Guidelines for PhD Teaching Assistants at SCGC

Main contact: Ms Séverine Roque, severine.roque@epfl.ch, BCH 3312

Introduction meeting
Personal appointment with Séverine Roque and Anne Lene Odegaard for PhD in Lausanne, group introductions by Anne Lene Odegaard in Sion. Please get in touch any time directly with Séverine Roque by email or phone for any questions regarding assistantship.

Requirements
All PhD students registered with SCGC (mostly from EDCH) are required to teach 630 h spread over 3 years. This corresponds roughly to one day teaching a week during the semester. PhD students are not expected to teach in the first and the last six months of their PhD, but are of course allowed if they want to (or need to in order to reach their hours quota).

Start of teaching
PhD students who have started before 01.10 → will be required to teach in the Spring semester
PhD students who have started before 01.04 → will be required to teach in the Autumn semester

Recommended minimal teaching load per year
By the end of the 1st year: 100 h, by the end of the 2nd year: 300 h, by the end of the 3rd year: 500 h, by the end of the thesis: 630 h

Excess of teaching hours
Excess of teaching hours (if the students wish to teach more than 630h) can be done only with the agreement of the PhD advisor(s).
Procedure
Will be initiated by an email of the section – 3 phases

Phase 1 - about 3 months before semester start
Teachers are asked to indicate their needs in teaching assistants. They can indicate the names of PhD assistants they have already selected and informed. Needs and student choices after the deadline cannot be guaranteed. This means that PhD students particularly interested in a specific course should contact the teachers early enough!

Phase 2 - about 2 months before semester start
PhD students without (or with not enough) teaching duties are asked to select three still free options for their teaching, respecting the required competences. If they cannot teach, they should fill and send the teaching release form to the section.

Phase 3 - about 1 month before semester start
The section makes the final teaching assignment, based on the teaching needs, the competences of the student and their choices (in this order). This assignment is final and mandatory.

Replacement
An assigned PhD student is allowed to miss a session of teaching, provided he/she finds a replacement who needs to be accepted by the teacher of the course. The section will not look for replacement; it is the PhD’s responsibilities.

Attribution of assistants to courses
In principle, assistants are allowed only for TP and courses including exercise sessions (not for courses only) of more than 15 students. Exceptions need to be validated by the section during phase 1 of the teaching assistant attribution.

- exercises: max 1 assistant for 25 students, exceptions need to be validated by the section during phase 1 of the teaching assistant attribution
- bachelor laboratory works (TP’s): max 1 for 10, exceptions needs to be validated by the section during phase 1 of the teaching assistant attribution
- presence in lecture for assistants: in principle, only one teaching assistant is expected to follow the lecture as main assistant if needed (only for lectures with exercises and more than 15 students). However, if no assistant with sufficient knowledge in the topic of the course can be found, the teacher can require the assistants to follow the course after validation by the section.

Attribution of teaching hours at SCGC
In principle, the hours giving at SCGC are effective working hours. Here are a few guidelines:

- Exercise session: 1 h exercise = 2 h teaching
- TP (laboratories): h presence time + about 25% for preparation/corrections
- Following courses (only if main assistant or required due to lack of knowledge): 1 h lecture = 1 h teaching
- Advanced projects (starting in second semester of master) and master project supervision: 56 h per student supervised
• Special work (lecture preparation, new exercise sessions, translation work, etc.): effective working hours with justification. For duties over 50 h, pre-validation by the section is required.

ATTENTION: when supervising an exchange/external student; teaching credits will only be attributed to the PhD student if the exchange student receives ECTS credits from his home university for his exchange.

Others
PhD students can also be required to help out during special promotional events, such as Scientastic festival, EPFL open house, etc. Should these events take place during weekends, the hours worked will be doubled as a compensation.

Travel compensation
PhD from outside will receive an extra 3 h teaching credits per day spent teaching in Lausanne. Train tickets are to be arranged directly with the lab’s secretary.

Language issues
The section is aiming to diminish the teaching duties in French. Currently, French cannot be required anymore for any EPFL-related teaching, but is still mandatory for some teaching to UNIL.

Up to 50 h of teaching will be credited for French courses for non-French speaking PhD students (upon presentation of justification). This of course means that afterwards the PhD student can be attributed to duties requiring French.

Teaching excellence award
Every year, 10 teaching excellence awards including a diploma and a prize of 1000 CHF will be attributed to PhD teaching assistants. Nomination are made exclusively by the teacher supervising the course and nominations take place as of June (exact deadline will be communicated in an email of the section to the teachers). Each PhD student can receive the prize only once and needs to have a working contract ending after the ongoing year.