considered for appointment to the Reader or Tutor titles, and in only the most rare and compelling cases, to the Teaching Assistant title. Any request for exception must include evidence that the hiring department or School has made a concerted effort to first locate a qualified UC Merced graduate student for the position. The hiring department must verify the qualifications of the candidate for the position and must request the Dean's approval for an exception to policy.

The [Graduate Division](#) reviews petitions for exceptions to policy regarding academic qualifications and conditions of employment in the hiring of graduate students for academic appointments. Exception request form may be found [here](#).

A student may not serve as a Reader or Teaching Assistant/Fellow in a course in which he or she is enrolled. Students may not simultaneously serve as a Teaching Assistant and as a Reader or Tutor for the same course.

The Deans of the Schools have responsibility for approving appointments of graduate students to academic positions consistent with all applicable policies. Employing departments shall ascertain that prospective appointees meet the eligibility requirements before allowing the appointee to begin service.

Definitions

Teaching Assistant: Selected for scholarship and promise as a teacher. No teaching experience necessary. The primary duty of appointees in this title is assistance in all aspects of instruction (grading, advising, sectional teaching, laboratory sectional teaching, field work teaching, limited lecturing). These duties are performed under the general supervision of faculty "Instructors of Record" who are vested with the sole and final responsibility for course content, work assignments, performance evaluations and grading in the assigned course. These appointees may not be given sole responsibility for the content of the course, selection of assignments, planning of exams, or grading, nor are they to be used exclusively as readers. They may provide input into the development of assignments or exams, and should hold office hours.

Teaching Fellow: A Teaching Fellow is formally advanced to doctoral candidacy, has demonstrated professional maturity and excellence as a scholar and teacher, and has at least two academic years (four semesters) of UCM

¹ See the [Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) for required qualifications.

TA experience (or equivalent teaching experience at a comparable institution). Teaching Fellows are expected to carry more responsibility and perform more advanced duties than Teaching Assistants, with less supervision. They may provide the entire instruction of a lower-division course under the general supervision of a faculty member. On an exceptional basis, a Teaching Fellow, upon recommendation from the Department Chair, may be assigned an upper-division course with the written approval of the Lead Dean, Graduate Dean and the UC Merced Academic Senate (usually during Summer Session).

Reader: The primary duty of Readers is assistance in the reading and grading of students' papers, homework, and exams. They may also be required to hold office hours. These duties are performed under the guidance and supervision of faculty "Instructors of Record" who are vested with the sole and final responsibility for grading policies and procedures in the assigned course. Readers must have earned at least a grade of "B" in the course for which they are reading and are not to be used as Teaching Assistants or Graduate Student Researchers. Service as a Reader does not count as qualifying experience for a Teaching Associate or Teaching Fellow appointment.

Remedial Tutor: Tutors facilitate learning and assist students in understanding course concepts, discovering solutions to problems, modeling study strategies, and/or preparing for upcoming exams, on either a one-on-one basis or with small groups of students. A Tutor will not be given the responsibilities normally assigned to Teaching Assistants or Readers. When appropriate, a Tutor should have received a grade of "B" or better in the course to which he or she is to be assigned. Service as a Tutor does not count as qualifying experience for a Teaching Associate or Teaching Fellow appointment.

Student Status

Academic Probation: Graduate students may not be appointed while on Academic Probation due to low GPA, excessive Incompletes, failing or unsatisfactory grades, or while making unsatisfactory progress towards the degree.

Educational Leave Program (ELP): Appointment to a student academic title while on an official Educational Leave Program (ELP) is not permitted.

In-Absentia status: Graduate students may not be appointed to a teaching title while registered *In-Absentia*.

Leaves: No period of leave will extend beyond the ASE's appointment.

Withdrawals: Students who withdraw from the University must have their appointments terminated.

Filing Fee Status: Students on approved filing fee status are not eligible for academic student employment.

Summer Registration: Continuing graduate students do not need to be registered during the summer in order to hold an academic appointment. Continuing students who hold Summer Session appointments must either have been registered for the previous Spring or for the following Fall semester. Incoming graduate students may not be hired in ASE instructional titles during the Summer preceding their first Fall terms.

Childcare Reimbursement Policy

All ASEs are eligible for reimbursement of some child care expenses, per [Article 4](#) of the MOU. The MOU states the amount that may be reimbursed for expenses incurred during each semester of employment. Requests for reimbursement must be made after the expenses are incurred, but no later than the last day of the following semester. For a fact sheet and reimbursement request form, see [this website](#).