Teaching Assistantships

Most math grad students are supported as Teaching Assistants. A first-year Teaching Assistant usually spends five hours per week (on Tuesdays and Thursdays) conducting quiz sections for calculus or pre-calculus courses that meet with a faculty member on other days. Teaching Assistants also hold office hours and share in the grading of exams. The duties are not too heavy and are scheduled so as not to conflict with one’s graduate study. New TAs are given extensive TA Training and have many resources available throughout their appointment to help them improve their teaching skills. After the first year, there are a variety of assignments available to TAs, including:

Available TA Assignments

- Teaching your own section of an undergraduate course;
- Grading papers and holding office hours for advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate courses;
- Serving as a computer assistant for the department.

Compensation

TA compensation comes from two sources: base TA salaries, and supplementary awards or fellowships.

Beginning TAs receive a base salary ($2,228 per month in 2016-2017); see the University’s Graduate Student Service Appointment Salary Schedule for current salaries: click on “Regular (Non-Variable Rate) TA/RA/SA Salary Schedule”, and math TAs are paid on “Schedule #1”. TAs also receive a waiver of tuition, except for approximately $450 per quarter in required fees. TAs may be promoted first to the rank of Predoctoral Teaching Assistant I (PDTA I), which carries a somewhat higher salary, and later to Predoctoral Teaching Associate II. (See the Guidelines for TA and RA Appointments, for details.) There is usually an increase in the salary schedule each year.

How to Become a TA

To be considered for a Teaching Assistantship, applicants should indicate in the appropriate place on the Math Department Application for Admission and Financial Aid that they wish to be considered for financial support. TA appointments are made on the basis of the student’s potential for successful graduate work, with attention to the likelihood that the applicant will perform the TA duties in a satisfactory manner. Continuation of the appointment from one year to the next is based on the student’s performance as a graduate student and as a teaching assistant. It is unusual for an appointee to find it difficult to handle these duties properly.

The number of new TAs appointed varies each year, but in recent years there have been around 20 TA positions available. All new TAs must participate in the Mathematics Department’s TA training program, which is held in September before the start of Autumn Quarter.

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