Updated 9/14/26

New Faculty and Visitors Handbook

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1. Introduction

1a.
The University of California Office of the President maintains a general Faculty Handbook applicable to all UC campuses. It can be found on-line at:
http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/programs-and-initiatives/faculty-resources-advancement/faculty-handbook.html
While it is written primarily for ladder rank faculty many sections are applicable to non-Senate faculty and other academic appointments. Topics covered include:

- Key features of the university
- University governance and administration
- Teaching and student relations
- Grievances
- The UC Libraries

… and many areas relating to appointment and advancement, research, benefits and privileges etc.

1b.
General information is also available at:
http://blink.ucsd.edu/faculty/general/index.html
This covers:

- Academic units
- Faculty groups
- Campus services
- Policies
- Student support
- Additional resources
- Local information

1c.
The rules and regulations and all department listings can be found in the General Catalog:
http://www.ucsd.edu/catalog/

1d.
The academic and administrative calendar is available at:
https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/resources/academic/calendars/

1e.
A full list of UCSD Academic Senate educational policies and procedures can be found at:
https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/

2. Information especially for new faculty and visitors

2a. Overview

1. UCSD has a 10-week quarter. It is very fast-paced, particularly if you are not used to this system. We try to cover the equivalent of a semester's worth of material in 10 weeks.

2. The students are often not as prepared as you expect they may be and may need review before too much new material is covered.

3. The Undergraduate Affairs Office (aka the Front Desk)—staffed by Rodney Pritchard and Holly Proudfoot in APM 7409, in addition to Scott Rollans in APM 7402—is the main point of contact for administrative requests and general course related questions. You would go to them for:
    a. Issues regarding your classes; enrollment, etc.
    b. Access to TritonLink – the UCSD Student/Class Information site. From here you can download class rosters, see photos of enrolled students and email a class list.
    c. Textbooks
    d. TA allocations
    e. Sample syllabi hard copies; also available at http://www.math.ucsd.edu/~syllabi/
    f. Incompletes, special exam requests, overflow exam rooms, etc.

4. Your sponsor is a good source for course history and more academic questions. It is their responsibility to help you obtain the information and materials you need to perform your duties.

5. Main administrative deadlines are:
    a. End of 2nd week to add classes.
    b. End of 4th week to drop without penalty.
    c. End of 6th week to drop with a "W" grade.

2b. Classes

1. Undergraduate Math classes are almost always scheduled to meet for 50 minutes each Monday, Wednesday, Friday with a discussion section met by a teaching assistant (TA).

2. All lower-division courses (2 through 31CH) must have an active web page or Canvas page presenting at minimum the following information:
    a. Instructor contact information (office location, phone, email).
    b. Office hour information.
    c. Grading policy, including the weighting of the various components.
    d. Dates of exams.

Other useful information to provide students (either of the course web page, or a class hand-out, or both) includes:

e. A syllabus at the beginning of the quarter.
f. What you believe a student should know before starting this class.
g. Homework expectations.

3. Typically, a class has two midterms and a final. Students appreciate the first midterm to be before the end of Week 4, the last opportunity to drop a class without a "W" being assigned, but this is not an enforced policy.

4. The Schedule of Classes is available at: https://www-act.ucsd.edu/cgi-bin/blink.pl/3/faculty/schedule_of_classes.pl

5. Be on time to class. Locate and inspect the room(s) you have been assigned prior to the first day of class. Most lecture halls are electronically fully equipped.

6. Use a microphone, particularly in the bigger classrooms. Wireless microphones are installed in all large lecture rooms.

7. Do not leave town during finals. Absences require prior permission from the Chair and another instructor must cover the class. Faculty members (including visiting faculty) must be available to students during final examination week up to the time when the final examinations of their courses are given and physically present in the examination room for the entire final examination, except in special cases when an exam is given in more than one room. In cases where the approved absence of a course instructor cannot be avoided, the department chair or program director must approve designating another faculty member to administer the final examination. Nevertheless, faculty course instructors themselves must assign grades for the courses they teach.

8. About 3 office hours per week are expected from the lecturer. Students appreciate additional office hours in exam periods.

2c. UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship

The policy itself can be found at: https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/appendices/2, but in brief is as follows:

1. When you find a suspected case of cheating, report it to the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) aio@ucsd.edu. http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/take-action/report-cheating/index.html
2. The AIO will immediately notify the appropriate administrative authority in writing, with a copy to the instructor and to Academic Records.

3. You, of course, can meet with the student yourself to discuss and resolve the issue, but don't have to.
4. The Dean of Student Affairs will arrange to meet with the student. If the student accepts the charges, you are finished, except for assigning whatever grade you think is appropriate.
5. If the student decides to contest the charges, you and other relevant parties can attend the formal Review hearing, or you can submit a written statement, to present your case. The Review Panel will decide based upon the "preponderance of the evidence."
6. Please note that throughout this process only instructors have the right to bring or drop charges of academic dishonesty, and to assign the final grade. The Council of Deans imposes any administrative sanction (e.g. probation or suspension).

2d. Teaching Assistants and Graders

Duties and Responsibilities for Teaching Assistants
The demands on a teaching assistant may vary from one professor and course to another; however, the workload should not exceed 20 hours per week on average and should normally range between 10 and 12 hours per week, unless there is an exam scheduled. Here is an approximate outline of a teaching assistant's workload in a lower division course during a typical week:

Conduct discussion sections	4 hours
Hold office hours	4 hours
Prepare for sections and office hours	2 hours
Meet with instructor	½ hour
Maintain records	½ hour

A more detailed set of instructions to TAs is provided below.

Meet with the instructors of the courses in which you will assist. Do this BEFORE the first lecture. Discuss office hours, syllabi, duties, etc. It is recommended that you set up a weekly meeting time with your instructor. You will find that everything runs more smoothly if you meet with the instructor on a weekly basis, if even for just a couple of minutes.

Conduct discussion sections. Here are some general guidelines for conducting successful discussion sections:

a) Sections provide a chance for students to ask questions and get feedback, which is not easily done in a large lecture. Generally, a TA is expected to go over worksheets or homework and exam problems with students. This is an opportunity to demonstrate concrete applications of principles covered in class. The focus should be on the ideas behind the problems, with less emphasis on details of calculations and mechanical

procedures. Encourage students to think about the methods they use, advantages of alternative methods, ways to check their answers, and the effect on a problem of changing the conditions.
b) Make sure the students can hear you clearly. Ask the class for quiet if necessary. Your presentations on the board should be neat and orderly. This is hard to judge near the board, so occasionally step back to get the students' perspective. Make frequent eye contact with the students.
c) Maximize student input. Ask the students what they like and dislike, to help you determine what is useful to them. Encourage questions—ask some of your own if students don't! Getting students to participate and do problems at the board is also encouraged. Although efficiency may be sacrificed, the students will learn from each other's mistakes. They will become more involved and less likely to simply copy down what you put on the board without understanding it. Furthermore, they will learn how to explain their reasoning clearly, using proper mathematical language.
d) If the first lecture of the quarter is on a Friday, sections do not meet on the previous Thursday; similarly, if the first lecture is on a Wednesday, sections do not meet on the previous Tuesday. If the first lecture is a Monday, ask the instructor whether sections should meet that week.

Meet regularly with the instructor. As mentioned above, it is advisable to meet weekly with the instructor. These meetings should be brief; they often last less than 15 minutes. Regular meetings help you and the instructor to stay in touch and resolve problems promptly. Try to set up a regular meeting time with the instructor at the beginning of the quarter. As a minimum, you should stay in regular contact with the instructor via email.

Attend the instructor's lectures, if asked. Some instructors may ask you to attend lectures. Attending the lecture once per week should suffice for lower division courses, although it may be advisable to attend more often in an advanced upper division course since doing so could save on preparation time. It is useful to attend lectures occasionally in any case, since doing so allows you to see the instructor's style and perspective on the course material.

Prepare thoroughly for office hours and section meetings. Get the homework problems as soon as possible from the instructor. Be sure you can do all of them ahead of time, using the methods and notation presented in class and in the textbook. The textbooks for many classes, including the calculus sequences, have instructor solution manuals available; you may check these out at the Front Desk.

Hold office hours. You should allow a minimum of one (1) hour per lower-division section and two (2) hours per upper-division section. Do not schedule office hours during the lecture. Consult the instructor to ensure that the instructor's hours do not conflict with yours, in order that students have a wide choice of hours to seek help. Some students, for example, have jobs and cannot attend morning office hours. Overflow rooms are available when office hours become too crowded. You might choose to hold extra office hours on exam weeks. You may also reserve a classroom through the Front Desk for review sessions.

Prepare homework and exam solutions. Many instructors like to have homework and exam solutions available online. Make sure photocopied solutions are clear and legible. Be aware that pencil and certain pen colors do not photocopy well.

Keep records. Keep all the records for the students in your sections, even if the class has a Grader for homework. Do a careful job, following the instructor's procedures closely. Gradebooks are available from the Front Desk. You are encouraged to keep records on Microsoft Excel, which is available on the PCs and Macs in our computer labs. Save your records to the departmental file server (euclid). The front desk will, upon request, email you a roster in Excel format. Always keep current paper copies of your records in addition to the digital copies, and periodically give copies to the instructor. It is advisable to retain these records for one year, one for yourself as well as a copy for the instructor. This practice will prove valuable in the event a grade is appealed or a student asks for a letter of recommendation after completing the course. University policy requires that unclaimed examination papers be kept for one quarter. If your course has a Grader, promptly leave homework in an envelope in the Grader's mailbox so it can be returned quickly. Even if Graders are responsible for keeping homework or quiz records, be certain that they give you copies of them periodically during the quarter.

Proctor exams. Proofread exams for mistakes. Know whether students are allowed to use notes or a calculator during an exam. Arrive early at the exam location and make sure the students are seated with spaces between them. Normally you may answer questions during an exam to clarify the meaning of the problems but not to assist students in solving them. Watch out for cheating! Ask the instructor what specific procedures you should follow if you suspect cheating. Tell the instructor if you feel that you need the help of additional proctors in a large class. The Front Desk can help with such arrangements.

Grade. In a large course, some exams may require up to 20 hours to grade. Consult the instructor for guidelines on how exams should be graded. Work from your own (or the instructor's) solutions and design a tentative grading scale for each problem. It is extremely important to be consistent on grading from one student to another. In some upper division courses, you may also be asked to grade homework. If your class has Graders, you should make sure that their grading is done in an effective and timely manner.

Confidentiality. Federal and State laws and University policy provide important safeguards for maintaining the confidentiality of student records. As a TA, you are responsible for protecting the confidentiality of students' work. Consequently, students should be informed that homework and examinations can only be picked up from their TA during posted office hours and will never be left in hallways for students to pick up. Neither may students' scores or grades be posted in public places unless names are coded so that individual students cannot be identified. Posting grades using student ID numbers is not permitted. TAs are expected not to discuss individual students' academic work with persons other than the faculty member and other TAs teaching the course.

Interaction with instructor and students. Look for areas in which you can contribute to the class and offer your help when needed without waiting for the instructor to provide directions. Meet with the instructor weekly (or at least periodically) throughout the quarter and always stay in email contact. It is important that the instructor knows how to contact you if you must leave town for a few days. You can provide valuable feedback on students' understanding of the course material. Take a personal interest in your students. Often you can be more helpful to them than the instructor because you have a more recent experience of what it is like to be in the students' shoes.

Final Exams. At the end of the quarter you will have to grade final exams and probably compute weighted total scores on all course assignments for every student. Do an extremely careful job as the instructor will take your figures for granted when assigning letter grades. Many instructors will expect statistical information such as mean scores and distributions. You may also be asked for input in deciding the grades since you will know many of the students better than the instructor. You are expected to be constantly available to the instructor for consultation until final grades are turned in (usually Monday or Tuesday during the week after final exams). Even if the instructor gives you permission to leave town earlier, stay in constant contact until the instructor confirms that all desired data from you has been received. Confirmation is important: There have been incidents where the TA emailed a file and then left town, but the file was never received.

Evaluation. Department policy stipulates that the instructor of every course you TA complete an evaluation of your performance at the conclusion of every quarter. These are kept permanently in your student file for future reference by Department faculty and administration. Instructors are expected to comment on your strengths and weaknesses as a TA, and to say whether they would accept you as a TA again. Faculty are encouraged to visit your sections to assist them in providing these evaluations.

Training. Every first-time graduate TA is required to attend the department's training program run by the Faculty TA Training Advisor and the graduate student Senior TA. This program consists of six meetings held over the academic year as well as observations of your sections by the Senior TA.

Resources. You are encouraged to consult with the Senior TA http://www.math.ucsd.edu/~seniorta/), Faculty TA Training Advisor, Graduate Vice Chair, other TAs, and/or the Teaching + Learning Commons (https://commons.ucsd.edu) for help, advice, or assistance in resolving problems or conflicts that may arise in your job as a TA. The department cares about your success as a TA!

2e. Grading and Course Grades

Instructors typically assign exam grading to their TAs (although you would be welcome to assist them), but as their academic supervisor, you should set grading policies and oversee grading assignments. For most upper-division courses, TAs also grade

homework. Sometimes lower-division courses have undergraduate graders to grade homework and/or quizzes (but not exams).

While the assignment of final course grades is ultimately at your discretion as the course instructor, it is important to have reasonably consistent grading standards across the department. Such consistency helps to ensure that students' grades are primarily determined by the quality of their academic performance, rather than the instructor's grading standards. Below is some information which you are encouraged to consider when assigning final grades.

Lower-Division Courses. Below is grade data for our lower-division courses. If your proposed grades differ substantially from the historical norm, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Undergraduate Vice Chair for guidance and support.

LD Course Grade Distributions, FA10 - Present

Course	GPA Ave	% A	% B	% C	% D/F
10A	2.59	25	32	30	13
10B	2.61	28	32	26	14
10C	2.75	32	32	25	11
11	2.83	33	34	24	9
18	2.82	33	34	23	10
20A	2.65	28	32	27	13
20B	2.58	26	32	28	14
20C	2.76	34	31	24	11
20D	2.86	37	31	22	10
20E	2.88	37	31	22	10

A note about D/F grades. It is important to make sure that students who receive passing grades (or even a D grade) are prepared to advance to the next course in the sequence, even if this means the percentage of F grades is somewhat above the historical average. If student performance suggests an unusually high (or low) percentage of F grades, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Undergraduate Vice Chair for guidance and support.

Instructors should also be aware of two problematic aspects of the D grade:

1. Even though university policy requires that a D translates to an NP ("No Pass") for students who choose the P/NP grade option, students who choose the letter grade option are able to use a D as a prerequisite for enrollment in the next Math course in a sequence.[1]
2. Math majors **cannot** use a D grade to fulfill any major requirements, even if they can enroll in the next course in the sequence.

[1] Except in the Math 20 series where a C- minimum grade prerequisite is still enforced. This is due to a change at the Academic Senate which prevents departments from setting a C- or better minimum grade prerequisite on new or updated course approvals; we are unable to revise or override this Senate prerequisite policy.

For these reasons, the department recommends that D grades be given sparingly (or avoided altogether), especially in upper-division courses.

Upper-Division Courses. Below is grade data for some of our more introductory upper-division courses. If your proposed grades differ substantially from the historical norm, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Undergraduate Vice Chair for guidance and support.

Selected UD Course Grade Distributions, FA10 - Present

Course	GPA Ave	% A	% B	% C	% D/F
102	2.93	37	34	20	9
103A	2.79	31	34	26	9
103B	2.92	33	39	23	5
109	2.84	34	34	23	9
142A	2.62	28	33	25	14
142B	2.81	31	37	24	8
170A	2.90	37	33	21	9
180A	2.85	33	36	23	7
183	2.93	37	34	20	9

The above introductory upper-division courses tend to have sufficiently high enrollments that the grade distribution in any particular class should stay relatively close to the historical average. In more advanced upper-division courses that often have lower enrollments, grades tend to be slightly higher, with approximately 40 percent of students receiving grades of A- or better and nearly 80 percent of students receiving grades of B- or better. Failing grades in such courses are uncommon and occur mostly when students become disengaged and stop doing the work.

Other Grading Suggestions

As a course instructor, you are solely responsible for determining and assigning final course grades. Please take this responsibility seriously, and carefully consider University policies and departmental expectations (e.g. the problematic aspects of the D grade which are outlined in the previous section) when making decisions about course grades. Remember that your faculty mentor, the Undergraduate Vice Chair, the chair of the Teaching Committee, and the chair of the Assessment Committee are here to support you, provide resources, and answer any questions you may have.

While preparing your course syllabus:

UCSD Senate policy on course syllabi requires that your course syllabus be made available to students *no later* than the end of the first week of instruction.

1. Your syllabus must explain the formula that you will use to calculate each student's numerical grade. That is, you should indicate what percentage of the grade will come from homework, midterm exams, the final exam, etc. Some (but

not all) instructors also choose to announce on the syllabus that certain numerical percentages will guarantee certain letter grades (for example, 90% will be at least an A-, 80% will be at least a B-, and so on). It is best to choose a grading scheme which is close to what has been used in previous offerings of the course. If you plan to try something substantially different, please discuss this with your faculty mentor, the Undergraduate Vice Chair, the chair of the Teaching Committee, or the chair of the Assessment Committee.

2. When designing your course calendar, it is important to keep in mind that students should have some opportunity to gauge their progress in the course, such as graded homework, a quiz, or a midterm exam, before the drop deadline (Friday of Week 4).
3. The Math Department policy is that in-person and proctored assessment is required for all undergraduate mathematics courses at UCSD. For this reason, midterm and final exams should be in person and proctored and should not be administered as take-home exams.
4. It is good to think about what you will do if a student misses a midterm exam due to an illness or a family emergency. One option, which avoids the need to write makeup exams, is to substitute the final exam score for the missed midterm. If a student misses a final exam, they may be eligible for an Incomplete (I grade), but University policy stipulates that instructors may only assign the I grade if the student has completed the majority of the coursework at a passing level and is missing the final exam for documented reasons beyond the student's control.

During the quarter:

1. Students may ask you to change your grading policies in the middle of the quarter, but this should almost always be avoided. If you consider making any changes to the policies on your syllabus, then you need to run these proposed changes by your faculty mentor and the Undergraduate Vice Chair.
2. It is important for students to have a reasonably good idea throughout the quarter of how well they are doing. One option is to tell students, after each exam, what score would correspond to an A, B, or C on that exam. If you do not provide such information, then students may default to thinking that 90% is an A, 80% is a B, and 70% is a C, which could be inaccurate, especially on challenging exams.

When assigning final grades:

1. It can be helpful to start by fixing the A-/B+, B-/C+, and C-/F boundaries. It is usually best to draw these boundaries in such a way that your grade distribution stays reasonably close to historical averages. If your proposed grades differ substantially from the historical norm, or if you have any questions or concerns,

please don't hesitate to reach out to your faculty mentor and/or the Undergraduate Vice Chair for guidance and support.

2. Regarding the C-/F boundary, it is best not to aim to give a certain percentage of F grades. Rather, a student should receive an F if they are not prepared to advance to the next course in the sequence, or if they did not learn a minimum threshold amount of the material. Nevertheless, historical averages are a useful guide to ensure that standards remain consistent over time and across multiple offerings of a course.
3. It is generally expected that instructors will give + and - grades (that is, A+, A-, B+, B-, C+, C-), unless you have a pedagogical reason for not doing so and announce this policy on your syllabus. You can determine the + and - grades after the A-/B+, B-/C+, and C-/F boundaries have been set. The A+ grade is used sparingly, for just a few students who did exceptionally well.
4. When placing boundaries between letter grades, it can be helpful, especially in smaller classes, to look for gaps in the grade distribution and place the boundaries in those gaps. Looking for gaps may help you to avoid a scenario in which two students with nearly identical numerical averages end up with different letter grades, although this cannot always be avoided in large classes.

2f. Policy on Examinations

- The UCSD Academic Policy on examinations can be found at: https://senate.ucsd.edu/operating-procedures/educational-policies/courses/epc-policies-on-courses/policy-exams-including-midterms-final-exams-and-religious-accommodations-for-exams/
- The Department expects that you will be present during the administration of each of your exams. TAs should also be present to help proctor the exam.
- You should put in place measures to guard against cheating, such as multiple versions of your exam, checking student IDs. Discuss strategies with your sponsor or other department members.
- You are responsible for providing final course grades for your courses. Your faculty sponsor is responsible for handling any Incomplete grades or other unfinished business associated with your courses before you leave if you will not be remaining at UCSD for the following quarter.

2g. Policy on Students with Disabilities

- The UCSD policy on students with disabilities can be found at: https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/3 Contact Holly Proudfoot at the Front Desk (math-osd-liaison-g@ucsd.edu) for assistance in accommodating such students.

2h. Exam Printing

- Please send requests for the printing of exams, quizzes, and/or instructional material to math-printing-g@ucsd.edu at least **3-5 days prior** to the date needed.
- The department cannot guarantee you will have your materials on time if the request is submitted with less than 3-5 days' notice. Alternatively, you can make the copies yourself using the copier in 7018 with a "green card" borrowed from APM 7409, or you can go to a Triton Print location and submit your order in person. A list of Triton Print locations can be found online: https://blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/tritonprint/contacts.html

2i. Resources

- Assessment Committee Chair – Jason Schweinsberg
- Graduate Vice Chair – Todd Kemp
- Postdoc Coordinator – Ming Xiao
- TA Training Faculty Advisor – Leesa Anzaldo
- Teaching Committee Chair – Patrick Fitzsimmons
- Undergraduate Vice Chair – Laura Stevens
- Visitor Liaison and Calculus Coordinator – John Eggers
- Front Desk Staff (APM 7409 and 7402) – textbooks, room allocations, TritonLink access, exam duplication, TA and grader allocation, etc.
- Supply room (APM 7018) – chalk, pens, stationery, etc.