

Bren School TA Positions

The Bren School assigns Teaching Assistants (TAs) to core courses for the Master of Environmental Science and Management (MESM) and the Master of Environmental Data Science (MEDS) programs, courses with significant lab or field components, and courses with large enrollments (>35 students).

Only UCSB PhD students are eligible for Bren TA positions. University rules do not allow master's students to be TAs for MESM or MEDS courses taken primarily by their peers.

The Bren School offers about forty 1-quarter, 25-50%-time TA positions per year for UCSB PhD students. Salary scales for Academic Personnel are posted to UCSB's website under [Academic Personnel/UCSB Salary Scales](#). If a TA is appointed at least 25% time, then the TA is eligible for partial fee remission (payment of California resident academic fees, campus-based fees, and health insurance). The TA position does NOT cover non-resident supplemental student tuition (NRST).

Eligibility

To be eligible for a TA position, PhD students must, throughout the period of their appointment, be:

- Currently registered and enrolled in at least 8 units
- In good academic standing
 - >3.0 GPA
 - Fewer than 12 units of unfinished coursework
 - Not on academic probation
 - Be within normative time and/or time to degree standards
- Certified as having language proficiency in spoken English if their native language is not English.

In addition to these eligibility criteria, the instructor must verify that the applicant has appropriate knowledge and experience to be a TA for the course. MESM and MEDS students are not eligible to be TAs or Readers for graduate courses in the Bren School.

Multilingual Students

Non-native English speakers must take the English Language Placement Examination (ELPE) prior to their first quarter of enrollment. All prospective TAs for whom English is not the native language must meet minimum proficiency requirements in spoken English before they can be certified to have sole teaching responsibilities for graduate classes.

TA language evaluations of English-speaking proficiency are conducted jointly by representatives of the [English for Multilingual Studies](#) (EMS) Program and a faculty member from the academic department of the prospective TA or the employing department. If the student does not pass the evaluation, s/he

cannot be certified for sole classroom teaching responsibilities. In addition, the student will be required to take EMS courses to improve oral proficiency and become eligible for reevaluation.

Application Process

Each year in March, the Bren School releases a request for TA applications for the following academic year. The TA application is posted to the Bren School website under [Resources/Current Students/Funding & Employment](#). All Bren PhD students must discuss their academic progress plan and financial needs with their faculty advisors prior submitting an application for TA positions at the Bren School. The Bren School's limited TA opportunities and funding sources for PhD students require that faculty and students assume primary responsibility for ensuring adequate and consistent sources of funding to meet student needs. Bren PhD students are encouraged to apply for TA positions in other departments in addition to the Bren School.

To be considered for TA positions in the Bren School, students must submit a Bren TA Application, including their name, faculty advisor's name, quarters they would like to serve as a TA, courses or general topics that the student is qualified to TA, qualifications (e.g., coursework or previous experience as a TA), other current and confirmed future sources of funding, and any other relevant information. TA applications are due in early Spring Quarter (see application for deadline).

Selection Process

TA applications are reviewed by the course instructor(s), Graduate Advisor and Student Affairs Manager in May of the academic year prior to the TA appointment. When a top candidate is selected, then staff consults with the student's faculty advisor to confirm that the student has capacity to serve as a TA in the proposed quarter. The faculty advisor may determine that a TA position is not appropriate for the student and may proceed with an alternate funding plan.

Criteria for TA selection include academic preparation, teaching experience and past performance, scholastic achievement, and funding need. In addition, the Bren School must honor commitments to PhD students made through university fellowships awarded during admissions. If applicants have similar qualifications, then the selection committee may consider past effort by the student to secure other sources of financial support and past support provided to the student by the Bren School.

A student will not be assigned to a TA position if that student lacks appropriate knowledge, lacks prior experience or has less relevant experience than other applicants, and/or demonstrated poor past performance as a TA. A student who has prior experience as the TA for a particular class is not guaranteed re-assignment if there are other qualified applicants.

If there are no qualified Bren students to TA for a particular course, the Bren School will seek PhD students from other departments to fill TA positions.

Award Notification

After the course instructor(s) and faculty advisor confirm the student's TA appointment, then Bren staff completes the "Teaching Assistant/Associate Appointment Notification Letter" and Appendices mandated by the Union ([UAW 4811](#)) and sends it to the selected student. The student must sign the letter and return to the Graduate Advisor to confirm that the student accepts the TA position(s). In the quarter prior to the appointment, staff will confirm the TA appointment, days/times of the course, and course location with the TA(s) and faculty instructors.

Hiring Process

Once the student accepts a TA position, then the Bren School Academic Personnel Manager processes the student's TA appointment. To process an appointment, the student must be enrolled in at least 8 units for the quarter of the TA appointment. If the student has not previously served as a TA, then the student must make an appointment with the Academic Personnel Manager to complete new hire paperwork. For more information about TA positions, please contact academics@bren.ucsb.edu.

Additional Information

Information about TA appointments is posted to UCSB's Graduate Division website:
<http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/financial/employment/academic-appointments>

Information about the TA Development Program is posted to UCSB's Instructional Development website: <https://id.ucsb.edu/teaching/teaching-resources/ta-programs/overview>

Information about UAW 4811 – UCSB (the Union) is posted to the website: <https://www.uaw4811.org>