

Teaching Assistant Internships: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Students

UC Davis Career Center
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General Information

1. How does UC Davis define “internship”?

Internships at UC Davis are supervised work-learn experiences in a professional environment outside the college classroom to help an intern’s academic and career goals. Interns must be guided, supervised and evaluated by professionals (not other students). If an internship is unpaid, duties may not replace those of paid employees.

2. How long is a teaching assistant internship?

A typical internship is at least one quarter (8-10 weeks), but can be extended if the intern and the host teacher agree. Depending on your major or program requirements, you should expect to serve 30-60 hours

per quarter.

3. I'm ready to apply for teaching assistant internships. What should I do?

If you're a UC Davis undergraduate student looking for a teaching-related internship, [visit this webpage](#) to view current opportunities in local area school districts.

Before you apply to a specific posting, consider the following:

- **Confirm School Location.** Schools may be in Davis, Woodland, Dixon, Natomas, Sacramento, etc. Ensure you have adequate transportation prior to applying.
- **Check Bell Schedules.** Google the school name and "bell schedule" to see when classes are in session. Make sure it aligns with your availability.
- **Document Your Internship.** For students seeking admission to a teaching credentialing program, it is important to document your teaching internships and hours supervised by a credentialed teacher. See "[How can I receive credit for my internship?](#)" below.

4. How can I receive credit for my internship?

There are two ways that you can document an internship experience. The first is by earning **academic units**, which usually involves enrolling in a course concurrent with the internship experience. A few examples of campus programs that support this option are the [Education minor](#), the [Human Development major](#) (HDE majors only), the [CalTeach/MAST program](#), and the [College Corps](#). Contact your major advisor for more details on how to receive academic credit for your internship.

Another option is to document your internship through a [Transcript Notation \(TN\)](#). This allows you to add a line of text to your transcript that indicates the internship title and the quarter when it occurred. This option is managed through the Internship and Career Center.

In both cases, there are typically requirements regarding minimum number of hours and host teacher evaluations.

5. What are the UC Davis programs that support teaching-related internships?

A few of the formal, structured programs that involve teaching-related internships or "field experiences" are listed below. Typically, these programs include enrolling in an academic course as well as completing some number of hours in a classroom.

- **Education Minor:** The EDU minor includes a course called EDU 100, "Introduction to Schools," which requires an internship. Students in EDU 100 may come from a variety of majors, and they must complete EDU 100 in order to fulfill the minor.
- **Human Development Major:** Declared Human Development majors *may* receive academic credit for classroom internships. Contact Internship Coordinator for more information.
- **CalTeach/MAST Program:** This program is specifically for Math And Science Teachers. Associated courses are EDU/GEL 081, EDU/GEL 181, and EDU/GEL 183.

- **College Corps:** UC Davis College Corps works with several local school districts and education-related organizations to support placements and financial awards for student volunteers who complete the program. Unlike the other programs listed above, a College Corps student serves a full academic year at their host site.

In addition to the programs listed above, the [Career Center](#) provides ongoing, holistic support for all UC Davis students and recent alumni who seek teaching-related experience (including internships).

6. I'm also interested in paid opportunities for education-related experience. Where should I look?

It is important to note that, with a few exceptions, teaching assistant internships are **unpaid**. If you are seeking education-related experience in a paid position, there are a wide variety of opportunities available in [Handshake](#), the UC Davis careers platform.

If you are new to Handshake, you can use the Career Center's [Handshake Profile Checklist](#). Having a well-developed profile allows the platform to promote more relevant search results and to notify you when new opportunities are posted.

You can also sign up for the Career Center's [email newsletter](#) to receive weekly job and internship postings or attend quarterly Career Fairs to meet with employers.

7. Some teaching internships ask for a resume. Can I get help writing one?

Yes! The Career Center can support you with developing a resume – whether you have lots of experience or none at all. The Career Center offers sample resumes, workshops, virtual resume reviews, drop-in advising, and appointments at careercenter.ucdavis.edu.

8. If I have more questions, where can I go to get more information?

The UC Davis [Career Center](#) is available to support you during and after your time at UC Davis! [Schedule an appointment on Handshake](#) to discuss any questions or concerns with a Career advisor.

Roles and Duties

9. What do teaching assistant interns typically do?

Early in your internship, you are encouraged to have a conversation with your host teacher about the potential scope of tasks and projects you can do. If you have special skills (technical, creative, language), be sure to share this information with your host teacher. Some host teachers will have very clearly outlined tasks and projects in mind, while others will seek your input and ideas. It is a good idea to work together to outline some specific goals of what you will achieve.

Here are some examples of how interns have assisted classrooms in the past:

- Take roll/attendance
- Lead warm-up exercises
- Work with students individually, or in small groups
- Provide individualized help for students with learning disabilities or motivational issues
- Give directions for an assignment
- Set up activity or laboratory materials
- Develop and/or conduct lessons or other activities
- Grade and provide timely feedback on students' work
- Support teachers and students at recess
- Perform organizational/administrative tasks
- Develop educational videos or other materials to supplement in-person instruction
- Support the integration of technology into the classroom

10. What are appropriate behavior and dress code at my internship site?

Unfortunately, there have been instances when interns were removed from their teaching internships for failing to adhere to appropriate standards of behavior and dress. Don't let that be you!

Behavior: It's important to remember that you are a guest at your internship site. As a guest, you are expected to support school policies and staff, follow all rules and regulations, and conduct yourself as a professional educator. This includes proactively communicating with your host teacher, asking clarifying questions when a policy is unclear, serving as a positive role model for the students you work with, and demonstrating personal accountability to follow through on what you say you will do.

Dress code: Dressing appropriately is an important way to present yourself as a professional to teachers and students at the school site. Depending on the culture of the school, this may include formal business attire, or it may be more business-casual. To make a good first impression, you can ask your host teacher for guidance on dress code ahead of time, so that you can be absolutely sure to be dressed properly on your first day. To help you dress for success, the Career Center has a list of [local resources for free/low-cost clothes](#).

11. What is the role of the host teacher?

You may be exploring teaching as a potential career, and in many cases, this may be your first classroom observation/teaching experience. By inviting you into their classroom, your host teacher is providing you a chance to learn from their experience and to get essential hands-on training.

The host teacher is first your supervisor – they provide instruction on your duties and responsibilities, and they will evaluate and provide feedback on your performance. In addition, they may act as a mentor, a coach, and a future professional reference.

Typically, your internship will begin by observing the host teacher's classroom, move towards working with students individually or in small groups, and may include a range of other projects such as developing and delivering a lesson to the class. The host teacher will be there to support you as you take on more projects and responsibilities.

If your internship is connected to a UC Davis academic course or program, you will likely have a formal evaluation that your host teacher needs to complete. You are strongly encouraged to provide your host teacher with plenty of advance notice about this evaluation – don't wait until the last minute!

12. What do school sites require before I can start my internship (background check, TB test, etc.)?

Many schools and districts require volunteers and interns to complete certain steps before they are allowed to come to the school sites. These may include a TB test, fingerprinting/background check, proof of COVID vaccination, and so on. You are *strongly* encouraged to contact the school before starting your internship to confirm what steps are required.

Tuberculosis (TB) Test:

- Schools may ask for evidence of a negative TB test (usually within the past 60 days). This may take the form of a skin test, blood test, or chest X-ray.
- UC Davis students can get a TB test on campus at Student Health and Counseling Services. Visit <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/>, log in to Health e-Messaging, and then send a message to request a TB test. Depending on your insurance, there may or may not be a fee associated with this service.
- You may also get a TB test from your primary health care provider outside of UC Davis.

Criminal Background Check / Fingerprinting:

- Some districts consider interns “volunteers” who are not required to complete a background check.
- If a district DOES require a background check, they will provide you with the necessary forms.
- The fingerprinting system is called “Livescan,” and can be done at many locations in and around campus. Visit the CA DOJ website for a [list of approved Livescan providers](#), searchable by county.
- There is a fee associated with this service. Some districts will pay the fee for the interns, while others will require the interns to cover the cost.

13. How can I prepare for my first day/week at my internship?

You are encouraged to proactively contact your host teacher prior to your first day to discuss the details of what to expect, including your specific work schedule. During your first few days, you should plan additional travel time to ensure you arrive at the classroom on time. Exchange contact information and confirm what method of communication works best for them (call, email, text, etc.).

Below is a list of some questions you can ask your host teacher. Please also consider what might be unique to your situation and discuss these matters as well.

- When I arrive at the school, where do I go to check in?
- When I get to your room on the first day, what do you want me to do? Should I just come in? Where should I sit/stand?
- Is there a place I can put my things (backpack, coat, etc.) that is out of the way?
- On the first day I attend class, would you like to introduce me to the class, or would you like me to introduce myself? Do you recommend that students call me by my first name, or should I be Mr./Ms. first or last name? Do you have any suggestions on topics the students would like to know about me?

- Are there specific classroom/school rules and associated consequences that I should know about?
- What advice do you have regarding appropriate dress code for interns?
- What is a typical day in your classroom (lecture, interactive/hands-on, small group work, projects, handouts) and how can I participate/involve myself best?
- If I arrive to find a substitute teacher in your class, what would you like for me to do?
- If I need to communicate with you regarding some matter or lesson development, what would be the best time of day? And what is the best way to reach you?
- What is your/the school's policy regarding electronics, e.g., cell phones, smart watches, etc.?