

Shizuoka University Teaching・Assistants Handbook

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Shizuoka University
Education Development Center

Introduction

The 2022 revision of Standards for Establishment of Universities confirms that students and other persons designated by universities and other institutions may be allowed to assist in classes. This is expected to further improve the quality of university education by promoting the participation of teaching assistants ("TA") and other assistants in teaching in classes and ensuring a more generous guidance system for students. In addition, teaching assistants are now required to undergo training in order to perform their assistantship duties. In accordance with this revision, Shizuoka University has revised the "National University Corporation Shizuoka University Teaching Assistant Job Regulations" to add "sharing a part of classes" as a new work and "mandatory prior training" as a new duty in addition to the existing TA work and duties, and has decided to apply the revised regulations from the 2025 academic year. The revision is effective from the 2025 academic year.

In light of these objectives, this handbook describes items that all TAs should understand, and please make sure you fully understand the contents before beginning your TA duties. The University considers a thorough reading of the handbook as part of the prior training.



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1. Purpose of the TA System at Shizuoka University

TAs are required to engage in educational support work for faculty members in lectures and practical training, or to share a part of classes (limited to doctoral students). The purposes of TAs are as follows.

The aim is for students to receive "detailed and attentive instruction" and for classes to be "interactive between students and professors".

For the TAs themselves, they aim to improve their skills as teachers, researchers, and professionals by gaining educational experience through their TA work.

2. TA duties

The main duties of TAs are as follows, but their duties vary depending on the characteristics of the faculty and the courses they are in charge of. Please be sure to share information with the faculty member in charge of the course before performing their duties.

(Educational support work) ※For all TAs, regardless of master's or doctoral degree courses.

- Guidance and advice for students in their studies
Examples: Advice of how to prepare reports and presentation materials, methods and procedures of experiments
- Assistance to teachers in classes
Example: Preparation and clean-up of laboratory equipment and chemicals, facilitation in group work
- Preparation of class materials
Example: Assistance in preparation of materials, assistance in development of teaching materials
- Assistance in conducting examinations and reports
Example: Assistance in conducting examinations, organization of answer sheets

(Partial sharing of class work) ※Only for TAs of doctoral degree courses.

Example: Sharing the teaching of a part of each class with a faculty member, or teaching one class out of 15

Important notes

In the event of an accident or other incident during a class, the teaching assistant should not be unfairly disadvantaged because the relationship of responsibility remains unclear. It is important to understand that the primary responsibility for teaching a course, even when teaching assistants share a part of the class, as well as for educational support services, rests with the teacher in charge of the class.



3. Advantages of doing TA

(1) Obtaining the necessary funds for their own studies

By engaging in TA work, students can efficiently earn wages on campus without having to go off campus and can use the wages earned to their own studies.

(2) Enhancing communication skills

Graduate students enrolled in master's and doctoral programs are potential leaders in academia, industry, and other areas of society. In their TA work, they will experience the difficulties of communicating with, listening to, and teaching others, and will become aware of the need to improve these skills. TA work allows them to improve their own "communicating skills" through communication with senior faculty members as instructors and with students.

4. Readiness as a TA

(1) Communication with students

- 1) It is important to note that TAs are viewed as instructors in the classroom. If they behave the same way as students, students may become confused and this may cause problems.
- 2) There is a power relationship between those who teach and those who are taught, and when engaged in TA duties (inside and outside the classroom), TAs are in the same position as instructors. Therefore, TAs need to be aware of power harassment and academic harassment.
- 3) Personal information and private information of students obtained in the course of work will be subject to confidentiality obligations.

※Details of "harassment" and "handling of personal information" are described below.

(2) Communication with faculty members

- 1) TA duties are performed under the direction of the instructor in charge of the class. Therefore, it is necessary to proactively build a relationship of trust with the instructor in charge of the class. Since the duties of TAs vary depending on the courses they teach and the faculty member in charge of the class, it is necessary to communicate with faculty member in charge of the class by checking with him/her prior to the class. Insufficient communication may result in poor overall class instruction and a corresponding decline in the quality of education.

- 2) Even if you work under the direction of your course instructor, there may be times when the amount of work is no longer appropriate. You need to control your TA work so that it does not affect your own research activities. If the workload is not appropriate, please consult with your supervisor or class instructor as soon as possible.

(3) Working hours

- 1) TA work hours are basically class time. As with faculty members, be sure to enter class on time. They should be prepared to use classroom handouts, classroom furnishings and equipment, and laboratory equipment that have been discussed in advance with the faculty member.
- 2) TA work hours must not overlap with your course hours, and TA work must not interfere with your research or teaching activities.

(4) Grooming and language

- 1) Students do not specifically distinguish between TAs and faculty members, but see them as class instructors.
- 2) As a member of society and an educator, you need to dress appropriately and use appropriate language.

5. Prevention of harassment

In order to prevent harassment from occurring, it is important for each individual to be aware and prepared. Here is a brief analysis and explanation of a case study. Please check the case study and the explanation by yourself.

Case Analysis

Do you think the following items constitute harassment? Place a "○" in the box for "not applicable" and an "×" in the box for "applicable (in some cases)".

If "applicable," why?

1. A pat on the shoulder or a back rub as an expression of thanking for the labor does not constitute sexual harassment.
2. Drinking is considered an extension of class, and since it is not on campus and is a rude place to be, it is permissible to talk a little obscenely.
3. A person jokingly asked a student if the student had gained weight recently, but the student laughed at that, so it did not constitute sexual harassment.
4. A student's attitude was so unserious that no matter how many times I warned

the student, the student did not improve, so you yelled at the student in a loud voice and using harsh words.

- 5. When pointing out errors, do so in an environment where as many people as possible are watching, as this can have a learning effect on the students around you.
- 6. You send e-mails to students every day, because the students think that if you say it verbally, they will say you are yelling at them, so you send e-mails to them.
- 7. In seminars, students are given characterizations based on their personalities, and certain students are teased to make it more exciting.
- 8. In one class, there was a student who did not submit a report with more than 50% of the assigned points for all students, so you called and told the student that the student would not receive credit if the student did not submit the report.

Commentary for Case Analysis

1. × : May constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a matter of the recipient's subjectivity, regardless of the harasser's intention to work with the harasser. It is forbidden to think that touching someone's shoulder or rubbing someone's back is enough. Unnecessary touching against the other person's will may constitute sexual harassment and should be avoided.

2. × : May constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a problem as long as it takes place within the context of campus relationships, even if the drinking is outside of work hours. In addition, the fact that it is at the drinking establishment does not mean that the range of acceptable conduct is any wider. It is important to note that sexual harassment is more likely to occur at the drinking table because of the heightened sensitivity of the situation.

3. × : May constitute sexual harassment.

Remarks about body shape should be avoided because they are not work-related, often have sexual connotations, and are likely to make the other person feel uncomfortable. It may also fall under the category of "other harassment".

4. × : Academic Harassment may be applicable.

The act of scolding a student is not in itself academic harassment. In this case, the reason for scolding is reasonable. However, if the means of scolding is excessive, it

may exceed the scope of proper guidance and education, and may constitute academic harassment. In this case, shouting at someone in a loud and harsh tone may constitute academic harassment.

5. × : May constitute academic harassment.

Reprimanding in front of a large group of people can cause more psychological damage than necessary to the recipient and, depending on the content of course, may be judged to be beyond the scope of proper guidance and education.

6. × : May constitute academic harassment.

The e-mail itself is a peaceful form of harassment. However, if the content of the e-mail is accusatory, and if it is sent continuously and on a daily basis, it may go beyond the limits of instruction and education, and may constitute academic harassment. In addition, it is important to note that e-mail does not allow the recipient to see the response, and the content can be sent harshly without hesitation, and may be received in a way different from our intention based on the text alone.

7. × : In some cases, this may constitute academic harassment.

It is important to understand each student's personality in order to enhance the class, to draw out the student's positive attitude, and to build trust with the student. However, it is also important to recognize that misrecognition of individuality and excessive demands on that individuality can place an emotional burden on the student.

8. ○ : It does not constitute academic harassment.

Since the manner is calm, and the person is only telling them what will happen in the system without saying more than is necessary, it is included within the scope of education. However, care should be taken not to be coercive when telling them.

6. Handling of personal information and confidentiality

When working as a TA at Shizuoka University, please comply with the Act on the Protection of Personal Information (hereinafter referred to as the "Personal Information Protection Act"), the Act on the Use of Numbers to Identify Specific Individuals in Administrative Procedures, and the Shizuoka University Personal Information Management Rules. In the course of your TA duties, you may handle personal information that you would not be exposed to in your capacity as a student. Please handle information obtained in the course of TA duties with the utmost care, using it

only for the intended purpose of the duties and managing it strictly so that it is not leaked to outside parties. If an incident of information leakage has occurred or is likely to occur, please report it immediately to the instructor in charge of the class to prevent further damage.

(Examples of personal information as defined in the Personal Information Protection Law)

- Name of the person
- Information regarding the date of birth, contact information (address, residence, telephone number, e-mail address), position or affiliation in the company, combined with the name of the person in question
- Audio recording information that can identify a specific individual by reason of the inclusion of the individual's name or for other reasons
- An e-mail address by which a specific individual can be identified

7. Reasonable accommodation

Shizuoka University has established the "Shizuoka University Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Declaration (DE&I Declaration)" to ensure fair opportunities for all members of the university and all those who work with the university, and to contribute to the realization of a society free from discrimination and exclusion on the basis of various attributes and backgrounds. Reasonable accommodation is a measure that is implemented individually for each person with disabilities according to his or her situation, based on the development of an environment such as barrier-free buildings, necessary human resources, and improved information accessibility, which are implemented in advance in anticipation of the use by an unspecified number of people with disabilities, etc. The content of such measures varies according to the characteristics of the disability and the specific situation in which the removal of social barriers is required, and is diverse and highly individualized. When a student's request for reasonable accommodation is approved, the faculty member in charge of the class will be notified of the specific details of the accommodation. When it is necessary for TAs to understand the details of the accommodation, the faculty member in charge of the class will share the information, and accordingly please take the necessary measures. The following are examples of reasonable accommodations. Please note that these examples are only examples, and that there may be other reasonable accommodations that are not listed here, and that each case must be judged on a case-by-case basis.

(Examples of considerations for the physical environment that may constitute reasonable accommodation)

- Seats should be reserved near the entrance/exit for students who need to leave their seats frequently during class due to their disabilities.
- To make every effort to secure a rest room for requests from easily fatigued persons with disabilities to take a rest in a separate room, and if it is difficult to secure a rest room, to provide a temporary rest space by placing a long stool in the classroom.

(Examples of communication considerations that may constitute reasonable accommodation)

- Provide information security such as sign language interpretation, note-taking, computer note-taking, and assistive listening systems in various opportunities such as classes, practical training, training, and events.
- Providing electronic files, Braille and enlarged materials, etc., upon request of students and others, so that they can access printed materials such as syllabi, textbooks, teaching materials, etc.
- Subtitling of audiovisual materials such as videos in classes attended by students who have difficulty in listening comprehension.
- Provide materials to be used by the instructor in class in advance and allow time to read through them or convert them to a more readable format prior to the class
- Making it easier for students to speak up if they have difficulty participating in class discussions, or allowing them to express their opinions in a text-based manner

8. Actual TA work flow and support for student learning

(1) At the start of the semester

Prior to the class, you should read through the syllabus of the class in question to understand the objectives of the class and the content of each session.

(2) Preparation for each class

1) Sharing the teaching plans with faculty members

Prior to the implementation of each class, the content of the class and teaching plan (class schedule) should be shared with the faculty member to ensure that the class runs smoothly.

2) Preparing teaching materials

You will need to prepare for class as instructed by the instructor, including the printing of teaching materials (paper and digital resources).

3) Preparation of equipment and information devices

Equipment and information devices will be prepared for use in class, if necessary, under the direction of the instructor. As much as possible, it should be prepared before class.

(3) Each class

The main part of TA's duties is the work in each class. Let's consider the TA's role as a "bridge between students and teachers: a learning assistant," assuming that the TA is to provide educational assistance in an information education class and following the flow of the class.

1) During class implementation: Communication with students (response to questions, individualized support)

- i. Responding to questions: In seminar or practice-type classes, you may be required to answer students' questions. On such occasions, you should prepare in advance according to the teaching plan, especially with regard to the content of the class, to ensure that you are able to answer the questions. You may also have to delve deeper into the student's question to find out what he or she is asking. In some cases, however, you will probably "not teach the right answer". You will share your teaching plan with the faculty member to determine how much to teach.
- ii. Individualized response to individual differences in student work progress: In seminar or practice-type classes, individual students will have individual differences in work pace. In classroom management, it is effective for TAs to provide guidance to students who work at a fast pace and students who work at a slow pace. The pace of each student should be monitored, and if the student is working at a faster pace, additional work should be given. If the student is working at a slower pace, the pace of learning should be controlled by checking to see if the work is slowing down and, if so, helping the student to understand the cause and solve the problem.

(4) After class

- i. Accepting questions from students: After class, you may receive questions from students outside about the class content or assignments. Respond to any questions that can be handled, and report to your instructor any questions that are difficult to handle.
- ii. Class reflection with faculty members

After class, it is necessary to share with the faculty member a reflection on the class for that session, future issues, etc. Considering that it is burdensome to set up a time for reflection again, it is preferable to have a conversation with the faculty member immediately after the class that allows for mutual reflection.

- ※ If you wish to share the teaching of a part of a class, please consult carefully with the class instructor about your role, including the scope of your assignment, and make sure that you have attended training appropriate to the content of the class.

9. Procedures (from selection to implementation of work duties)

In order to perform TA duties, the applicant must obtain approval from the Rector after submitting the Selection Form and, after approval, must attend the required training. The following is a brief flow chart from selection to implementation of work duties.

10. Other

Please refer to the information below to confirm the information required to engage in TA work.

- Disaster response, etc. Official website of the University: Crisis Management and Earthquake Disaster Prevention Measures / 災害対応等 本学公式ウェブサイト:危機管理・地震防災対策
<https://www.shizuoka.ac.jp/outline/bousai/> 
- Center for University Education website: List of classroom capacity and facilities / 機器・施設等 大学教育センターウェブサイト:教室収容人員・設備状況一覧
<https://web.hedc.shizuoka.ac.jp/staff/class-operation-manual/> 
- Timetable and annual schedule of events Official website of the university: classes and even / 時間割・年間行事予定 本学公式ウェブサイト:授業・行事予定
<https://www.shizuoka.ac.jp/education/affairs/schedule/> 
- Harassment Consultation / ハラスメント相談窓口
<https://www.shizuoka.ac.jp/outline/info/soudan/harassment/> 



11. Class FAQ

- Q (Question from a student) I can't seem to finish the assignment in time.
A In consultation with the instructor during class, a line for completion of the assignment will be set and students will be allowed to proceed as far as possible up to that line. It is also necessary to understand the progress and content of the assignment in advance.
- Q (Question from a student) What is this assignment?
A Teach the main points of the assignment in an easy-to-understand manner. For this purpose, the TA should share and familiarize himself/herself with the contents of the assignment with the instructor in advance.
- Q (Question from a student) I don't know how to use the software or what the terminology is.
A Encourage them to do their own research and solve the problem themselves using search engines such as Google and Yahoo!
- Q (Question from a student) I get a compile error in the program practice and can't do anything about it.
A Instead of having the TA deal with the error immediately, have him or her read the error message and then take the time to read the source code and try to figure out what is wrong with the program as much as possible. If the TA still cannot figure it out, give him or her a hint (e.g., the location of the error).
- Q (Question from a student) I don't know how to ask a question to a faculty member.
A Check the office hour times specified in the syllabus and inform students.
- Q (Class management) How would you summarize the role of TAs during practical training?
A It is necessary to be sensitive to what students understand and what they do not understand, and to support them so that they can solve problems on their own during the practical training.
- Q (Class management) You are having trouble deciding on groups and assigning roles.
A At the beginning of the semester, it may be difficult to determine the group assignments, because it is difficult to grasp the situation of the students. In such cases, you will assign groups at random to some extent in order to balance the number of students. After that, you will observe the students in class to learn about their individual situations and abilities, and then assign them to appropriate groups.
- Q (Class Management) Students were copying reports, program codes, etc.
A If it is a formal assignment, tell the instructor. Also tell the instructor that copying is not allowed for in-class assignments, etc., and if that does not stop them, tell the instructor.
- Q (Class Management) How do you deal with students who are too quick to move forward with assignments during exercises?
A Consult with the instructor in advance and prepare a developmental task for the students to do in such cases, and have them perform that task. Also, in the case of programming practice, it is a good idea to ask for help from the students around you

12. Advice from seniors who have experienced TA before

The common role of TAs sought by students and faculty members is to "bridge the gap between students and faculty members".

- We are able to provide detailed guidance by actively listening to the student's small questions.
- We can analyze where students are struggling based on our own experiences and provide guidance from the student's point of view.
- Facilitates faculty improvement by communicating student learning situations to faculty members.



Advantages of engaging in TA work

(1) Academic careers

- The most important thing is to be able to teach college students. Understand where college students are stumbling blocks and how to teach them to facilitate learning.
- We can help you acquire comprehensive teaching and communicative skills.
- By dealing with various types of people, you can develop your communication skills (e.g., how to interact, how to speak).
- It will also deepen your own understanding of what you are learning.

(2) About careers in companies or other organizations.

- Practice "ho-ren-so (報-連-相)" ("reporting 報告," "contacting 連絡," and "asking for advice 相談") in communication with faculty members.
- It fosters a sense of responsibility (you can't just throw it away in the middle of a project. There is a sense of being employed.)
- You will be able to talk about it as an experience in your own job search.

(3) Economic aspects

- You can regularly get money for your own study and research
- No commuting time





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