

UC Davis
University of California
Department of German & Russian

Policies and Procedures

**for Teaching Assistants (TAs)
and Associate Instructors (AIs)
(German)***

Related support guides:

TA Guide (issued campus-wide by the CEE)
Orientation Packet (issued by the Language Program Coordinator)

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Introduction

This document is intended to provide TAs and AIs with the policies and procedures of the Department of German & Russian, particularly those that extend beyond or are more specific than the policies and procedures that apply to all instructional faculty at the University of California (UC) and the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). It does not supersede or replace pertinent policies governing instruction, employment, or study at UC and/or UC Davis.

In your initial UC Davis Teaching Assistant Training, you were provided links and documentation that pertain to the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) for the University of California. These can be accessed at the UC Office of the President's website: <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/academic-personnel-policy/general-university-policy-regarding-academic-appointees/index.html>.

Policies and procedures specific to UC Davis can be accessed at the Office of the Vice Provost – Academic Affairs: <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/person-type/vice-provost>

General information about teaching effectiveness is available from a number of campus offices and organizations. Some helpful resources include:

- CEE, Center for Educational Effectiveness: a hub for information and resources pertaining to instructors, both international and domestic: <https://cee.ucdavis.edu/>
- DLC, Davis Language Center, hosting year-round events to support language instructors: <https://ucdlc.ucdavis.edu/>
- ATS, Academic Technology Services: in-person and webinars on how to construct Canvas courses: <https://iet.ucdavis.edu/units/enterprise-iet/academic-applications/ats>
- Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education: <https://ue.ucdavis.edu/faculty-resources>

Departmental information about specifics in the field of German will be distributed each September during the Language Program Coordinator's orientation, and will be available on Canvas to every instructor enrolled in the teaching practicum series GER 390A (fall), GER 390B (winter), GER 396 (spring).

Principles of Community

The Department and its faculty affirm the UC Davis Principles of Community as the basis for policies concerning teaching, curriculum, instruction, and student-faculty interaction. These principles are articulated as follows:

"The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

- We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society carries within it historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.*
- We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.*
- We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences. We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring."*

Instructional Policies

The Department and its faculty encourage TAs and AIs to consider their instructional tasks as part of a larger period of professional development, in which they master skills that will be required of them in their future careers. As most graduate students are preparing for a career in academia or another teaching-related field, this is the time to gain a solid foundation in the art and science of teaching, while still under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors.

The Department's pedagogical and methodological expectations of TAs and AIs are spelled out in detail in the Orientation Packet distributed each September at the departmental orientation. They derive from three general principles:

Target language use:

- Classes are best taught monolingually in the target language. Class time should be viewed as an immersive experience of structures, vocabulary and cultural themes via the meaningful manipulation and creation of language by the students themselves.
- Explicit grammar instruction, translation, or explanation should be minimized in all class sessions, at all levels.
- Students should be exposed to as much German as possible and be encouraged to use the language themselves, even imperfectly, to the greatest extent feasible given their level and background.

Active student engagement:

- Students should be the authors of their proficiency gains and the actors in language use. The instructor should not repeat the text or facilitate an environment in which students are required to do little or no study independently. The goal is active engagement and holistic communicative production.
- The role of the instructor is to facilitate and moderate language use. Instructors should orient classroom activities and exercises toward the student, rather than themselves, texts, or ancillaries.

- Lessons are best when they are task-based as opposed to lecture-based.

Emphasis on cultural contexts:

- It is as important to immerse students in the cultures of the target language as it is to immerse them in the language itself. We can serve the learning goals of cross-cultural competencies and critical thinking (analysis, thinking outside the box) more effectively when we present language in the context of its cultures.
- Students are inspired when they encounter materials about the history, political and social movements, demographics, geography, arts, music, and customs of the target language countries. TAs and AIs are expected to integrate such material into their lesson plans on a daily basis.
- Grammar exercises should always be taught in contexts. A "context" can be as narrow as the vocabulary fields of the current textbook chapter theme, or as complex as literary texts or cultural artefacts.

Standards of Professionalism

As members of the instructional faculty of UC Davis, all TAs and AIs must conduct themselves in a professional manner in the classroom, in related activities, and in educational contexts. It is particularly crucial that TAs and AIs approach each class session ready to apply the instructional principles outlined above and expanded upon in the Orientation Packet provided by the Language Program Coordinator (faculty supervisor).

Lesson Planning:

- Prepare a lesson plan well in advance.
- Lesson plans should include goals and objectives.
- Lesson plans should be logically sequenced.
- Activities in the plan should be designed to promote language use, even if some activities are focused narrowly on accuracy (e.g. fill-in-the-blanks, true/false, etc.).
- Begin on time: TAs and AIs need to arrive at their assigned classroom at least five minutes prior to the hour. This

allows time to set up equipment, hand back homework, and answer student questions.

- End on time: TAs and AIs must make every effort to end the lesson at the assigned time. This is a matter of courtesy to the instructor using the room next, and to students who often must attend subsequent classes.
- Carefully prepare all ancillary materials. They should be proofed for grammar, formatting, and effectiveness. The supervisor might ask for all new materials to be vetted.
- Any projected images/exercises should be vetted for visibility in the classroom setting. Some writings/images come out too small or too big on the classroom screens.
- Any photocopies or materials to hand out should be prepared several hours in advance of the session, to allow for copy machine malfunctions.

Test Preparation:

- The faculty supervisor will indicate the chapter test writing procedure for each level and group of sections at the beginning of the quarter. If TAs or AIs are assigned a particular test to write, a draft should be completed and submitted to the supervisor several days prior to the administration of that test in order to allow for additional corrections. Carefully proofread all drafts for grammar, spelling, formatting, and point distribution.
- TAs and AIs must write their own vocabulary quizzes, varying the style of the quiz. Quizzes, like newly created handouts and other materials, need to be proofread carefully for accuracy. The supervisor might ask to copy-edit all quizzes before distribution.
- Final exams: All TAs and AIs are expected to collaborate on the creation of tests, final exams, administration of oral tests, and prompt & rubric writing for creative projects. This allows the tailoring of evaluative work to specific student groups, or to account for differentiated instruction and assessment. TAs and AIs are expected to administer all final exams jointly unless otherwise specified by the supervisor.

Evaluation of students:

- All feedback should make clear the criteria for evaluation and facilitate student understanding of any shortcomings in their work. Feedback on student writing should always include a comment acknowledging meaning (in addition to marking accuracy mistakes, etc.).
- For larger assignments and creative projects, rubrics and grading keys must be created and distributed together with the prompts.
- Timely return: TAs and AIs must make every effort to correct evaluative materials as soon as possible after it is completed. Students make guesses on how language works and need timely feedback to determine whether they guessed correctly. The daily homework and vocabulary quizzes must be corrected and returned by the beginning of the following class session. Chapter tests must be returned within 2 - 3 instructional days. The Canvas gradebook must be updated on a weekly basis or sooner, including attendance records.

Final exams:

- Student requests for a make-up final exam, whether written or oral, require the approval of the faculty supervisor. If approved, the make-up final should be administered within a window extending no further than 24-hours before and after the common exam time.
- Per University policy, all final grades must be submitted to the Registrar no later than 72 hours after the assigned final exam time. TAs and AIs should plan ahead to allow ample time for the correction of final exams, as well as other evaluative components (oral exams, compositions, participation grades, projects, etc.).
- Once a TA or AI has completed all grades and input these into the Canvas gradebook, they should inform the faculty supervisor of such. Any irregularities, problems, or discrepancies should be discussed with the supervisor. The supervisor will review all grades and inform the TA or AI of any problems or concerns. Only after receiving confirmation that all grades have been submitted to the

Office of the Registrar, should the TA or AI consider her/his responsibilities for the quarter complete.

- All final exams, as well as all evaluative materials not returned to students (handwritten records, oral exam notes, etc.) should be turned in to the faculty supervisor at the end of the quarter. These will be maintained for a period of one year.

Evaluation of TAs and AIs:

- End-of-the quarter instructor evaluations are required per University and Departmental policies. These provide an important means of gaining feedback, both positive and negative, about instructional quality and assessing teaching effectiveness. The Department takes instructor evaluations very seriously and reviews them on a regular basis.
- Classroom visits: At least once per quarter, TAs and AIs will be observed in their classes by the faculty supervisor or another faculty. These class visits are always announced and followed by a brief meeting to reflect on the lesson. Faculty must be given a detailed lesson plan at the beginning of the class.
- The CEE offers videotaping of classes and follow-up reflection and counseling on questions of teaching effectiveness. TAs and AIs are required to have themselves be evaluated by videotape at least once during their time in the graduate program.

Office Hours:

- TAs and AIs (like all instructional faculty) are required to hold at least two, non-consecutive office hours per week during all instructional quarters.
- At the beginning of each quarter, TAs and AIs must inform the appropriate staff member of these hours/days for the departmental website and post a physical “door card.”
- Office hours should be advertised frequently in class, and students should be invited directly if they seem to need help. They might be too shy to come by without a direct invitation.
- Office hours are to be held in the TA’s or AI’s assigned office space: office hours or meetings with students may

not be held off campus, and meetings outside of the office must be in a public, instructional setting on campus.

- TAs and AIs are not allowed to meet or confer with students with their office door closed.
- TAs and AIs should be ready to refer students to Student Health and Counseling Services if they are noted to be in crisis. While the TA or AI should be mindful of student problems and may, with the assistance of the faculty supervisor, follow up on issues that students may divulge in office hours, they should always keep in mind that they are not trained therapists.

Substitutions and cancellations

- Any planned and unplanned absences from the classroom must be reported to the supervisor. A blank form called "Absence Report" is available on the Departmental website and will also be distributed during the Departmental beginning-of-the-year orientation.
- TAs and AIs are expected to substitute for each other and make these arrangements themselves. Whenever that is not feasible, the supervisor must be contacted for help.
- In cases of emergencies, the supervisor must be informed as soon as possible, and they will arrange for a substitute.
- TAs or AIs are not allowed to cancel a class without the permission of the faculty supervisor.

UC Davis Principles of Community in Instruction

- Respect for all participants in the classroom is paramount. TAs and AIs should treat all students with respect and dignity at all times.
- Respect for students requires objectivity and fairness. TAs and AIs should endeavor not to favor or disfavor any student or group of students, but involve all students in class activities to the greatest and most uniform manner possible.
- Respect for students requires the establishment of boundaries. TAs and AIs are expected to establish and maintain boundaries between their professional and

personal lives, and to refrain from the discussion of topics that do not contribute to the unit goals/objectives. Maintain professionalism at all times.

- Respect the students' right to confidentiality. All student records are protected by federal legislation. An instructor cannot disclose any information about student records, not even to that student's parents, unless the student has requested the information in writing. Exceptions are coaches, athletes' tutors, counselors in the Student Disability Center, or other such university-affiliated staff. Do not post grades anywhere.

Disruptions:

- If a student or group of students should become disruptive or disrespectful to the instructor or other students, the TA or AI should consult with the supervising faculty or Department Chair as soon as possible, and in all circumstances within 24 hours.
- If a TA or AI suspects that a student has violated the Academic Code of Conduct (plagiarism, cheating, overreliance on translation software, etc.), they must contact the faculty supervisor before confronting the student. The supervisor will help determine the appropriate next steps, and whether to file a report with Student Judicial Affairs.
- If a TA or AI ever feels that a student is behaving in a dangerous manner or threatens physical violence to themselves or others, the University Police should be called immediately (9-1-1 or 754-2677). After the Police have been contacted and appropriate intervention has been made or determined, the TA or AI should contact the faculty supervisor and the Department Chair, as well as any other appropriate UC Davis resources (SHCS, SJA, relevant dean's office).

Sexual Harassment:

- All TAs and AIs are required to complete a Sexual Harassment Training module. Information on these will be distributed to new and entering TAs.

- Sexual Harassment is strictly prohibited. All members of the University community are subject to regulations concerning sexual harassment, including protections against retaliation for reporting and confidentiality (as appropriate). The UC Davis TA Guide (issued by the CEE) and HDAPP has resources and detailed information on further policies.
- If a TA or AI suspects or witnesses sexual harassment, they should immediately report this to the faculty supervisor, Department Chair, and/or HDAPP.

Discrimination:

- Discrimination is strictly prohibited. Discrimination is an illegal or prohibited adverse action or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services).

Harassment:

- Harassment is strictly prohibited. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably interferes with a person's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment when that conduct is based on the categories identified above.
- Policies and procedures pertaining to discrimination and harassment are governed by pertinent Federal, State, UC and UC Davis rules and regulations. For full details, see the UC Davis Administrative Policy Manual:
<https://ucdavispolicy.ellucid.com/home>)

Relationships with students:

- All instructional faculty are subject to UC and UC Davis policies regarding relationships with students, both those

who are currently in their classes or those who could reasonably be expected to be in their classes in the future.

- Sexual and/or romantic relationships between instructional faculty, including TAs and AIs, and students are strictly prohibited.
- TAs and AIs are reminded to be cautious about entering into non-sexual, nonromantic friendships with students currently enrolled in their classes, or with students who might reasonably be expected to enroll in their classes. While the Department and University do not have blanket restrictions about such relationships, TAs and AIs are reminded that, in their role as instructor, they are in a position of imbalanced power and authority, and act as academic “gate-keepers.” A well-intentioned friendship with a student can have detrimental effects on the boundaries established between personal and professional arenas, as well as on a classroom dynamic and on perceptions of fairness and equity among other students.

Departmental Citizenship

The Department encourages TAs and AIs to keep in mind their role and responsibilities as Departmental citizens. Regardless of experience, rank, or background, all members of the Department are participants in its daily workings, enjoy the benefits of intellectual, pedagogical, and professional community, and are answerable to the implementation of standards, principles, and policies. TAs and AIs are expected to conduct themselves with respect to all other community members, including fellow graduate students, staff, and faculty.

Materials development:

The faculty strongly encourages TAs and AIs to collaborate on the development of instructional materials. Working together to create shared lesson plans, easy readers, PowerPoint presentations, ancillaries, and evaluative materials has several beneficial effects on instruction:

- It provides commonality across sections
- It fosters creativity and the cross-pollination of ideas

- It allows experienced instructors to guide new instructors
- It invites new ideas into the curriculum
- It can alleviate some of the daily instructional burden

TAs and AIs are expected to carefully proof all materials, regardless of authorship, and to review and adjust these taking the particular needs of their students into account.

There is a "milk crate" in the TA office (Sproul 416) containing folders with materials to complement each chapter of our current textbook. Two shelves by the door are devoted to easy readers, games, and textbooks. Make every effort to keep this collection tidy and complete. If you remove something, put it back. Respect your current and future colleagues who will also need these items.

Professional development:

- Like non-teaching graduate students, TAs and AIs are expected to participate in the department's invited lectures, speaker's series, and events organized by the undergraduate German Club.
- TAs and AIs are expected to participate in second language acquisition workshops offered campus wide, particularly those by the Davis Language Center (DLC), and the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE)
- TAs and AIs are expected to learn Canvas course management. To that effect, they are expected to seek out workshops or webinars by the Academic Technology Services (ATS).
- All TAs and AIs (new and returning) must attend a two-day departmental orientation every September during the week prior to the start of instruction.
- Weekly coordination meetings of 1.5 hours are mandatory to develop and improve skills in the areas of assessments, materials creation, lesson-planning, and classroom management.