

Guidelines for the Undergraduate Classroom Support Program (UCS)

Introduction and Notes for Faculty

Introduction

The Undergraduate Classroom Support (UCS) program provides opportunities for undergraduate students to contribute to the teaching and learning of their peers by helping faculty in specific courses across the University. Alongside Teaching Assistants (TAs), who by definition at AUC have at least a Bachelor's Degree, undergraduates have long provided valuable classroom support, under the Work Study Program, to AUC faculty. The system being introduced in the 2016-17 academic year is intended to clarify and regularize this practice.

Students hired in the Undergraduate Classroom Support program will be able to enhance their own learning experience as well as that of other students by helping to facilitate course-related activities in and/or outside the classroom. Having done well themselves in any course they are chosen to support, UCS Students come equipped with valuable experience, as well as energy and passion for the field of study. The benefits for all concerned can be significant. More information and guidelines for working with UCS Students are listed below:

Selection of UCS Students

Acting as a UCS Student requires not only significant knowledge of course content, but also highly developed communication skills, a strong sense of responsibility, and a significant time commitment. UCS students are selected according to the following:

- Prospective UCS Students must be of at least Junior standing with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, and must have earned at least a B+ grade in the particular course(s) for which they will be providing classroom support.
- Prospective UCS students must have effective interpersonal and communication skills appropriate for the proposed assignment. Final decisions as to suitability will be made by the Department Chair, or a person designated by the Chair, based on a personal interview.
- Departments advertise openings through the on-line system, specifying the workload and other expectations, and any specific hiring criteria. Faculty may recommend that specific students apply, but, in all cases, students themselves must do so themselves, on-line.
- Selected UCS Students will participate in a mandatory orientation session conducted by the relevant Department/School at the start of each semester.

Suggested Tasks for UCS Students

Undergraduate Classroom Support Students, as is noted by their designation, are not the equivalent of Teaching Assistants (TAs). The following is a list of suitable tasks for UCS students, building on their strengths while recognizing the limits of their time and qualifications.

- Attend and observe class meetings
- Lead group discussions in review sessions
- Provide support in problem and/or software labs, and in one-on-one problem solving.
- Offer support for computer software introduced in courses, soft skills mentoring, etc.
- Attend and aid in field trips in the presence of faculty/TAs.
- Assist with audio-visuals for the classroom such as lecture recording, editing, and digitization

Tasks that UCS Students May NOT Perform:

- Proctor exams
- Grade any coursework (quizzes, exams, assignments, lab reports, papers, etc.)
- Deliver course material or problem sessions during regular class hours
- Assist in any way in preparing exams
- Independently supervise field trips

Responsibilities of Faculty Members:

The efficacy and success of UCS Students in supporting classroom learning and helping to engage their peers depends largely on the thoughtful participation of faculty members in the UCS program. Faculty intending to use UCS Students as support in their courses take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensure the UCS Student is properly prepared to assume the support role
- Mentor the UCS Student with a specific focus on the duties assigned to them
- Provide useful and timely assessment feedback and suggestions through regular meetings with the UCS student(s), outside of class sessions.
- In cases where more than one UCS Student is used in a course, lab and/or studio, or in cases of multi-section courses, ensure that the UCS Students involved work as a team, with clearly defined division of responsibilities and systems of coordination.
- Ensure UCS Students are properly enrolled in the Work Study Program, with all necessary steps completed for the students to receive compensation

Evaluation and Assessment:

Realizing the potential benefits of the UCS Program for all concerned will depend on careful attention to evaluation and assessment.

- Undergraduate Classroom Support students will be evaluated by the course instructor and, when appropriate, by students in the classes for which they provide support.
- UCS students will also provide a reflective self-assessment at the end of the semester, as a key part of the learning experience.
- The instructor evaluation and UCS student self-evaluation will both be done on-line through the Work Study Program.
- Evaluations will be shared with UCS Students, and used as a basis for improving program implementation