

Applying for a TA Position in CSE

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Overview of TA Positions

TA positions are a great way for our students to be actively involved in the teaching process in CSE.

All PhD students are required to TA at least once during their academic career. TA positions are optional for Master's students.

Although we prioritize hiring students in our own department, any student from any department may apply to be a TA in CSE.

Eligibility requirements:

- Student is in good academic standing
- Student has received at least a B+ in the course they're applying for (or its equivalent)
- Student is enrolled in at least 6 units (for a 25% position) or 12 units (for a 50% position)
- Student has satisfied the English language requirement (international students only)

During the academic year, TA assignments are only given at 25% (10 hours/week) or 50% (20 hours/week). Summer appointments are more flexible.

All TAs must take CSE 599 the first time they hold a TA position. TAs should also enroll in CSE 500 for 2 units or 4 units (25% appointments or 50% appointments, respectively).

Application Timeline

- **Friday of Week 5:** TA Application opens
- **Sunday prior to Week 7:** TA Application priority deadline (late submissions still accepted)
- **Monday of Week 7:** TA Coordinator reviews applications and notes those that require additional certification
- **Friday of Week 8:** Instructor's hiring preferences are due to TA Coordinator
- **Week 9:** TA Coordinator assigns students to courses. All contracts should be sent out by Friday of Week 9
- **Week 10 & Finals Week:** Onboarding sessions with the Graduate Funding Coordinator

This process is adjusted slightly for Fall TA Applications, so please check your @eng.ucsd.edu email for the most up-to-date information.

International Students & The ELCE

International students are subject to additional eligibility requirements to ensure that they are proficient enough in the English language to lead their own discussion sections.

The **English Language Certification Examination (ELCE)** is administered through the Engaged Teaching Hub and informs the department of whether or not a student is eligible to serve as a TA.

International students with a spoken TOEFL score of 26 or above are **exempt** from the ELCE requirement.

International students with a spoken TOEFL score of 23-25, or students who received a TOEFL waiver during the admission process, must take and pass the ELCE before being eligible to TA.

International students with a spoken TOEFL score of 22 or below must take additional English preparatory courses before being eligible to take the ELCE.

- Students with a 22 must take at least 1 course
- Students with a 21 or below must take at least 2 courses
 - All courses should be taken for a **letter grade**.
- After taking these courses, students will be eligible to sit for the ELCE. Upon passing the ELCE, students will then be eligible to hold a TA position.

International Students & The ELCE

If you do not have a spoken TOEFL score of at least 23, **your TA application will be marked ineligible immediately after the priority deadline.** Students within the testable range of 23-25 are able to apply for a TA position. If you are selected, we will hold your application until after the exam.

The CSE Department will only administer the ELCE to CSE students or students with pending TA contracts.

- Ineligible students in other departments should check with their home department to see how they can become certified.

Incoming students will not be tested in large groups since they can still apply to TA if they are within the testable range. We will schedule an ELCE test on the student's behalf if they are selected for a position.

During the academic year, the ELCE is only offered during Finals Week of any given quarter and is only offered for students with pending TA contracts.

The ELCE vs. The TOEFL

The TOEFL is an admissions test and the ELCE is an employment test. The two tests have different purposes and the level of difficulty varies between them.

Your spoken TOEFL score will determine your eligibility to take the ELCE, which then determines your eligibility to TA.

Some students choose to retake the TOEFL to try and score a 26 or above in the spoken section to waive the ELCE requirement.

- This is an acceptable alternative, however, you will be responsible for any additional fees associated with retaking the TOEFL.

If you did not have to submit your TOEFL scores during the admission process, **you still need to take the ELCE to demonstrate your English proficiency.** You have received a waiver for the TOEFL requirement (admission), but not the ELCE requirement (employment).

Frequently Asked Questions

I submitted my TA application! When will I hear back?

Please be patient and double check that your application was actually submitted. Although applications are due prior to Week 7, there are many other things happening behind the scenes that require time. If you have not received a contract by the end of Week 9, you may not have an appointment for that quarter. You can always check your application in the IA System to see its progress.

I spoke with an instructor and they told me they want to hire me, so what's taking so long??

All TA contracts are sent as a batch, so we need to have the majority of assignments made before we send out offers. We try to pair students up with their first choice classes if possible, however, sometimes students need to be moved to different courses if they are the only qualified applicant. Because contracts are final, we cannot send a contract and rescind it. For this reason, we need to make sure the offers we send will not change, which takes time.

An instructor told me they listed me as a preference, but I didn't receive a contract and my friends did! What happened?!

Instructors receive an email with the number of TAs and tutors they can hire for their course. Because of the changes that can happen during the assignment process, we ask instructors to give us more preferences than they will hire in case we need to work down the list. Just because an instructor has said they're willing to work with you doesn't mean you will receive an assignment--it depends on the number of positions they have available. You may also receive a contract later if another student declines the position.

Frequently Asked Questions

I applied to TA in CSE but didn't receive a contract. Can I apply to TA in other departments?

Yes! You are able to apply in any department you feel qualified to TA for. Some departments require compliance with the ELCE requirement and others don't--please contact the department directly if you are unsure if you are eligible or not. You can see a list of all available positions on the [ASE Open Positions](#) website.

If I'm not selected as a TA, can I apply to be a tutor?

Graduate students are not advised to apply for tutor positions, as those positions are mainly intended for undergraduate students. Because of this, you may not be hired as a tutor unless absolutely necessary.

I was hired as a TA and have accepted the position. When will I receive my tuition & fee remission?

Once you accept the position, we will request that your tuition & fees are paid on your behalf. However, this process involves multiple departments, so it may take up to 10 business days for the price adjustment to be reflected. Master's students are responsible for paying this balance by the deadline in order to avoid late fees. The remission amount will be credited to your account and you can ask for a check from the Cashier's Office at a later date. PhD students, please contact the Graduate Funding Coordinator if payment has not posted 2 days before the due date.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm an international student with a spoken TOEFL score below a 22. How do I enroll in the proper English preparatory courses?

There are certain courses that the Engaged Teaching Hub recommends for students hoping to become TAs. Students with a 22 should prepare to take 1 course, and students with a 21 or below should prepare to take 2 courses. Please email the TA Coordinator for a complete list of the linguist's recommendations.

If I fail the ELCE the first time, can I retake it?

In some cases, yes, but this usually only happens for PhD students. Since Master's students do not have a TA requirement, we do not offer retests after they have failed. Exceptions may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

I have an instructor who absolutely needs me to run their course, but I did not pass the ELCE. What now?

We must assign another student to assist with the course since you are ineligible to serve as a TA until you satisfy the ELCE requirement. After failing, you must take an English preparatory course and, if the instructor still needs you the next time they teach, you must retake and pass the ELCE.

What if I forget this information throughout the quarter?

FIRST, READ THROUGH YOUR EMAILS!

Most of the time, the information you're looking for is already mentioned somewhere! Please do this before contacting Student Affairs.

**If it isn't, or your question is about a specific situation,
email me or give me a call (858-365-0456) and I'll be happy to help!**

Questions?