

# Fragrance-Free Fact Sheets: Teaching Assistants

## what can you do as a teaching assistant?

*As a teaching assistant, you have the opportunity to create a positive and inclusive space for students. This fact sheet will equip you with specific steps you can take to create a safer environment.*

### Personal Changes

- Reduce and limit your use of fragranced products whenever possible.
- Read ingredient labels before buying personal care products and household cleaning products. Watch out for “fragrance,” “scent,” or “parfum” ingredients, which are likely to contain hazardous chemicals.
- Be aware that some products marketed as “unscented” still contain fragrance. This is often identified as a “masking scent” on the ingredient list. It is a neutral-smelling synthetic fragrance designed to hide the smell of other ingredients in the product.
- If this seems overwhelming, try to instead choose products with fewer synthetic ingredients. Use phone apps like The Household Products Database, Skin Deep, or Think Dirty to help easily identify which products are safest.

### In Your Classroom, Discussion, or Lab Section

- During the first class meeting, take the time to explain the fragrance-free initiative and rationale, your policies, and your commitment to listen to concerns and answer questions.
- Include language in your syllabus explaining the decision to create a fragrance-free space.

**Example:** In an effort to create accessible spaces for everyone, I ask that students refrain from wearing scented products such as perfume/colognes, hair products, cosmetics, and scented lotions while attending class, and avoid using scented soaps, shampoos, and detergents prior to class. These products can cause serious health issues for those with fragrance allergies and/or chemical sensitivities. For more information on being fragrance-free, visit <http://sharetheair.ucla.edu>.

- Designate a non-discriminatory section of fragrance-free seating in your class in a well-ventilated place (possibly near open windows or an air purifier).
- Consider allowing fresh air breaks during class to allow individuals to get a break from disruptive fragrances.
- Before important events, such as exams, remind students to be fragrance-free, as scents can disrupt other students’ ability to perform.

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## Need Support?

- Let your Faculty Supervisor know if you or any of your students need fragrance-free accommodations in order to succeed. Refer them to <http://sharetheair.ucla.edu> if they request more information.
- If your Faculty Supervisor is not supportive, consider seeking support from your department chair or manager.
- Find allies among your peers: band together with fellow teaching assistants to share resources and sources of support.
- If you face pushback for your decision to implement fragrance-free practices in your classes, consult with your union about your rights as a Teaching Assistant and the UCLA Center for Accessible Education for support regarding accessibility needs for students.

