
To: All Teaching Assistants
All Instructors with TAs

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Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants and Instructors

The following guidelines outline the principal responsibilities of teaching assistants (TAs) and instructors towards each other and to their students. These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the **Teaching Assistant Anticipated Workload form, which must be completed and signed by each instructor and teaching assistant** for each course, and submitted to the Graduate Secretary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Perform duties as indicated in the **Teaching Assistant Anticipated Workload** form. These may include:

1. Attend course lectures, if required. If required, TAs will obtain detailed notes or meet with instructor for any missed lectures.
2. Attend meetings with the instructor and other TAs held to discuss grading standards and other instructional matters.
3. Grade assignments following guidelines established by the instructor.
4. Lead discussion groups on topics approved by the instructor.
5. Invigilate examinations in class and during the December and April examination periods. It is usually necessary to assign two invigilation duties to everyone for final exams, and it may be necessary to ask that some invigilators serve three times.
6. Hold office hours for consultation with students.
7. Read the TAG TA Handbook, available at:
<http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/3/3d/Ta-handbook.pdf>

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTRUCTORS

1. Instructors have final responsibility for all of the grades assigned in the course.
2. Ensure that TAs do not spend more than the total hours stipulated by the appointment, as indicated on the TA Anticipated Workload form.
3. Ensure that TAs are not required to perform any duties in the 24 hour period preceding their own examinations, including Ph.D comprehensive examinations.
4. Meet with TAs as necessary to discuss material to be considered in tutorials.
5. Monitor the progress of discussion groups and provide advice and guidance as necessary. This may include attending one or more discussion group meeting of each TA.

6. Establish grading standards and communicate them to TAs. This could be accomplished by having each T.A. and the course instructor grade sample papers and discuss the basis for the grade.
7. Review a sample of the grading done by each T.A. and all assignments assigned failing grades by TAs.
8. Establish a procedure for the appeal of grades assigned by TAs and ensure that this is communicated to all students in the course and all TAs. Students should be encouraged to consult the T.A. in the first instance; however, they should be informed that they have a right to appeal to the faculty member in charge of the course.
9. At the beginning of term, indicate clearly to TAs the approximate dates on or by which key TA duties (e.g., marking) are to be performed.
10. Ensure that U.B.C. invigilation regulations are adhered to when serving as Head invigilator.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND SUPERVISORS

1. To foster an educational environment that promotes academic excellence and mutual respect.
2. To ensure that grades accurately reflect the academic achievement of students. Although professors bear ultimately responsibility for grades, it is expected that T.A.s will exercise independent judgment in marking the assignments which have been allocated to them. However, professors bear the responsibility for ensuring that there is “grade equity” between tutorial sections and from one year to the next. Before making any required adjustment to a mark assigned by a T.A., supervisors will inform the T.A. of their decision to do so.
3. To establish and maintain a timetable of tasks throughout the term that is consistent both with the demands of the course and the TA’s other academic obligations. At the beginning of term, the instructor will indicate clearly to TAs the approximate dates on or by which key TA duties (e.g., marking) are to be performed. The TA, in turn, will inform the instructor of the nature and dates of any obligations during the term that might limit her/his availability and will indicate clearly if s/he will have difficulty completing scheduled tasks on time. Within reason, TAs should display willingness to organize preparation of their own coursework (e.g., writing papers) in a way that can accommodate the instructor’s schedule. The instructor will also, where possible, adjust the timetable to accommodate TAs’ other obligations. The instructor will then seek explicit agreement to the timetable from all TAs. Should agreement be impossible, the matter should be immediately referred to the Graduate Advisor for possible TA reassignment. Once TAs have agreed to a timetable, they are then responsible for adhering to it. While circumstances may require instructors to adapt the timetable during the term, TAs should be consulted and informed of any changes as far in advance as possible.

Should disagreements over duties occur that cannot be settled between instructor and TA, they can be referred to the Department’s Director of Graduate Studies. Failure to resolve the issue may result in referral to the Department Head and further procedures as indicated in the grievance Article [10] of the collective agreement between UBC and C.U.P.E. Local 2278. Other aspects of the T.A./supervisor relationship are covered by this agreement, including discrimination (Article 6), reprimands (Article 8), discipline (Article 9), hours of work (Article 13), scheduling of duties (Article 14 and Article 16), and performance evaluations (Article 22). Teaching Assistants should have received a copy of the collective agreement from the University. Faculty members with teaching assistants should read the relevant parts of the collective agreement. In particular, faculty members should note that any matter involving articles 6, 8, 9 or 10 is governed by procedural rules which prescribe a role for the Department Head and the Union. A copy of the agreement is available from the department office.