

# Course Assistants - What are they and how do I become one?

<https://csci-1301.github.io/about#authors>

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## 1 What Is an Undergraduate Course Assistant?

In this course, an Undergraduate Course Assistant (UCA) is generally present in addition to your instructor. A UCA is a student, generally in the School of Cyber and Computer Sciences, who successfully passed CSCI 1301 and that is hired by the School to assist other students.

Their duties generally include:

- Helping the students during the labs,
  - To set-up their computers,
  - To find the right resources,
  - To understand their IDE's error messages,
  - To investigate bugs with them,
  - etc.
- Helping the students outside of the lab (through email, teams, or office hours), for similar tasks as in lab, but also to get ready for an exam or a quiz,
- Reporting to the instructors any issue, mistake or confusion they noticed,
- Suggesting improvements to the resources shared with the students.

Their duties *can not* include:

- Understanding for you<sup>1</sup>,
- Helping you or even commenting on graded material *before* it was graded,

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<sup>1</sup>Although that may sound curious, we believe it is important to remind you of the fact that they can only *help* you understanding, but that you have to do your part!

- Grading students' work,
- Helping you with other classes,
- Helping you becoming a self-regulated learner and work on your schedule<sup>2</sup>.

## 2 How Do I Become One?

A UCA is hired by the School upon recommendation of instructors, after discussion with our Academic Program Coordinator, and possibly our Director of Undergraduate Studies.

A UCA *must*:

- Be a student, that is, currently enrolled in courses, or, if during the Summer, being enrolled in courses for the next Fall semester,
- Pass our Human Resources background check,
- Have an interest in tutoring,
- Clearly understand the limits and boundaries to the help they can provide to students.

Additionally, if a student wants to help with this particular class, then the student must have successfully passed CSCI 1301 with a grade of B or higher

A UCA will:

- Be able to work up to 25 hours per week (an average of 10 hours per week is typical, but needs to be discussed with the instructor), paid \$12.50 per hour, without other benefits,
- Be adequately trained to use our platforms and edit our resources,
- Be able to work on Campus and discuss their schedule with their referent instructor,
- Develop a stronger bond with the instructors, facilitating possible future reference or research projects.

So, in short: talk to any CSCI 1301 instructor if you feel like becoming a UCA.

## 3 I Am a UCA, What Should I Do Now?

Congratulations! You should now read more about your position in the UCA starting guide<sup>4</sup>!

## 4 What Is the Difference With a GRA?

*Graduate* Course Assistants (GRA) hold a bachelor and are generally PhD or Master student. Their duties generally overlap with those of the instructors and those of the UCAs, as they are the first point of contact of UCAs, design projects, organize the schedule of the tutoring center and of the labs.

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<sup>2</sup>That's a job really well taken care of by the Academic Success Center<sup>3</sup>!

<sup>4</sup>uca\_guide.html

## 5 What Is the Difference With a URA?

Undegraduate *Research* Assistants (or “URAs”) share many similarities with UCAs:

- They both are students employed by the University,
- They both have a maximum of 25 hours/week,
- Their pay rates are the same,
- They both work under the direction of a Faculty member<sup>5</sup>.

However, their focus is on working on *research*<sup>6</sup> instead of being focused on teaching. The difference is sometimes tenuous, but URAs positions are generally given in priority to “advanced” students (that is, close to graduation), to use their gained knowledge to push further the limits of human knowledge!

It is not possible to cumulate an URA *and* an UCA position, but obtaining an UCA position is in general an excellent stepping stone to obtain a URA position, if you wish to do so: by proving that you are reliable, serious, agreeable to work with, you will maximize your chances of having a Faculty member notice you and offer you to work on their research with them.

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.augusta.edu/ccs/faculty.php>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.augusta.edu/ccs/research.php>