

TA Contract
UBC Linguistics Department
Version Created: Fall 2010

The following guidelines outline the responsibilities of the Teaching Assistants (the “TA”) and Instructors towards each other and towards students. These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the Anticipated Workload Agreement to be determined on a case by case basis at the first TA Meeting of each term and any policies detailed in Professional Development Programs devised by the Department.

1 Guiding Principles

The responsibilities and rights set out herein shall be interpreted and applied with the following guiding principles in mind. The TA(s) and Instructor shall, at all times:

- a. treat each other and the students with respect.
- b. foster an educational environment that promotes academic excellence.
- c. foster a working environment that promotes professionalism.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants

1. Understand and enforce course policies, as detailed in the course Syllabus (separate document).
2. Prepare for and attend course lectures. Take additional notes as required with the purpose of being able to replicate the lecture content for students, if necessary.
3. Attend TA meetings to discuss the schedule, grading standards and other matters as scheduled.
4. Let the instructor know as early as possible, preferably beforehand, if you will be absent from any lecture or TA Meeting. Schedule other responsibilities so they do not conflict with the course schedule. If an emergency or medical situation arises on short notice which prevents physical attendance at a lecture or TA Meeting, contact the instructor as early as possible, preferably by telephone.

5. Attend and lead any assigned tutorial sections with proper preparation beforehand. Address any questions about the material to the instructor with adequate lead time.
6. Grade assignments (including but not limited to homework, midterms, final posters, etc.) following guidelines established between the Instructor and the TA(s). Record these grades as required by the instructor. Return papers in a timely fashion, generally, within one (1) week for quizzes and assignments and within two (2) weeks for exams .
7. Hold consultations with students as agreed between the Instructor and the TA(s). If a schedule conflict arises during the semester, find a substitute for those consultations. Perform other related TA tasks as determined by consent between the Instructor and the TAs.
8. Respond to emails/Vista messages from the Instructor and students in a timely fashion (generally, within 24 hours).
9. Keep the Instructor apprised of any difficulties arising with students, tutorials or any other matter.
10. Inform the Instructor of the nature and dates of any obligations that arise during the term that may limit their availability and indicate at the earliest possible opportunity if they will have difficulty completing scheduled tasks on time.
11. Keep written records of all hours worked and the tasks on which those hour were spent. Inform the Instructor if at any point during the term of the appointment they exceed twelve (12) hours of work in a single week, and/or as early as possible once it becomes apparent they will exceed the maximum hours of their appointment.
12. Attend any and all professional development programs required by the Department. Unless attendance is required as part of the curriculum for which the TA receives academic credit, TAs will be paid at their regular hourly rate for all time spent on professional development and such time will count towards their maximum hours.

2.2 Responsibilities of the Instructor

1. At the beginning of term, indicate clearly to TAs their responsibilities, and the approximate dates on which key TA duties (e.g., office hours, marking, etc.) are to be performed.
2. Establish regular TA meetings to discuss lecture and tutorial materials, grading issues, etc. and adhere to the TA meetings as established. Provide TAs with lecture and tutorial notes, and other course material, in advance (generally, within 24 hours).

3. Establish grading standards and clearly indicate them to the TA(s). Instructors have final responsibility for all of the grades assigned in the course.
4. Ensure that the TA(s) do not spend more than the total hours stipulated by the appointment, as determined in the Anticipated Workload Schedule, which is Appendix A to the TA Contract.
5. Monitor the progress of tutorials, and provide mentorship advice, and guidance to the TA(s) as requested or as necessary. This may include participating in the development of Professional Development Resources
6. Hold office hours for students, and respond to students and the TA(s) by email or Vista message in a timely fashion (generally, within 24 hours).
7. Keep the TA(s) apprised of any difficulties arising with students, tutorials or any other matter
8. In courses with multiple TAs, ensure work is distributed in an equitable fashion.

2.3 Joint Responsibilities of the TA and the Instructor

1. To ensure the grades accurately reflect the academic achievement of students. Although Instructors bear the ultimate responsibility for grades, it is expected that the TA(s) will exercise independent judgment in marking the assignments which have been allocated to them. However, in courses which have multiple TAs, Instructors are responsible for ensuring there is “grade equity” between tutorial sections. Before making any required adjustment to a mark assigned by a TA, instructors will inform the TA of their decision to do so.
2. 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. Within reason, the TA (s) should display willingness to organize preparation of their own coursework (e.g., writing papers) in a way that can accommodate the TA(s)’ other obligations. The Instructor will also, where possible, adjust the timetable to accommodate the TA(s)’ other obligations. The Instructor will then seek explicit agreement to the timetable from all TAs. Should agreement be impossible, the matter should immediately be referred to the TA Coordinator for possible TA reassignment. Once the TA(s) have agreed to a timetable, they are responsible for adhering to it. While circumstances may require Instructors to adapt the timetable during the term, the TA(s) should be consulted and informed of any changes as far in advance as possible.
3. At the first TA Meeting of the term, the Instructor and the TA(s) shall exchange contact information (e.g., cell phone numbers, personal email addresses, home phone numbers, etc.) in order to facilitate communication throughout the term.

4. Maintain student confidentiality in accordance with any and all guidelines set by the University of British Columbia.

2.4 Responsibilities of the Department

1. Assign and announce the identity of the TA Coordinator.
2. Mediate any disagreements arising between the the TA and the Instructor, whether through the TA Coordinator or otherwise.
3. If a scheduling conflict arises at any point in the term and cannot be resolved in accordance with the process outlined in 2.3(2) of the Contract, reassign the TA to another course in accordance with the Collective Agreement.
4. Develop and provide professional development resources for TAs, including but not limited to TA Information Sessions.
5. Where a TA exceeds or anticipates exceeding their maximum hours under the appointment, determine whether the TA is to cease work or continue to work at extra pay in accordance with the Collective Agreement. The Department recognizes the TA has a right to refuse extra work once their maximum hours are exceeded.

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To the extent this agreement or any portion thereof conflicts with the Collective Agreement, the Collective Agreement prevails.

I have read and understood all the information contained in this document, and the course syllabus. I have had adequate time to address my concerns with the Instructor and the Union.

By their signatures below, the Parties indicate agreement to enforce course policies and fulfill the responsibilities set out herein in accordance with the Guiding Principles.

TA: _____ Date: _____

Instructor: _____ Date: _____

Department Representative: _____ Date: _____

TA Union Representative _____ Date: _____

Appendix A: Anticipated Workload Schedule

The following is an estimate of the expected allocation of Teaching Assistant duties. There may be unanticipated shifts between activities, but the total hours performed cannot exceed the hours required of the appointment, which is normally 192 hours (average 12 hours per week) for a full one-term TAship, applied to the periods September 1–December 31 for Term 1, and January 1–April 30 for Term 2. This work is likely to be distributed unevenly across the term, with some weeks requiring work significantly above/below the average.

Duties and Responsibilities	Required (Y/N?)	Hours/Week	Hours/Term
Attendance at lectures			
Attendance at tutorials			
Preparation (e.g. for tutorials)			
Attendance at TA meetings			
Reading course texts and lecture notes			
Office hours/online student consultation			
Email consultation with Instructor/Other TAs			
Grading			
HW 1, due ...			
HW 2, due ...			
...			
Midterm ...			
Final ...			
Paid Vacation	Y		8
		TOTAL HOURS:	192