Frequently Asked Questions About the TA Program

**What are the steps for applying to the TA program?**

1. Take ENGL 402/402S.
2. Apply to be an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA) with the Writing Center (WC) in October and then work as a tutor for at least one semester in the WC.
3. While working as a tutor in the WC, apply to be an ISA in an English classroom and complete work as embedded assistant in a section of ENGL 101P.
4. Apply to TA program in March.
5. If accepted, you’ll take English 590 in Fall. You may continue to work in the Writing Center while in the TA program in the Fall.
6. The second semester in the program, you’ll teach one section of English 101 and attend mandatory TA meetings. You may be eligible to work in the WC while you are teaching.

**I noticed that there are required classes such as 402/402S and 590. Can I take them concurrently?**

No. 402/402S must be taken before you are eligible for the TA program. You must have WC experience as well.

**I worked at another university or community college as a WC tutor. Can that count or do I have to have CSUF work experience?**

Yes, your previous work experience can count. While we prefer CSUF work experience, we do consider applicants who have substantial WC experience at other higher education institutions.

**I’ve taken WC courses at other higher education institutions. Can I substitute that in for ENGL 402/402S?**

Possibly. The WC Director can evaluate your transcripts/training to see if the substitution is possible. However, it isn’t a good idea to just assume your previous coursework will count.

**I have coursework that I think might substitute for English 590. Will that work?**

No. All TAs have to go through our TA training program because our instructors need to be versed in CSUF expectations for TAs who teach English 101 classes.

**I haven’t been an embedded ISA in ENGL 101P because all my experience is as a WC tutor. Am I eligible for the TA program with English class experience?**

Yes. While we prefer applicants to have both WC tutoring experience and embedded-tutor experience, embedded tutor experience is not strictly required.

**If I meet all of the above qualifications, am I guaranteed a spot in the TA program?**

No. We have competitive admissions and will consider many factors including your GPA, recommendations, work history in the WC, and interview. Do a great job in your courses and instructional work so you are strong candidate!

**What, exactly, will I be teaching as a TA?**

You’ll teach a section of English 101: Beginning College Writing, and you’ll be the instructor of record. Composition classes focus on the study of writing, not literature, so your class will include non-fiction readings and assignments. Your class will include four major assignments and will be process-based, which means you’ll lead students through the drafting process of their assignments and review drafts as students write. You will use a common syllabus, and your major assignments and activities will be designated for you. As a class in 590, we’ll design the syllabus so that it adheres to CSUF writing program guidelines and university learning goals that are required for the course.

**Do I get to pick my schedule? My book?**

You can make a request, but there are no guarantees that you’ll get the schedule you ask for. TAs will be assigned MWF schedules so that everyone has 50 minute time blocks to plan each week. You will be provided with a composition textbook for your course (you don’t have to buy it), and everyone will use the same book, which promotes both collaboration and reflection.

**I saw that there are mandatory meetings in the second semester. Why? How “mandatory” are they?**

You are required to attend, and we’ve factored them into your pay. You will receive meeting dates at the beginning of the Spring semester and you should schedule your life around them.

**Do I have an office as a TA?**

Yes. You will be assigned an office and required to keep two hours of office hours a week. You’ll also receive an instructor email address that you must use with students. Offices are usually assigned a few days before the semester begins.

**How many office hours do I have to keep as a TA?**

Two per week. On weeks where there are TA meetings, you can cancel one office hour.

**I heard that there are observations of my teaching. What’s that like?**

Like all CSUF faculty, you will be observed while teaching. The TA coordinator and a peer will observe class periods and provide written records of what they observed.

**What’s the pay rate?**

The university-determined pay rate for a TA to teach one semester of ENGL 101 is $4,000.

**My plan is to be a literature professor, not a composition professor. Should I be a TA since I will be teaching a composition class?**

That’s up to you, but the more teaching experience you have, the more marketable you will be when you apply for higher education teaching jobs. Also, all English teachers are teachers of writing to some extent and having a background in how to teach writing and what’s considered will help you in your future. Finally, gaining experience with students is invaluable.

**Where else might I look for more information?**

Check out these links:

english.fullerton.edu/academics/eng\_grad\_program/ta\_program.aspx

http://english.fullerton.edu/academics/eng\_grad\_program/TA%20Position%20Description.docx