

**The benefit and cost of recruiting  
undergraduate students as teaching assistants  
for Introductory Microeconomics**

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## Full-time/Part-time Teaching Assistant (several posts) for Economics or Finance Courses at Undergraduate Level

Ref.: 522787

Apply now

Work type: Fractional / Part-time, Full-time

Department: Faculty of Business and Economics (07030)

Categories: Executive / Technical / Support

**Full-time/Part-time Teaching Assistant (several posts) for Economics or Finance Courses at Undergraduate Level in the Faculty of Business and Economics (Ref.: 522787)** (to commence in September 2023 for 1 year, with the possibility of renewal subject to satisfactory performance)

Applicants should possess a good Bachelor's degree in Economics or Finance. Preference will be given to those with a second degree, relevant professional qualifications and teaching experience in universities.

The appointees will assist instructors in course preparation and administration, conduct tutorials, grade assignments and tests, invigilate examinations, and perform other duties as assigned. They may need to work outside normal office hours, including evenings and weekends. Those who have responded to the previous advertisement (Ref.: 521105) need not re-apply.

A highly competitive salary commensurate with qualifications and experience will be offered, in addition to annual leave and medical benefits.

The University only accepts online application for the above posts. Applicant should apply online and upload an up-to-date C.V., academic transcripts including HKALE, HKDSEE and HKCEE results, and external test scores (if applicable). Review of applications will commence as soon as possible and continue until **August 31, 2023 (extended to September 30, 2023)**, or until the posts are filled, whichever is earlier.

Advertised: Aug 22, 2023 (HK Time)

Applications close: Sep 30, 2023 (HK Time)

# Misunderstanding #1: Equal pay for TAs

Equal pay for TAs across Faculties!

The same pay can attract quality TAs in one faculty but not necessarily in the others!

It all depends on the **job market conditions!!**

# Even if we can successfully hire enough TAs for the semester . . .

Most stay for a year and then move on. That is, we have to *train a new group of TAs every year*.

Most treat the job as a stepping stone and *do not work with their hearts!*

Some will *leave in the middle of the semester* once they receive a better job offer.

## The recruitment of TAs . . .

Some colleagues in the Faculty will help recruit a number of full-time TAs for all Economics and Finance courses. Then, these TAs are allocated to courses by matching their previous training and the course content.

Selection of TAs are based on applicant's qualifications and a short interview.

When the job market condition is tight, we settle for candidates that meet our minimum requirement -- a bachelor degree in Economics, Finance, and/or business.

# Misunderstanding #2: Anyone can teach Introductory Microeconomics !?

Some colleagues in the Faculty will help recruit a number of full-time TAs for Economics courses. Then, these TAs are allocated to courses by matching their previous training and the course content.

Selection of TAs are based on applicant's qualifications and a short interview.

When the job market condition is tight, we settle for candidates that meet our minimum requirement -- a bachelor degree in Economics, Finance, and/or business.

**Most teaching assistants allocated to Introductory Microeconomics had the weakest background in Economics.**

# The intended important role of TAs

Teaching assistants supposedly assist teachers and enhance teaching and learning!

**IF: we have qualified TAs!**

Unqualified TAs can be a burden!

# The intended important role of TA

Teaching assistants supposedly assist teachers and enhance teaching and learning!

**IF: we have qualified TAs!**

What if we have a new group of TAs every year?

New TAs may not understand the **needs of our UG students.**

New TAs may not know **our approach of teaching.**

What if TAs have weak background?



**The solution is UGTA!**

## Full-time TAs

Most treat the job as a stepping stone and do not **work with their hearts!**

Some will **leave in the middle** of the semester once they receive a better job offer.

## UG students as TAs

UGTA job can add to student's CV, whether they will join the market place after graduation or will pursue postgraduate studies after graduation.

UGTA job provides a chance to polish their presentation skills, build a solid foundation in their understanding of Economics.

UGTA are most eager to help their younger peers.

## Full-time TAs

Most stay for a year and then move on. We have to train a new group of TAs every year.

New TAs may not understand the **needs of our UG students**.

New TAs may not know **our approach of teaching**.

## UG students as TAs

UGTAs took our course before. They understand the needs of our UG students.

They know our approach of teaching.

They did well in our course, and thus can potentially share with students how to learn and do well in the course.

## Full-time TAs

Equal pay for TA across Faculties!

The pay can attract quality TAs in one faculties but not necessarily in the others!

It all depends on the job market conditions!!

## UG students as TAs

**It is not just about pay!!**

The salary to UGTAs are not high. But, pay is not everything!

Aside from pay, there is learning, there is satisfaction of helping peers.

## Full-time TAs

Some colleagues in the Faculty will help recruit a number of full-time TAs for Economics and Finance courses. Then, these TAs are allocated to courses by matching their previous training and the course content.

Selection of TAs are **based on applicant's qualifications and a short interview.**

## UG students as TAs

When we hire UGTAs **specifically** for our course of Introductory Microeconomics, we have room to design **our application form and interview process that fit our needs.**

Customized application form.

- Reasons for my interest in the job(s).
- My understanding of the difficulty of teaching and learning of the course, and hence my potential contribution to the teaching and learning.

# UG students as TAs

Customized interview to fit out requirement.

## Interview Arrangement

**Interviewer:** Dr. Ka-fu WONG

**Venue:** Zoom

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes.

### Interview format:

1. Mock Tutorial: We would like you to present and explain the concepts regarding the **questions in a separate PDF file** (link below, or [ here ] ) with a set of PPT slides. Imagine you have 15 minutes for the discussion. In preparing for the slides, imagine you were doing so in a tutorial setting. Always keep in mind that students are of diverse background and ability. Thus, it is important to use this opportunity to review some important concepts with the students and illustrate with detailed steps. Note, it is not just about demonstrating how to solve the specific question and ask them to memorize the mechanical steps, but to reinforce the learning the concepts connected to the question such that they will be able to applying the concepts to solve similar problems.
2. Self introduction and casual exchange.

**(For record keeping, the interview will be recorded.)**



Mock tutorial question set

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# Observation of TA's performance in tutorials

- Most TAs are new.
- TA's presentation skills and coverage may have room for improvement.
- Supervisory teachers will observe at least one tutorial of each TA (new and old), and give feedback on how to improve the tutorials in the future.

Set our eyes on better teaching and learning for students!

Please do not set our eyes on maximizing personal benefits!

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Please **trust** me that I will be doing my job.

Nevertheless, please do **check** on me occasionally in case I am off track and in case I am in a blind spot.

Your check (and possibly **helping hands**) will be very much **appreciated**.



I will try to **trust** you that you are doing your job.

Nevertheless, I will **check** on you – to ensure that you are on track.

**Helping hands** will be in order if necessary.

I hope you **do not mind** the checking and helping hands.

## How do UGTAs compare to full-time TAs?

Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning (SFTL):

UGTAs are **at least as good as** the full-time TAs allocated to our course, **most are much better**.



## How do UGTAs compare to full-time TAs?

Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning (SFTL):

UGTAs are **at least as good as** the full-time TAs allocated to our course, most are much better.

**UGTAs have become  
an important part of our T&L equation!**

# We love our UGTAs!

Bonus: With the UGTA system, students take the course of Introductory Microeconomics are **aspired to study hard** to gain the chance to become UGTAs in their senior years!

Historical note: I have been the course coordinator of many subclasses of the Introductory Microeconomics for many years. We started to hire UGTAs to help our teaching of Introductory Microeconomics in 2016 Fall Semester. It took me a lot of effort and time to convince our colleagues in charge of TA recruitment/allocation to allow us to experiment with hiring UG students as TAs. Although my team members (teachers of other subclasses) are all convinced the value of UGTAs, no other courses in our faculty used UGTAs.