

University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Appointment and Reappointment Procedures for
TA/TO's in Mathematics and Statistics

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics offers a PhD program in Mathematics and Statistics and MS programs in Applied Mathematics and Statistics. It also offers an MS program in Mathematics but this is usually a step towards the PhD degree.

Every year the department admits 8 to 12 new PhD students and 8 to 10 MS students but the number may vary appreciably according to the applicant pool and the availability of funds. With few exceptions, successful applicants into the PhD or MS programs are offered Teaching Assistantships. New TAs are chosen by the Graduate Admissions Committee. After the February 1 deadline for applying, committee members rate each of the applicants on the basis of their transcripts, personal essays, letters of recommendation, and experience. Those applicants whom the committee decides to accept are then sent letters of acceptance and are given until April 15 to decide. If by April 15 not all available TA positions have been filled, then additional applicants whom the committee decides to accept are notified by telephone, email, and letter. The department is committed to the development of a diverse graduate student body and makes every effort to recruit women and members of underrepresented groups in the Mathematical Sciences.

Early in the spring semester, each eligible student is asked to indicate whether he or she wishes to be considered for reappointment. Decisions concerning the reappointment of Teaching Assistants will be made by the Graduate Program Director and the faculty members of the GAC in consultation with the Department Head and the Chairperson of the Graduate Admissions Committee. TAs who receive reappointment will be notified in writing by the Department Head in late March or early April.

Teaching assistants whose teaching is satisfactory and who are making satisfactory progress toward their degree, as defined below, can expect that their assistantship will be renewed for the normal period of residence. The normal period of residence of an MS student is two years, for a PhD student with a previous MS degree in a related area is four years, and for PhD students with no previous MS degree is five years.

Satisfactory progress toward the degree: The progress toward the degree is measured differently depending on whether the student is a PhD or an MS student and the number of years the student has spent in the program. In all cases students are expected to maintain a grade point average of B or above.

The academic progress of first-year students in either the PhD or MS program is measured by their performance in Fall semester courses and the evaluations from their

instructors. If this performance is unsatisfactory (e.g. the student's grade point average is below B, or the student has not taken at least two courses in the Department), the GAC may decide to delay a decision on reappointment until after receiving mid-semester reports from the courses the student is taking in the Spring semester.

Second-year PhD students are expected to have attempted the Basic Exam by August of their first year and have passed it at the PhD level by January of their second year.

Third-year PhD students are expected to have attempted the Advanced Exam by August of their second year and have passed it by January of their third year.

Students are expected to select a dissertation advisor within six months after passing the Advanced Exam. A dissertation committee should be formed no later than a year after passing the Advanced Exam.

The academic progress of PhD students in their fourth and fifth year shall be measured by their progress in their dissertation research as reported by the dissertation director to the Graduate Program Director.

Research Assistantships: A variable number of Research Assistantships, funded by external grants, are available through some of the faculty members of the Department. Appointments and re-appointments are decided by the Principal Investigator in consultation with the Graduate Program Director and the Department Head. A Research Assistant who is not offered reappointment as an RA is eligible for a TA appointment according to the guidelines detailed above.