

## **FAQs about Undergraduate TA Opportunities**

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For more information, or to apply, contact Prof. Alan Zehnder, [atz2@cornell.edu](mailto:atz2@cornell.edu)

### **1) Which classes use undergraduate TA's?**

A partial list of classes that have used undergraduate TA's in the past are: 1170, 2120, 2210, 2250, 3230, 3250, 3260, 3270, 3780 plus electives such as 3050 or 3060. If you are especially interested in another class, please indicate it on your application. I can find out whether an undergraduate TA would be welcome there.

### **2) What is the application process?**

Applications are due by August 1 for the Fall and December 15 for the Spring. The application is quite informal. Applying early will help us plan the staffing of next year's classes. To apply, please send me an e-mail ([atz2@cornell.edu](mailto:atz2@cornell.edu)) with the following information:

- Provide a list of courses that you are interested in TA'ing, in order of your preference. Indicate the grade you received in each of them.
- Please indicate your preference for pay vs. credit:
  - Interested in 4980 credit
  - Interested in pay only
  - Interested in either, but prefer pay
- If you are interested in a paid position, are you eligible for work study? Note that the number of paid positions is limited; we hired only 2 paid TAs in Fall 2009. Please indicate how far along you are in your decision process about TA'ing, if you wish. For example, do you know that you definitely want to TA if you are offered the opportunity?

### **3) What are the requirements (e.g. minimum GPA)?**

The only firm requirement is a grade of A- or better in the class to be taught. In general strong students with a keen interest in the subject at hand will be effective TAs and will be able to derive significant educational benefits themselves from the work.

### **4) What is the timetable for TA assignments?**

Applications are due August 1 for the Fall and December 15 for the Spring. Late applications may or may not be considered, depending on our TA needs at the time. TA assignments will be made approximately two weeks before the start of classes.

### **5) Do I have to enroll in ENGRG 6780? What is that class, anyway?**

Yes, ENGRG 6780 (1credit) is required for all undergraduate TA and course design positions, including paid positions. You must also undergo TA training, held just before the start of the semester.

For more information about the class, and the TA training, take a look at the following website: <http://www.engineering.cornell.edu/student-services/learning/engineering-ta-development/index.cfm>. Ms. Linda Tompkins is in charge of ENGRG 6780 and TA

training, and can probably answer your questions about these topics. If you are TA'ing for a second time, you are not required to retake ENGRG 6780 or to redo TA training.

**6) What exactly do undergraduate TA's do?**

Duties vary from instructor to instructor. Most TA's hold office hours. They also grade homeworks and exams, and may help with lab instruction or small-group teaching. Some develop homeworks, tutorials, and other educational material.

**7) How much work is required?**

TA's should work approximately 7-8 hours per week. Of this time, at least two hours per week should be spent in contact with students, or in other non-grading educational activities. Paid TA's may work a maximum of 8 hours per week.

**8) Will I be graded if I TA for credit?**

Yes. You will enroll in MAE 4980, "Teaching experience in mechanical engineering," 3 credit hours. The faculty member with whom you work will decide on your grade for the course. A final report on your TA experience, addressed to Prof. Zehnder and to the faculty member with whom you worked, is required.