# Building a Community Resource for Teaching Assistants: The Statistics Department TA Wiki

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## Introduction

Teaching assistants (TAs) support both students and faculty, but new TAs often face challenges due to a lack of clear guidance on teaching, grading, and administrative tasks. The TA Wiki was created to provide a single, organized source for department policies, procedures, and practical teaching resources. This centralized reference helps ensure consistency, reduces duplicated effort, and streamlines the transition for new and returning TAs.

## Goals

### The TA Wiki aims to:

- Centralize information: Combine all departmental procedures, grading policies, and technical guides in one place.
- Support collaboration: Enable TAs to share resources, solutions, and improvements with each other.
- Provide practical teaching support: Offer clear guidance for lesson planning, running sections, and communicating with students.
- Save time: Reduce time spent searching for materials and simplify the onboarding process.
- Preserve department knowledge: Keep resources and strategies up to date for future TAs and faculty.

## What is the TA Wiki?



The TA Wiki is a single location for all departmental teaching resources, guidelines, and procedures relevant to teaching assistants. It is designed for ongoing updates, so TAs can easily add new materials, revise instructions, or share best practices as needs change.

## Platform: Why GitHub?

- Easy Version control
- Allows Open-source
- Offers Central access
- Encourages Structured format

## **Organization and Structure**

The TA Wiki is organized into practical sections for easy reference:

- Introduction: Role of the TA and expectations.
- Preparing for the Quarter: Contracts, instructor coordination, and planning.
- Canvas Basics: How to upload materials, make announcements, and manage grades.
- Discussion Sections: Strategies for planning and leading interactive sections.
- Communication: Best practices for student and instructor interactions, including difficult conversations.
- Grading and Feedback: Consistent criteria, feedback methods, and GradeScope usage.
- Professional Development: Resources for skill-building and community engagement.
- Updating the Wiki: Guidance for contributing new content and maintaining relevance.

Navigation is streamlined with a sidebar table of contents, keyword search, and internal links for cross-referencing related topics.

## **Impact**

### For TAs:

- Reduces time spent searching for teaching materials.
- Supports preparation with proven practices and clear expectations.
- Promotes consistent section management and grading.

### For Students:

- Benefits from well-prepared TAs and clear support.
- Gains from greater equity in the classroom experience.

### For the Department:

- Streamlines onboarding for new TAs and ensures continuity.
- Preserves department knowledge and practices over time.

## **Next Steps**

Ongoing improvements focus on enhancing visual layout, expanding content, and encouraging more contributions. We aim to further streamline navigation and broaden the scope to benefit additional departments in the future.

## TA Wiki Sidebar Example



#### **UCSC Statistics TA Wiki**

## Introduction

- Importance of inclusive TAing
- Preparing for the Quarter
- Overview: Preparing for the Quarter
- Accepting Contract Reaching out to Instructor Before the
- . Expected Number of Hours and Working
- · Familiarizing yourself with the course

#### Canvas Basics

- Overview: Canvas Basics
- Course Syllabus Preliminary Materials

#### Building a learning community

- Overview: Building a Learning community
- Starting a learning community Qualities of a Successful Learning
- Maintaining a learning community as a

- Showing students that they are valued

### Discussion Sections

- . Overview: Discussion Sections
- Guidelines for Selecting Practice
- Time Management
- Engagement via Active Learning

#### Office Hours

- Reserving Rooms for Office Hours or

Comparing In-Person and Virtual Office

- Classroom Media Access and Equipment

Utilizing Zoom features and technology

#### Communicating with the students

- Overview: Communicating with the
- · Handling Difficult Conversations

#### **Grading and Providing Feedback**

- Overview: Grading
- · Understanding the grading criteria GradeScope and Canvas resources
- · Providing constructive feedback to

#### Communicating with the Professor

- Overview: Communicating with the
- · Maintaining open lines of communication
- Reporting on student progress and issues
- · Seeking feedback and guidance

#### Professional Development

### · Overview: Professional Development

- Seeking opportunities for professional
- · Building a network of fellow teaching
- Building your teaching portfolio

### How to update this manual

. How to update this manual

## **Contact and Acknowledgments**

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