Dear Potential Ec10 Course Assistant,

We hope you will consider being a Course Assistant for Ec10 during the 2022 - 2023 academic year. This is a unique opportunity to develop teaching skills by leading a section of Ec10 students and to deepen your own understanding of economics by working with our experienced and passionate teaching team.

We are looking for students who have demonstrated strong performance in prior economics courses, a passion for the material, and an interest in teaching, although no prior teaching experience is required.

To be considered for this position, please submit a resume, cover letter, and current transcript via email to pkelso@fas.harvard.edu by April 1.

Timeline:
Accepting applications: Now – 4/1
Notification of interviews: 4/5
Interviews: 4/11 – 4/22
Decisions: 4/25

The interview:
We will notify you by 4/5 if we would like to invite you for a 30-minute interview. During the interview, we will discuss topics in micro and macroeconomics. In addition, you will teach 10 - 15 minutes of an actual Ec10 section. We will provide those of you selected for an interview with the section notes/slides you would receive as an Ec10 section leader, so you’ll know exactly what material you will be teaching far in advance of the interview.

Please do not feel intimidated by the teaching part of the interview. We expect that you will have little to no formal teaching experience when we hire you. We are looking for students with strong performance in introductory economics courses who are excited to learn how to teach.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Paul Kelso (contact above) or the Head Section Leader, David Martin (david_martin@fas.harvard.edu).

Sincerely,

Jason Furman
David Laibson
David Martin
I. What It Is

Economics 10, or “Ec10” as almost everyone calls it, is a two-semester sequence of courses designed to give students an introduction to current economic issues and to basic economic principles and methods (Ec10a in the fall covers microeconomics, and Ec10b in the spring covers macroeconomics). Most of our students take both courses, and we are primarily interested in hiring course assistants willing to teach both courses.

The courses consist of large, course-wide lectures and small section meetings. Ec10 will meet in full lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays, given by David and Jason with an occasional guest lecture. On Thursdays and Fridays the class will break into small sections of 18-20 students each (students attend one section a week, either on Thursday or Friday, depending on what works best with the rest of their schedule). The lectures will introduce theoretical concepts and their implications for public policy. In section we will do a mixture of reviewing and deepening students’ understanding of lecture topics, introducing new content and analytical tools for problem-solving, and conducting discussions and debates that get the students to apply these concepts to real world issues.

II. What Is the Role of Course Assistants?

Course Assistants (CAs) will each lead a section, just like our graduate student Teaching Fellows (TFs). The large enrollment in Ec10 (typically Harvard’s largest class in both semesters) means that students do not have much opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the course heads. Instead, they will get to know their section leader well in the small group setting and will look to you to discuss and explain in detail ideas that they are introduced to in lecture. The breadth of your responsibility for your section gives you a great chance to develop the full range of teaching skills, from lecturing to asking and answering questions to leading discussions to grading. Learning to communicate in a clear and persuasive way is great practice for presentations and for future careers inside or outside economics. Setting all that aside, the opportunity to engage with and mentor your fellow students during their first encounter with economics can be immensely rewarding in and of itself.

Moreover, by joining the Ec10 teaching team, you get a chance to learn from a diverse group of faculty and graduate students who have expertise in a wide range of fields, including but not limited to academic economics, domestic and international public policy, consulting, finance,
and law. For students considering a career in economics or an economics-adjacent field, this is a unique opportunity to learn about a wide variety of potential career paths.

III. Who We Are Hiring

Ec10 is looking to hire approximately 10 CAs to teach sections of 18-20 students for the academic year 2022-2023. Prospective CAs should have demonstrated strong performance in previous economics courses. Students who have taken only Ec10 at Harvard are encouraged to apply, as are students who have not taken Ec10 but have excelled in subsequent economics courses. Strong candidates will be able to demonstrate a passion for the material and an interest in teaching, but no prior teaching experience is required. In fact, many of our graduate student section leaders have little or no formal teaching experience when we hire them.

IV. Time Commitment

The Ec10 Course Assistant job kicks off in the first week of classes and includes a mandatory instructor workshop tentatively scheduled for Friday, Sept 2. Your section leader responsibilities conclude at the end of May, after grades for the spring semester are finalized.

During the course of the year, you will attend (or watch online) course-wide lectures on Monday and Wednesday, and teach section on Thursday or Friday. All course-wide lectures meet from 10:30-11:45 am, and sections are scheduled at various times throughout the day.

On average, CAs can expect to work 14 hours per week, spent in a mix of attending lecture, preparing and teaching section, staffing office hours, proctoring exams, grading, and helping with other general course assistance.

The amount of work will vary depending on the specific section/lecture schedule each week. There will be weeks that require fewer than 14 hours, and weeks that require more than 14 hours.

Section leaders are also expected to serve as proctors for four exams: a fall midterm, a fall final, a spring midterm, and a spring final. The final exams are scheduled by the registrar during finals week (each semester).
V. Material Provided

All sections in Ec10 cover the same material. (All students in the course take the same exams, and those exams are multiple choice so that they do not require manual grading.) To facilitate this, the Ec10 office provides each section leader with the following:

- **Section notes/slides**, which cover the material for each section and provide ideas on how to present it to students.
- **The Ec10 Section Leader Handbook**, which contains information about the course and section leader responsibilities, as well as teaching tips.
- **Problem sets** (approximately weekly, some of it graded automatically online)
- **Practice materials for exams**, provided throughout the year at the appropriate times.

VI. Teaching Support and Training

Ec10 provides a great teaching experience for section leaders. We will help you become a better teacher and support your teaching efforts in several ways:

- Our teacher training at the beginning of the fall semester provides each new section leader the opportunity to practice teaching and to get feedback from their new and experienced peers. The training also includes group-wide discussions on best practices.
- We organize new section leaders into groups with other “newbies” and a returning section leader who acts as a mentor. As part of this mentorship relationship, you will tape one of your sections in the first half of the fall semester and review it with your mentor.
- Last, but not least, we encourage section leaders to talk with us throughout the year. Discussions with their mentors should not be thought of as a substitute for discussions with us. Rather, the mentors are an additional resource for section leaders.

VII. Compensation

Compensation for CAs is set by the College at $22/hour. At 14 hours per week, CAs should expect to make $308/week on average for the duration of the academic year. Furthermore, CAs who do well may have the opportunity to teach again the following year.