

Graduate Student Handbook



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS™

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024/2025

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Graduate Programs Offered by MSCI.....	2
Assistantships, Fellowships, and Awards.....	3
International Students.....	4
Residency Requirements.....	5
Health Insurance	5
Graduate Student Housing	6
Advisors and Committees.....	6
Course Loads and Tuition.....	8
Course Numbers and Special Courses	9
GA Rights and Responsibilities.....	10
Teaching Eligibility	13
Teaching Responsibilities and Support	13

Introduction

This handbook provides graduate students with policies and procedures that relate to the academic program and facilities of the [Department of Mathematical Sciences \(MSCI\)](#). The handbook serves as a guide for graduate students toward completion of their degree requirements as well as listing the Graduate Assistants' responsibilities and duties. The policies and procedures contained in the handbook supplement those of the Graduate School and the [Office of Student Accountability](#) as published in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and in the [Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#). The student is responsible for knowing and complying with the published regulations of the Graduate School, most notably [Admissions Regulations](#), [Admission of International Students](#), [Academic Regulations](#), and [Minimum Degree Requirements](#). The official and current version of this handbook is on the [MSCI website](#).

Note that we cannot guarantee that all the provisions in this handbook are fully up-to-date. If in doubt, contact the Graduate Committee or consult the [Graduate Catalog](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Graduate Programs Offered by MSCI

Several graduate programs are offered in MSCI.

- [Graduate Certificate in Teaching of Mathematics](#): Requires the completion of 18 credit hours which includes an in-depth study of the teaching of Pre-Calculus and Calculus. This certificate in conjunction with a Masters' Degree qualifies the graduate to teach undergraduate mathematics courses at a 2-year or 4-year college or dual enrollment courses.
- [Master of Science \(MS\) in Mathematical Sciences](#): Requires completion of 33 credit hours, and either a thesis or passing of a Comprehensive Exam, given in the form of an independent study project with a presentation before a faculty committee. Alternatively, passing the PhD Qualifying Exams at the lower MS level is counted as equivalent to passing the MS Comprehensive Exam. Concentrations in [Applied Mathematics](#), [Mathematics](#), [Teaching of Mathematics](#), and [Statistics](#) are offered.
- [Doctor of Philosophy \(PhD\) in Mathematical Sciences](#): Requires completion of 72 total post-Baccalaureate credit hours, passing of PhD Qualifying and Comprehensive Exams, and a dissertation. Concentrations in [Mathematics](#) and [Applied Statistics](#) are offered.

More details on the programs and application procedures are provided on the [MSCI website](#) and in the [Graduate Catalog](#). It is the Graduate Student's responsibility to ensure that all of the requirements for graduation are satisfied.

PhD students are usually eligible to obtain an MS degree in Mathematical Sciences before completing their PhD and are expected to obtain this extra degree. Students pursuing a PhD should contact their Advisor and the Graduate Committee as soon as they have passed the PhD Qualifying Exams at the MS level or above and earned enough credit hours for an MS degree. PhD students who receive financial support from departmental resources (assistantship, tuition waiver etc.) are required to obtain an MS degree in Mathematical Sciences as part of their successful progression in the PhD program.

Assistantships, Fellowships, and Awards

Graduate Assistantships

MSCI is committed to providing financial support for Graduate Assistants (GAs) who are making adequate progress toward completion of their degree and are performing their job responsibilities satisfactorily. Assistantships will usually only be awarded to students in the PhD program. See [GA Rights and Responsibilities](#) below for more details.

Graduate School Fellowship and Awards

[Fellowships and awards](#) are offered through the Graduate School.

The annual [Student Research Forum](#) is held in the spring, sponsored by the Graduate School and the Helen Hardin Honors Program. Students compete for the best poster presentation and can earn monetary awards.

Faudree Scholars in Math

This endowed scholarship, courtesy of Ms. Pat Faudree, is geared towards PhD students with a focus on Combinatorics. Starting in Fall 2024, up to two PhD students will be selected annually, each receiving a minimum scholarship award of \$5,000. Preference will be given to students studying Combinatorics.

Department of Mathematical Sciences' Outstanding Teaching Awards

Every spring, MSCI recognizes one graduate student with excellent performance as a teacher. This includes excellence in teaching, tutoring or mentoring undergraduate students. The selection process begins with nominations, and then a selection committee sends a recommendation to the Graduate Committee. Recipients are given a plaque and a cash award of \$150.

The Dr. Ralph Faudree Award in Mathematics Research

The Dr. Ralph Faudree Award in Mathematics will be given annually to up to two PhD students in Mathematics who have demonstrated excellent progress toward achieving a doctoral degree. It consists of a monetary award of \$300 and a certificate of recognition. Eligibility requirements include: (1) having passed the PhD Qualifying Exams (PhD level); and (2) a commendable teaching record.

Faculty members in MSCI are encouraged to send nominations of candidates for the award to the Interim Chair, [Prof. Thomas Hagen](#), by **March 31**. Nominees will then be invited to submit an abstract and a title for a 25-minute presentation of their research during a Mathematics Research Day, held in the spring semester. Final decisions will be made by a jury consisting of department-appointed faculty members. All award recipients are listed on the MSCI webpage.

International Students

International students must attend orientation and teaching workshops directed by the Graduate School and [International Student Services](#) before the start of their first semester. Several important topics are discussed in these meetings. Topics addressed may include visa/immigration issues, [health insurance](#), social security, tutoring, [TB test scheduling](#), and the [SPEAK test](#). Due to the time it takes to file and process the required paperwork (social security, health insurance etc.), international students are advised to arrive in the US at least two weeks before the start of their first semester.

All international GAs are required to take the SPEAK test during their first semester. Test dates are announced on the [SPEAK test website](#) and fill up quickly.

Students who have an undergraduate or a graduate (MS) degree from a US institution in Mathematics, Statistics or a related field of study are exempt from taking the SPEAK test. Similarly, students who have demonstrated their English proficiency on one of the following tests are not required to pass the SPEAK test:

TOEFL iBT - Speaking Section Score: 26+

IELTS - Speaking Section Score: 8.0+

PTE Academic - Speaking Section Score: 67+

Be aware that these minimum test scores and test providers change frequently. The binding rules for acceptable test scores and providers are maintained by [International Student Services](#) on their [SPEAK Test website](#).

Students who score lower than the minimum required on the SPEAK test are directed to enroll in the [IEI SPEAK Test Preparation Course](#) and possibly other courses to improve their English skills before retaking the SPEAK test. MSCI will cover the SPEAK test fee for the first attempt and one re-take and, if necessary, the cost of the test preparation course one time.

It is the international GA's responsibility to register for the SPEAK test and the IEI SPEAK Test Preparation Course, if applicable. Similarly, it is the GA's responsibility to obtain a waiver or exemption from the test requirement, if warranted.

Residency Requirements

At present, there is no residency requirement for the MS degree. PhD Students must commit to full-time study for a minimum of two successive semesters after admission to the degree program to fulfill the residency requirement. Graduate Assistants are required to be resident during the Spring and Fall semesters (see [GA Rights and Responsibilities](#) below). International students may also have additional visa-related residency requirements.

Health Insurance

International Students

All international students (on F-1 and J-1 visas) with active course enrollment are required to have health insurance that meets the University requirements. International students on F-1 and J-1 visas are automatically enrolled in the [UofM Wellfleet plan](#) once they register for classes. International students have the option of requesting a waiver if they have equivalent alternative health insurance from other providers. Waiver requests can only be submitted during a limited time window. Details are available from [International Student Services](#).

Health Insurance for Graduate Assistants

The University of Memphis has partnered with [Wellfleet Health Insurance](#) to provide health insurance to all full-time Graduate Assistants. Starting in the fall of 2024, all full-time GAs will receive 100% coverage of the annual graduate student health insurance premium if they do not have other comparable coverage. Full-time GAs are defined as:

- Enrolled full-time (9 hrs. or late-stage doctoral students taking dissertation credits)
- With a 20 hour a week graduate assistantship contract (or multiple contracts that add up to 20 hours a week).

- Receiving full tuition and fees covered for the courses required for the degree program.
- Receiving a stipend.

To opt-in to the health insurance benefit students must:

1. Register for classes. Eligibility is determined, in part, by credit hour enrollment. You must be registered for classes for the semester in which you start your health insurance benefit.
2. Sign the graduate assistantship contract. You cannot receive health benefits if you are not employed by the University of Memphis.

Once you register for classes and sign your contract:

3. Fill out and submit the [Full Time Graduate Assistant \(FTGA\) Health Benefit Opt In form](#).

A one-time administrative fee of \$230 dollars will be required to enroll. This will be the responsibility of the full-time GA and will be deducted from the student's first paycheck. More information and details about the health insurance benefits and enrollment steps are available on the [Graduate School website](#).

Graduate Student Housing

Because housing is limited, new Graduate Assistants should finalize their arrangements prior to their arrival. [Graduate and Student Family Housing](#) is located on the University of Memphis, Park Avenue campus, approximately one mile from the main campus. The residents are comprised of students, students' spouses, and students' children. It is a community different from a typical apartment complex in that most residents are parents and/or students, and many are working full or part-time jobs. Both one- and two-bedroom apartments are available, and four apartments are specifically designed to accommodate students with disabilities. For more information, please contact the [Housing and Residence Life](#) main office.

Advisors and Committees

Academic Advisors

Upon arrival, a new student will be assigned an *Academic Advisor* by the Graduate Committee or a Graduate Coordinator. The Academic Advisor's job is to advise students on course selections and general procedures. Each semester, a student cannot register for any classes

until they have met with their Academic Advisor. The Advisor must clear the "Alternate PIN" to allow the students to register. With the exception of the first semester, this meeting must occur before the end of the previous semester. New students are expected to enroll in classes at least **two weeks** before the start of the semester. Returning students must enroll by the end of the previous semester, or at least notify the Associate Chair, [Prof. David Grynkiewicz](#), of their intended schedule.

Research Advisors

PhD students, and MS students who opt to write a thesis, should choose a *Research Advisor* to advise them on research for their Thesis/Dissertation. Research Advisors are chosen by mutual agreement between the student and the Advisor. A student's Research Advisor is usually different from the Academic Advisor initially assigned to the student.

PhD students should identify their Research Advisor immediately before, or right after, they pass the PhD Qualifying Exams (PhD level). MS students who opt to write a thesis should identify their Research Advisor at least two semesters before their intended graduation date. Research Advisors typically take over the responsibilities of the Academic Advisor (advising on course selection, clearing alternate PINs, etc.). It is the student's responsibility to inform the Graduate Committee of the chosen Research Advisor within one week after the student and the Advisor have come to an agreement.

Change of Advisors

Every student has the right to change his or her Academic or Research Advisor at any time. Agreement is only required by the student and the new advisor. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Graduate Committee of any change of Advisors within one week after the change.

Committees

PhD students, and MS students who opt to write a thesis, should choose a Thesis/Dissertation committee. The committee should consist of four faculty members for a PhD committee and three faculty members for an MS committee. One member will be the Research Advisor, and at least one other member should be outside of the immediate subject area (PDEs, Combinatorics, Analysis, etc.) of the Thesis/Dissertation. Faculty from other departments or from outside the University can be chosen if suitable.

Faculty must have the appropriate [graduate faculty status](#) to serve on such a committee. (In MSCI, most professors and even some instructors may be eligible.) The graduate student is responsible for asking faculty to serve on their committee and for checking eligibility of committee members. Faculty not affiliated with the University of Memphis must obtain University graduate faculty status.

For PhD students, the Dissertation committee plays a crucial role in providing guidance and scientific advice. Therefore, the committee should be chosen well before the Comprehensive Exam, but no later than one month before this exam, and at least two months before the Dissertation defense. For MS students, the committee should be chosen at least two months before the Thesis defense. The Graduate School requires the [Thesis/Dissertation Faculty Committee Appointment Form](#) to be submitted in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow the published graduation procedures, timetables and Thesis/Dissertation submission guidelines on the [Graduate School website](#).

Course Loads and Tuition

Graduate students are typically considered to have full-time status if they enroll in 9 credit hours (typically 3 courses) per semester. PhD students who have passed the Comprehensive Exam and have only Dissertation hours left as the only remaining credit hour requirement are classified as "late-stage doctoral." Enrollment in 1 credit hour per semester is considered full-time status for a late-stage doctoral student.

Note: Students receiving financial aid may have different minimum credit hour enrollment requirements. Check with the [Student Financial Aid Office](#).

Graduate Assistants supported by MSCI at the full-time level (20 hours/week) are [required](#) by the University to have full-time status each semester (typically 9 credit hours, and 1 credit hour when classified as late-stage doctoral with only Dissertation hours left). Tuition is paid for GAs on the basis of up to 9 credit hours per semester until they are classified as late-stage doctoral. From this time onward, typically 1 credit hour per semester will be paid unless credit hours are missing for degree completion. GAs may be required to pay tuition for any additional credit hours not covered by their assistantships. Generally, GAs count as in-state students when calculating tuition.

GAs need departmental permission if they want their assistantship to cover the tuition for credit hours offered outside MSCI. The Interim Chair, [Prof. Thomas Hagen](#), must receive a request from the student's Advisor, explaining the student's motivation.

Once students enroll in Thesis or Dissertation hours, they must continue to enroll in Thesis or Dissertation hours (MATH 7996 and MATH 9000 – see [below](#)) every semester (Fall and Spring) until they graduate.

Returning students must enroll in classes by the end of the previous semester. If a student is unable to register on time, he or she must notify the Associate Chair, [Prof. David Gryniewicz](#), about the courses he or she intends to take. **This is very important as classes may otherwise be cancelled due to low enrollment.**

All new GAs must enroll in the GA Teaching & Academic Strategies Course, [MATH 7960](#), at the first opportunity it is offered.

Course Numbers and Special Courses

Course numbers

Some courses are offered at two different levels with two different course numbers differing in the first digit.

- For 4000/6000-level courses, all graduate students must enroll in the 6000-level version. The 4000-level is for undergraduates.
- For 7000/8000-level courses, MS students should enroll at the 7000-level and (except as noted below). PhD students should enroll at the 8000-level.
- For 7000/8000-level courses, it is expected that the students enrolled at the 7000-level will be given a smaller workload than those at the 8000-level. This is to encourage PhD students to attend classes (at the 7000-level) outside of their immediate specialty and broaden their mathematical knowledge without imposing too much of a burden on their time.

It is the duty of the student to ensure enough courses at the right levels are completed so as to fulfill the appropriate [program requirements](#).

Independent Study Sections

A course offered in the form of "individual study" is a "reading course," supervised by the instructor but normally not given in a class. Some courses listed in the [catalog](#) are specially designed to be offered as individual study courses. Examples include [MATH 7671/8671](#), [7821/8821](#), [8812](#), [8813](#). However, these only count as individual study sections if they are taught as such. If a section is taught in a classroom with a group of students, then it counts as a regular course. The content of an individual study course may not duplicate any existing graduate course and **must be approved by the department during the preceding semester**. Only students who have passed the PhD Qualifying Exams (PhD level) are eligible for an individual study course. **Students may not take more than 6 credit hours of individual study courses.**

The courses [MATH 9000](#) and [MATH 7996](#)

Doctoral students who have passed the Qualifying Exams (PhD level) are eligible to register for [MATH 9000](#) (Dissertation). The doctoral program requires at least 9 Dissertation hours, but no more than 15 hours can be applied to satisfy degree requirements. For more information

contact the Graduate Committee. Masters' students writing a Thesis can apply between 3 and 6 Thesis hours of [MATH 7996](#) (Thesis) to satisfy degree requirements.

One of the requirements of these two courses is that once enrolled in one for a semester, a student must continue enrolling in the same course every semester (Fall + Spring) until the PhD/MS is completed. This includes the semester in which the student graduates.

GA Rights and Responsibilities

Compensation

Graduate assistantships offered to select graduate students may provide a stipend paid in eight installments, tuition and fees paid directly to the University, or both. Stipends typically provide \$15,000 or more per year. **Stipends usually increase after passing the PhD Qualifying Exams (PhD level).** In addition, eligible students may be offered the chance to teach a summer course that pays at the rate of ca. \$700 per credit hour.

Important: You need a **social security number** to receive payment.

Due to the length of time it takes to obtain a social security number, new international students are advised to arrive in the US at least two weeks before the start of their first semester. The University pays stipends by direct deposit to a bank or credit union account. You must provide an account number. If you already have a social security number and do not have an account, there are several banks and credit unions within walking distance of campus. An easy option is the [Tiger Banking Center](#) of the First South Financial Credit Union branch, located at 633 S. Highland, Memphis, TN 38111. You must pick up your first paycheck in person at the bursar's office in Wilder Tower.

Offices, Mailboxes, etc.

Graduate Assistants will be assigned office space, a mailbox, and a locker to store personal items. GAs must provide their own locks to secure their locker if they want to reserve a space in the lockers available in Dunn Hall 313. Access to computer equipment is provided. GAs will also be included on the MSC1 website with their picture and their own personal webpage. Access to the copying machine and the office supply cabinet will be provided by the MSC1 office administrator in Dunn Hall 373.

Review of Academic Progress

Each student will discuss progress in their degree program with his or her Advisor, the latest when they meet to determine a course schedule for the following semester. The student's academic progress will be evaluated by the department and the Graduate Committee and

serves as a basis, along with the job performance evaluation, for the student's request for assistantship appointment or reappointment. Note that a graduate assistantship may be reduced or cancelled due to either poor academic performance, or poor performance in carrying out assistantship duties. The university requires GAs to maintain a 3.00 GPA in order to retain their assistantships. A graduate student whose GPA drops below 3.00 will be placed on probation. A second consecutive semester on probation can result in termination.

Students are expected to complete their degree in a timely fashion, typically two years for the MS degree and five years for the PhD degree. Since graduate assistantships are offered to select graduate students with the expectation of satisfactory progress in their program of study, the following provisions apply:

- GAs in the PhD program are expected to pass the PhD Qualifying Exams at the PhD level within the first two years of their graduate assistantship. Qualifying Exams for the PhD program in Mathematics are typically scheduled in January and August every year. Qualifying Exams for the PhD program in Statistics might follow a different schedule. Exceptions to the exam schedule, due to extenuating circumstances, might be permitted with departmental approval.
- For a GA who did not participate in the Qualifying Exams or pass them at the PhD level on two previous occasions, a third opportunity may be offered before the start of the student's third year in the program **if** the student has demonstrated academic promise (e.g., by passing a previous qualifying exam at the MS level or maintaining a GPA well above the minimum of 3.00).
- GAs must consult with their Advisors about the Qualifying Exams and arrange with the Graduate Committee to take them in a timely fashion. Nonparticipation in the Qualifying Exams does not extend the two-year time limit for passing them.
- GAs in the PhD program will typically not be awarded financial support beyond the five-year limit for the PhD. Requests for support beyond the above limit must be submitted in writing by the student's Advisor to the Graduate Committee.
- MSCI may schedule summer tutorials and study sessions preparing PhD students for the Qualifying Exams. Students are advised to participate.

Duties of Graduate Assistants

GAs supported by MSCI are required to work 20 hours per week. These hours include a combination of teaching, helping faculty members with grading and/or proctoring exams, assisting in MSCI as needed, and tutoring in the Math Learning Center (MLC) in Dunn Hall 341, as assigned by [Prof. Ilham Tayahi](#).

The GA is responsible for his/her assigned tutoring schedule in the MLC. If for some reason, the GA needs a substitute for a specific day/time in the MLC, then he/she must find other GAs or undergraduate student workers to exchange their days/times and fill in. Each GA must

perform his/her assigned number of tutoring hours. Undergraduate student workers may not work, and will not be paid for, any hours beyond their contract. In all cases the GA must inform [Prof. Ilham Tayahi](#) of substitutions.

GAs are not responsible for substituting their Advisor's classes, nor are they required to perform personal jobs for their Advisors. Any changes in a GA's responsibilities, other than incidental occurrences (one-time emergency substitution etc.), must be made by the department.

GAs are to be present in Memphis each semester **one full week** prior to the first day of class. Graduate students who are teaching or grading finals must be present up to the Tuesday following all the published Final Exams, which is the day after the due date for posting the grades. These dates are on the [Academic Calendar](#).

GAs must ensure that they are eligible to teach (see section on [Teaching Eligibility](#)) **within one full year of entering the program**. Assistantships are reviewed periodically and are dependent on the students making adequate progress towards degree completion, and on performing their duties satisfactorily. Failure on either count may result in the reduction or cancellation of the assistantship.

Departmental Life and Student Participation

MSCI is committed to providing a vibrant and modern academic environment for all departmental stakeholders. The department therefore invests in organizing scientific seminars, colloquia, departmental get-togethers and other scientific, social and professional events. The involvement of all members of the department, especially its student members, is thus an essential part of the academic experience. Hence, it is expected that graduate students will participate in such departmental activities.

Graduate students who receive financial support from departmental sources (assistantship, tuition waiver etc.) are required, at a minimum, to attend departmental colloquia and participate in events that are organized to support the development of teaching skills or professionalism as part of their academic duties. In addition, graduate students who are engaged in or are about to engage in Dissertation or Thesis work are expected to participate in relevant scientific seminars offered by the department.

Teaching Eligibility

Graduate Assistants are expected to teach classes starting in their second year. Graduate students without an MSCI assistantship may be allowed to teach, although funding is unlikely to be available to pay any salary for this. Limited summer teaching is available for qualified students.

To be qualified to teach, students must complete the following requirements.

- Must have 18 credit hours of graduate coursework in Mathematics or Statistics successfully completed (at least C- grade).
- Must pass the [SPEAK test](#) if required by the Graduate School. Note that an appointment must be made for this test. Since appointments fill up quickly, don't leave this until the last moment.
- Must complete the [FERPA tutorial](#). (This is an online tutorial and should take less than half an hour to complete.)
- Complete the [Verification of academic credentials form](#). (Just the first page, and the SPEAK test score on the second page if applicable.) Hand this form in to Ms. Brandi Mull in Dunn Hall 364.
- Must attend the Teaching Assistant Orientation Workshop, which is sponsored by the Graduate School, prior to the start of their first teaching assignment. A copy of the workshop schedule will be provided, and specific responsibilities of teaching assistants will be further elucidated in the initial meeting of teaching assistants.

Note that **MSCI requires completion of the first two of these steps at least 3 months before the start of teaching**. Thus, typically students will only be allowed to teach after one full year (including summer) in the program.

Teaching Responsibilities and Support

Responsibilities

Teaching Assistants (TAs), i.e. GAs who teach a class, are required to adhere to the following requirements:

- The TA must teach the entire published class time, including the first day of class. This is to ensure that each class has at least [750 minutes](#) contact time per credit hour.
- The TA must find an eligible substitute teacher if he/she is unable to teach on any class day. In all cases, the TA must inform [Prof. Ilham Tayahi](#) of substitutions.

- The TA must report to the Course Coordinator for his/her assigned course and follow the Course Coordinator's instructions. The Course Coordinator will supply the TA with information specific to the course, including online homework access. For courses which do not have an assigned Course Coordinator [Prof. Ilham Tayahi](#) will act as de facto Course Coordinator. Please contact her for questions and instructions.
- The TA must provide a syllabus which informs his/her students about the content of the course and grading policies. For example, if the TA intends to use plus/minus grades, this must be stated in the syllabus. Instructors may get information from the Course Coordinator or refer to example syllabi on the [MSCI website](#).
- As the MSCI representative in the classroom, the TA must treat his/her students with dignity and respect, answering each question with concern for the students' understanding, and without making the student feel inadequate.
- In the United States, the classes are expected to be interactive, including student participation, questions, and feedback. The TA should encourage his/her students to ask questions.
- The TA is required to offer at least one hour per week of office hours which must be advertised to his/her students. (Time in the Math Learning Center can be used to satisfy this requirement.)

Due to the fact that students have many different schedules, the TA **cannot** schedule any required class-related activity outside of normal class hours. Also, the TA **cannot** reschedule his/her final exam to another time. It is, however, acceptable for the TA to offer extra review classes or Q&A sessions outside the scheduled class hours, as long as these extra activities are voluntary for students and are not a requirement to be successful in the course. If a classroom is needed for such voluntary extra activities, the TA needs to make a room reservation through the MSCI office administrator in Dunn Hall 373. For more information regarding class times, classroom equipment, choice of classrooms, and other scheduling issues, contact [Prof. David Gryniewicz](#) .

As a guideline, the TA should note that on average about 65%-80% of students in undergraduate math classes get a grade of C- or better (out of all students who are still enrolled after two weeks). This does **not** mean that TAs are required to give this many passing grades. It does mean that if the TA's pass rate differs significantly from this, then the TA should seek advice about his/her grading policy and course requirements from his/her Course Coordinator. Note that many TAs find that their students are *far less prepared* than they were expecting. (Remember, UofM students are typically not destined to be math PhDs!) Many students have difficulty thinking abstractly, so the TA should spend most of his/her time in class going over examples.

TAs can obtain photos of the students in his/her course: Go to [MyMemphis](#) → Faculty&Staff → Course Roster & Drop/Add Activity → Access class roster with optional photo report → Get Rosters → Select Show All Photos, or Print Roster with Photos, or Print Roster Without Photos.

Teaching Assistant Support

MSCI is invested in quality teaching. Hence, the department will offer various opportunities for TAs to improve their teaching skills, learn about best classroom practices, and to exchange ideas about classroom organization, grading and testing with each other. To this end, MSCI offers:

- Classroom visits by student peers or faculty: The visitors may record observations and subsequently meet with the TA to offer recommendations that will help the TA with teaching. A report will be filed with [Prof. Ilham Tayahi](#). Positive reports may serve as evidence for annual teaching award decisions.
- Teaching seminars and workshops: TAs and faculty meet to exchange ideas, address common issues with courses and discuss best practices.
- Mentor-Mentee program: GAs/beginning TAs are paired with an experienced TA for advice and guidance.

GAs are advised to participate in teaching workshops, seminars and teaching assistant coaching opportunities.

Acknowledgment

I have read and understand the Mathematical Sciences Graduate Student Handbook, including the Duties of Graduate Assistants. I understand it is ultimately my responsibility to complete duties as assigned and maintain adequate progress within my program.

MS/PhD Student Signature

Date

Print name of MS/PhD Student

Semester/Year