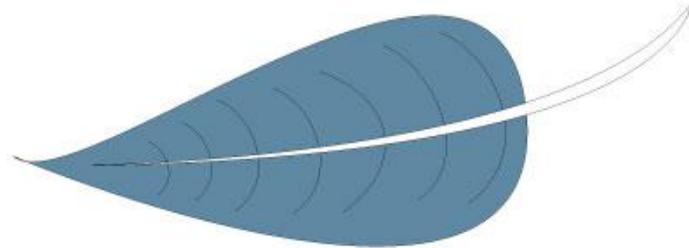


a place of mind



FACULTY OF LAND AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Grounded in Science | Global in Scope



UBC Faculty of Land & Food Systems
Teaching Assistant Handbook 2018/2019

Colin Dring & Jun Obayashi
September 5, 2018

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We would like to offer an especially big thank you to the members of the 2018-2019 LFS TA Training advisory committee: *Christine Scaman, Maja Krzic, Cyprien Lomas, Will Valley, Candice Rideout, and Judy Chan*. We truly appreciate the on-going suggestions from Cyprien Lomas, he continues to ask the questions that enable us to improve the TA experience. Finally, a big thank you to *Shaya Golparian* from the CTLT for her support and always being available to answer questions and connect us with teaching and learning resources.

A final thank you goes out to all the Teaching Assistants and Instructors in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. This TA Training Program would not exist without your desire to build and strengthen the LFS TA community. Thank you for your passion and dedication as educators!

Sincerely,

The 2018/2019 LFS Teaching Assistant Training Coordinators

Colin Dring (PhD student, Integrated Studies in LFS) and Jun Obayashi -MFRE

Please direct all feedback regarding this Handbook to Jun Obayashi at jun.obayashi@ubc.ca

Overview of the LFS Teaching Assistant Training Program 2018/2019

The Faculty of Land & Food Systems has around 160 Teaching Assistantships, filled by 110 Teaching Assistants (TAs). These TA positions involve the application of different duties, skill sets, knowledges, and approaches to teaching and learning. TAs in the faculty are responsible for: leading science labs, facilitating community and problem-based learning (PBL), giving lectures, facilitating in-class and online discussions, providing instruction on field trips, assessing student work, and much more.

We are excited to offer LFS TAs a faculty-wide development program whose goal is to provide professional development and support to our TAs. It is our belief that TAs, regardless of their experience, are engaged in the deep practice of teaching and learning. This practice requires an on-going mindset that is strongly motivated to continuously improve, push boundaries, innovate, and enhance participatory learning. All this begins with the LFS TA Orientation Day. The full 2018/2019 LFS TA Training Program is outlined within this handbook. **A summary is provided on the final page.**

Through active participation in the LFS TA Training Program, you will:

- Develop collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching networks within the LFS TA cohort and the LFS Learning Centre
- Identify and apply concrete, student-centered learning objectives and pedagogies
- Learn to effectively apply departmental grading criteria in a fair manner for a variety of assignment types
- Gain an awareness of existing policies and faculty and campus resources for educational assistance
- Be able to interact professionally with both supervisors and students (i.e. meeting deadlines and responsibilities, giving care and attention to detail, reporting to a supervisor, managing students)
- Develop inclusive leadership and mentorship skills that are respectful of different disciplines, cultures, backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles
- Articulate and create a portfolio of your teaching practice and accomplishments

By attending a minimum of four of this year's TA Training events, you are eligible for recognition of "TA Training Program Completion" through the Faculty of Land & Food Systems. You will receive an acknowledgment letter from the Faculty, and this professional development can be added to your Curriculum Vitae. Please contact the graduate student coordinators (see below) if you have questions about this program completion process.

Expectations – Topics to Cover with Your TA Supervisor

It is essential to have a meeting with your supervisor early in the term to ensure you are clear on what expectations are required of you, a timeline of course activities, and a discussion about your development as a TA (e.g. evaluations, opportunities for feedback, training). The first meeting with your TA supervisor (the course instructor) will be documented and a form submitted to the grad manager as part of the TA evaluation process (Please refer to page 14 for details). Make sure that you and your supervisor are clear on the following points:

- **What are my responsibilities?** These may include the following, and more:
 - holding tutorials, creating class materials, lecturing, leading class discussions, holding review sessions, duplicating materials, managing online information on blackboard, grading assignments or exams, invigilating exams, answering student e-mails, holding office hours, ordering/obtaining AV equipment, booking rooms, reading class material
- What are the course goals/objectives?
- Who are the students (background, level, class list, etc.)?
- Who are the other TAs?
- What is the procedure to follow if I am ill or must miss a class/lab?
- What is the textbook? How can I obtain a copy?
- Am I expected to attend lecture?
- Will there be TA/supervisor meetings? If so, how often?
- How does the supervisor like to be contacted?
- How many hours have I been assigned?
- How should the hours be split up among different tasks?
- What should I do if I think I might run out of hours (i. e. alert when 25% of hours left)?
- What kind of assignments are students expected to complete, and what are the due dates and late-acceptance policies?
- Who is responsible for marking schemes/grading rubrics?
- If the grading rubric becomes problematic, will I have the flexibility to change it?
- How long will I have to grade material once it's submitted?
- How should I handle marking complaints (bring to the instructor, or handle myself)?
- When will exams be held?
- What if I notice cheating/copying?
- Are you both familiar with the TA Union's (CUPE 2278) Collective Agreement?

The TA Performance Review Process

In your role as a TA, you can make an important contribution to the educational experience of our undergraduate students, and you also can learn a great deal yourself! The TA Performance Review Process was developed to promote all aspects of your work: it will support teaching excellence in the context of the course and enhance your own professional development.

The TA Performance Review Process is for all TA's in LFS and includes two **mandatory** components and one optional component:

1. A preliminary orientation meeting **(MANDATORY) (pg 7)**
2. An informal mid-term check-in **(OPTIONAL) (pg 9)**
3. A formal Performance Review to be completed at the end of term **(MANDATORY)(pg 12)**

1. Preliminary Orientation Meeting: You will meet with the course instructor immediately before the start of term, or during the first week or so of classes. During this meeting, the instructor and TA(s) will discuss items included in an "Orientation Guide" checklist to make sure expectations, roles, and responsibilities are clearly established and communicated.

2. Informal Mid-term Check-in: Approximately halfway through the term, it is optional to meet with the course instructor to discuss how things have been going to that point in time. The "TA Informal Check-in" document has suggestions of what could be discussed during this meeting. This is an opportunity to discuss any questions you may have or challenges you are experiencing. A check-in can be requested by either the TA or the instructor. The check-in document does **not** need to be submitted to the grad manager.

3. Formal Performance Review: At the end of term, you will meet with the course instructor to review the work you completed in the TA position. The course instructor will have completed the first few sections of the "TA Performance Review Form", and your comments and key points from the meeting will be recorded. This is an opportunity to reflect upon your work as a TA, your contributions to the course, and your development as an educator.

- This process is meant to enhance and encourage communication between the instructor and the TA, but it certainly does not replace ongoing communication throughout the term!
- Each meeting is estimated to take 20-30 minutes, with the possibility of a longer preliminary orientation meeting if several TAs for the same course and instructor are all meeting together at the same time.
- The orientation guide checklist and the TA performance review form will be completed, signed and submitted to the graduate office manager.
- Make sure you contact your instructor with any concerns or questions you may have throughout the semester – do not wait for one of these meetings to address any questions you may have.

Preliminary Orientation Guide for Instructors and Teaching Assistants Form

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

- To ensure a healthy working relationship between an Instructor and his/her TA(s), please use this guide as a starting point for your orientation. THIS FORM IS FOR FACULTY USE ONLY.
- TA's should recognize that TAships are more than just a job. It is considered, by many academics, to be *a training ground for a professional academic career*. These positions provide an opportunity for graduate students to be further integrated into the learning environment and encourages teaching development.
- This form should be completed within the first week of the course start date and submitted by the course instructor electronically to the Manager, Graduate Programs – LFS.

| | |
|------------------|------|
| COURSE NAME: | DATE |
| INSTRUCTOR NAME: | |
| TA NAME: | |

| CHECKLIST | COMPLETED |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Review Job Description | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Hours of Work | |
| a. Breakdown of Hours | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Vacation time as per signed contract (scheduling requires advance approval) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Office Hours | |
| a. for Instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. for TA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. TA / Instructor Meetings | |
| a. Frequency - once a month (Winter) or every 2 weeks (Summer). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Exchange contact info and review Emergency procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Schedule informal check-in after first assignment or midterm: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Schedule formal check-in at end of term: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 5. Expectations & Responsibilities
 - a. Importance of Communication
 - b. Lectures
 - i) Attending lectures – required (included in TA hours) or optional?
 - ii) Preparing for lectures
 - iii) Duties during lectures
 - c. Exams
 - i) Preparation
 - ii) Delivery / Invigilation
 - iii) Organizing Review Sessions
 - d. Marking
 - i) Rubric / template / grading criteria
 - ii) Protocol for complaints
 - iii) Record-keeping duties
 - iv) Posting marks
 - v) Evaluation Responsibilities

- 6. Performance Evaluations
 - a. The purpose of the evaluations is to provide a supportive framework for TA's in training. They provide the opportunity to build on skill sets and improve course outcomes.
 - b. There will be a minimum of two opportunities for TA's and instructors to meet (e.g. informal check-in at the halfway mark and formal meeting at the end of term).
 - c. Provide copies of the informal and formal performance evaluation forms to TA.
 - d. Any concerns by either party should be documented and addressed in a timely manner.
 - e. For clarification purposes, if a course has more than one instructor, the instructor who will be evaluating the TA performance will be:

- 7. Acknowledgments (Signatures)

This acknowledges that we have discussed and understand the above-mentioned items.

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| TA Signature: | DATE |
| Instructor Signature: | DATE |

TA and instructor should keep copies for their own records; the course instructor will send a completed, signed electronic version to the Manager – Graduate Programs, LFS (lfs.ta@ubc.ca)

Teaching Assistant Informal Check-In Form

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Teaching Assistant Name: | |
| Course (ex APBI 523 002): | |
| Year and term: | |
| Instructor's name: | |

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Teaching assistants are potential academics in training. These positions provide an opportunity for students to be further integrated into the learning environment and to encourage teaching development. The purpose of the evaluation is to facilitate the discussion between a TA and the instructor to encourage growth and improvement to enhance teaching performance and to recognize successful teaching. The evaluation process will include both an informal and formal evaluation during the academic term or appointment. The evaluation will also ensure expectations are clearly communicated. An open discussion between the instructor and the TA should naturally occur while reviewing the evaluation form. Time used for this performance evaluation is part of the TA contract hours. Instructors who have serious concerns with the performance of a TA should discuss them with the TA as soon as possible and notify the Graduate Programs Manager and/or the Director, HR & Administration. This process also provides the opportunity to recognize and celebrate excellence in TA performance.

Summary of Primary Responsibilities:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

GRADING RUBRIC

| | |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Does Not Meet Expectations |
| 2 | Approaches Expectations |
| 3 | Meets Expectations |
| 4 | Exceeds Expectations |
| N/A | Not Applicable or No Opportunity to Evaluate |

Please note the majority of TA's will fall within the range of the #3 Grade. A grade of 4 is for exceptional performance (i.e. top 10%).

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Communication Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N |
| | | | | | / |
| | | | | | A |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2. Interaction with Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N |
| | | | | | / |
| | | | | | A |

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 3. Time Management Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 4. Accuracy and Attention to Detail Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 5. Attitude and Behaviour | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 6. Overall Contribution to the Course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
| | | | | | |

Instructor's comments on the TA's performance (including any areas of improvement):

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Comments from the discussion:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

By signing, both the TA and instructor confirm a discussion regarding this informal check-in has taken place.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Instructor's signature: | | Date: | |
| TA's signature: | | Date: | |

TA and instructor should keep copies for their own records; the course instructor will send a completed, signed electronic version to the Manager – Graduate Programs, LFS (lfs.ta@ubc.ca)

Teaching Assistant Performance Evaluation Form

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Teaching Assistant Name: | |
| Course (ex APBI 523 002): | |
| Year and term: | |
| Instructor's name: | |

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Teaching assistants are potential academics in training. These positions provide an opportunity for students to be further integrated into the learning environment and to encourage teaching development. The purpose of the evaluation is to facilitate the discussion between a TA and the instructor to encourage growth and improvement to enhance teaching performance and to recognize successful teaching. The evaluation process will include both an informal and formal evaluation during the academic term or appointment. The evaluation will also ensure expectations are clearly communicated. An open discussion between the instructor and the TA should naturally occur while reviewing the evaluation form. Time used for this performance evaluation is part of the TA contract hours. Instructors who have serious concerns with the performance of a TA should discuss them with the TA as soon as possible and notify the Graduate Programs Manager and/or the Director, HR & Administration. This process also provides the opportunity to recognize and celebrate excellence in TA performance.

Summary of Primary Responsibilities:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

GRADING RUBRIC

| | |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Does Not Meet Expectations |
| 2 | Approaches Expectations |
| 3 | Meets Expectations |
| 4 | Exceeds Expectations |
| N/A | Not Applicable or No Opportunity to Evaluate |

Please note most TA's will fall within the range of a Score of 2-3. A Score of 4 is for exceptional performance (i.e. top 10%).

| 1. Communication Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Communicates clearly and effectively – verbal | | | | | |
| b) Communicates clearly and effectively – written | | | | | |
| c) Responds to student questions professionally, concisely, and in a timely manner | | | | | |
| d) Communicates with course instructor in a respectful and timely manner | | | | | |
| e) Requests clarification of instruction or assignments when unclear | | | | | |

| 2. Interaction with Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Creates student interest and involvement | | | | | |
| b) Shows enthusiasm when working with students, demonstrating interest in the course and class material | | | | | |
| c) Interacts with students respectfully and thoughtfully and creates an atmosphere of mutual respect | | | | | |
| d) Good judgement in dealing with students | | | | | |
| e) Works well and gets along with the other TA's | | | | | |

| 3. Time Management Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Demonstrates an appropriate and independent use of time | | | | | |
| b) Returns assignments / exams to students in a timely manner | | | | | |
| c) Starts promptly and is prepared | | | | | |
| d) Demonstrates ability to set and adjust priorities | | | | | |
| e) Attends all required meetings | | | | | |

| 4. Accuracy and Attention to Detail Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Accurately and consistently grades assignments | | | | | |
| b) Accurately and consistently grades tests/exams | | | | | |
| c) Accuracy of record-keeping of grades and other course information | | | | | |

| 5. Attitude and Behaviour | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Is conscientious about performing all aspects of their job well - taking pride in their work | | | | | |
| b) Exhibits flexibility and willingness to adapt to change | | | | | |
| c) Demonstrates initiative and takes on a pro-active approach to their work | | | | | |
| d) Reinforces concepts presented by course instructor | | | | | |
| e) TA is concerned about students' learning | | | | | |

| 6. Overall Contribution to the Course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N / A |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| a) Performs duties as outlined in job description | | | | | |
| b) Quality of contributions to course planning / coordinating meetings | | | | | |
| c) Comparing the TA's performance to the performance of others with similar responsibilities | | | | | |
| d) Makes a positive impact to the delivery of the course | | | | | |

Instructor's comments on the TA's performance (including any areas of improvement):

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

TA's comments on the mentorship/teaching development experience:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Comments from the discussion:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

By signing, both the TA and instructor confirm a discussion regarding this performance evaluation has taken place.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Instructor's signature: | | Date: | |
| TA's signature: | | Date: | |

TA and instructor should keep copies for their own records; the course instructor will send a completed, signed electronic version to the Manager – Graduate Programs, LFS (lfs.ta@ubc.ca)

“Am I Doing This Right?” – Getting Additional Feedback

One of the best ways to evaluate your progress as TA is to ask how you are doing! Feedback is an extremely useful tool in further developing teaching skills/strategies. As TA, you can receive feedback from: the course instructor, peer TAs, and students. Each of these will be able to give you very different perspectives on your TAing. Please refer to page 12 for more details on the TA evaluation process between you and the course instructor.

Some key points on asking for and receiving feedback:

- **Ask.** Don't assume that a course instructor will provide feedback when they think it is necessary. If you do, you may experience unnecessary tension and frustration before it comes up! Also, make sure the person you are asking for feedback from has the time and the energy to give you feedback at that time. This is especially relevant for one-on-one feedback.
- **Specify.** What do you want feedback on? Is there an aspect of your TAing you would like the other person to focus on? You can even specify if you want the feedback in a specific format (ie. one thing that was effective, one thing that could be improved, on a scale of 1 to 10, please rank...).
- **Clarify.** Even if you think you understand the feedback that you are receiving, it can be helpful to paraphrase and repeat back to them what you think their main point is: “So, it sounds like I did a good job of providing comments back to the students, but I should spend less time on marking grammar because it takes away from commenting more on the content. Is that right?”
- **Ask for examples.** If the other person thinks something you're doing isn't working, what do they suggest you do instead? Maybe they can even directly show you. This can be particularly helpful when receiving feedback on marking assignments.
- **Get another opinion.** Everyone has different learning styles and preferences. The more people you can receive feedback from, the better!
- **Remember, it's nothing personal.** It is easy to feel defensive when receiving feedback. Remind yourself that this feedback is a helpful gift.

But, wait! The university system is set up to give student at the very end of the term. By that point it is too late to respond to the feedback and make any changes for that course. How can TAs receive feedback from students before the end of term?

If you would like to get student feedback during the term, you can hand out your own informal feedback form to the class. It is important that you tell students that completing this feedback form is anonymous and entirely optional. A middle of term TA feedback form can be very valuable because: a) it gives you a chance to adapt during the term; b) you can tailor the feedback form to address the areas you personally want feedback on. On the next page is a template that can be modified for use as an informal TA feedback form.

Sample TA Feedback Form

5=strongly agree | 4=agree | 3=mixed feelings | 2=disagree | 1=strongly disagree | N=not applicable

My TA:

1. ...conducts well organized class sessions.
2. ...appears knowledgeable about the subject material.
3. ...appears enthusiastic for the subject matter.
4. ...helps me understand and learn what is expected in the course.
5. ...encourages questions from students.
6. ...gives clear explanations.
7. ...recognizes when we are confused and tries to reduce the confusion.
8. ...is helpful out of class or during office hours. (Mark N if you don't know.)
9. ...treats me equitably and with respect.
10. ...Overall, this TA is a good teacher.

I benefited most from:

I would suggest:

Professionalism

Professionalism in the classroom covers a range of expectations from how well prepared you are, to how you conduct yourself with the students both in and out of class, to how you deal with disagreements with your faculty supervisor. As a representative of both the Faculty that you work for and the University itself, you are expected to follow the regulations and policies outlined by each.

The following are some introductory guidelines for professional TA conduct. They by no means cover all possible aspects of professional conduct. If you find yourself in a situation where you are unsure of the most professional course of action, consult your faculty supervisor or union representative.

TAs must be careful to ensure the confidentiality of all grades, class records, and student work. This information should NEVER be stored on a shared computer or discussed with anyone other than the course instructor.

Preparation for Teaching

You are responsible for arriving to your class on time and fully prepared. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the material that you will be instructing, and to ask your faculty supervisor for clarification if you are unsure about the material or how you should be instructing it. Many course faculty provide preparatory sessions for TAs – make sure to read over the material before attending these meetings so that you are ready to ask questions. If you are instructing for a course that does not provide preparatory sessions, make sure to read over the material you will be teaching well in advance of your class so that you will have sufficient time to contact your supervisor if you have any questions.

If you are instructing or facilitating a class, make sure that you know how much time is available for each activity your students will do or each topic that you will cover. Good planning will make time management in the classroom much easier, so that you will be less likely to run out of time before covering your material or completing all your planned activities. Make yourself a checklist or lesson plan (include the length of time you will devote to that topic or activity) so that you can clearly keep track of the material you have covered and what you still need to do.

Remember, no matter how well you know your subject and how well you have prepared for your class, there will always be questions that you will not be able to answer. It is perfectly acceptable to admit to your students that you do not know the answer, and to look it up for the following class. In fact, not knowing the answer can be an excellent opportunity to spark an interesting class discussion and to guide students to possible resources where they could investigate the question themselves. However, it is not acceptable to mislead your students by making up an answer. This does not mean that you cannot speculate and suggest possible solutions, so long as you make it clear to your students that you are speculating.

TA Conduct with Undergraduate Students

You have a responsibility to your students to treat them with respect. When speaking to your students, make sure to be polite. When you are grading assignments, make sure to keep your feedback constructive.

All of your students should have equal opportunities to ask you questions, both in and out of class. Make sure to provide all of your students with your contact information and office hours. Avoid meeting with students in informal settings (places other than your office or classroom) unless you invite the entire class.

Students may sometimes ask you if you will look over their assignments before they hand them in. If you do this, make sure that you make this opportunity available to all of your students. Although you should certainly answer students' questions about their assignments, you should not feel pressured into proofreading or editing an assignment for a student. *If you have students who need help with their writing, then you can refer them to the UBC Writing Centre (www.writingcentre.ubc.ca) for free tutoring.*

Remember that as a TA, you are in a position of power. This means that you have a great responsibility not to abuse this power. Anything that might compromise your responsibility to treat all your students equally and fairly, such as dating one of your students, is completely inappropriate. If you are ever in the situation where you have a student in your class who is your friend, relative, or romantic partner, make sure to let your supervisor know immediately so that they can transfer that person into a different section of the course or otherwise prevent preferential treatment of that person.

Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

(Chickering and Gamson, 1987)

a) Encourage Contact between Students and Faculty

Frequent student-faculty/ TA contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty/ TA concern helps students persevere during rough. Knowing faculty members or TAs enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages thinking about their own values and plans.

b) Develop Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

c) Encourage Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much by listening in class, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

d) Give Prompt Feedback

Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college, and at the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

e) Emphasize Time on Task

Time + Energy = Learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals. Students need help learning effective time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. Definition of time expectations for students, faculty, and professional staff can establish the basis of high performance for all.

f) Communicate High Expectations

Expect more and you will get more. High expectations are important for everyone – for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well-motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves and make extra efforts.

g) Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab and vice versa. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

Disputes with Faculty Supervisors

If you have a dispute with your faculty supervisor or department about issues such as (but not limited to) your pay, hours worked, or assigned duties, consult the Collective Agreement between the TA Union and the University. The Collective Agreement defines the conditions of your employment, as well as the procedures that you should follow to resolve any problems with the conditions of your employment. For more information, visit <https://cupe2278.ca/faq/collective-agreement/>

If you disagree with your faculty supervisor about course policies or content, you should certainly discuss these issues with your supervisor. However, arrange to have this discussion with your supervisor in private, not in front of your students. This especially applies if you are discussing grading policies.

Tracking Hours

It is important to track your hours to ensure you don't work more hours than you are being paid for. Check in with your supervisor periodically to ensure you are allotting your hours appropriately. If you are finding certain tasks (such as marking or prep) are taking more hours than your supervisor anticipated, you can work together to come up with a new strategy to correct this hour imbalance. An excel file TA hour tracker was e-mailed to you at the beginning of term and can also be found on the [LFS TA Portal](#). **It is mandatory that the TA hour tracker is completed and submitted to the grad office manager at the end of the term.**

Overcoming Nervousness and Anxiety

Mark Twain said it best: **“There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.”** Most TAs, whether they are first time TAs or experienced instructors, often feel nervous when standing up in front of a class of students. After all, public speaking can be scary, and teaching is a form of public speaking. It is perfectly normal for you to be nervous about teaching, especially if this is your first time as a TA.

According to experts, the best way to deal with public speaking anxiety is to first acknowledge that this fear is perfectly normal and you are not alone. To reduce your fear, you need to make sure you properly and thoroughly prepare yourself before you speak. Proper preparation and rehearsal can help to reduce this fear by about 75%. Proper breathing techniques can further reduce this fear by another 15%. Your mental state accounts for the remaining 10%.

Below are just a few suggestions (based on work by Lenny Laskowski and David W. Richardson) that you can use to overcome your speaking anxiety. The first and most important of all is preparation. **Think of it as the 9 P's: *Prior Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance of the Person Putting on the Presentation.*** Nothing will relax you more than to know you are properly prepared.

- **Think positively** – visualize yourself delivering a successful presentation. Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
- **Deliver an audience-centered presentation** – when you are more interested in what they will get out of it rather than what you put into it, you cannot help but be successful.
- **Take three deep breaths** – inhale to the count of eight and exhale to that same count.
- **Seek out three pleasant faces** – your listeners will exhibit a variety of facial expressions, body postures, and an overall general interest as you prepare to speak. As you begin, seek out three pleasant faces. Gather energy from their positive

response. Remember, though, to also make eye contact with your other listeners during your presentation.

- **Rehearse and practice** – in front of the mirror, or for a friend, spouse, or family member. Audio or video tape your rehearsal, then evaluate your pace, inflection, and overall delivery.
- **Practice before going to bed** – make it the very last thing you do before you go to sleep – you’ll wake up with it fresh in your mind.
- **Check out the room** – prior to the presentation, check out the room where you’ll be presenting. Visualize this space when you practice.
- **Have a quiet dinner** with a calm person before your presentation – avoid tension or stress.
- **Know the Room** – become familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early and walk around the room including the speaking area. Stand at the lectern and speak into the microphone. Walk around where the audience will be seated. Walk from where you will be seated to the place where you will be speaking.
- **Know the Audience** – If possible, greet some of the audience as they arrive and chat with them. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
- **Know Your Material** – If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech or presentation and revise it until you can present it with ease.
- **Learn How to Relax** – You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, then slowly exhale. To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, then close them tightly.
- **Realize People Want You to Succeed** – All audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They want you to succeed – not fail.
- **Don’t Apologize for Being Nervous** – Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. If you don’t say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems, you’ll only be calling attention to it. Had you remained silent, your listeners may not have noticed at all.
- **Concentrate on Your Message** – Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience, not yourself.
- **Turn Nervousness into Positive Energy** – the same nervous energy that causes stage fright can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
- **Gain Experience** – Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Most beginning speakers find their anxieties decrease after each speech they give.

Above all, remember: *Only you know what you’re going to say. If things do not go exactly as you had planned, no one else will know it meant to be different.*

Teaching Assistant Awards:

1. *Land and Food Systems TA award* (2018/2019)

In recognition of the valuable role that TAs play in undergraduate education, LFS has recently initiated a biennial (every second year) *Land and Food Systems TA award*.

The nominee presents a dossier, in support of the nomination, with required documentation:

- 1) Personal statement (one-page)
- 2) Summary of Recent Teaching Responsibilities
- 3) Statement of Candidate's values and assumptions about teaching and learning in higher education (less than one page in length)
- 4) Formal feedback from students, colleagues and/or supervisors
- 5) A demonstration of the graduate student's contributions to teaching over time (narrative)

For questions about this award, please email Dan Naidu, LFS grad manager at dan.naidu@ubc.ca

2. *UBC Killam Graduate teaching assistant award* (2019/2020)

LFS is assigned one Killam GTA award biennially (every second year), which includes a certificate and 1,000 CAD. TAs can self-nominate for this award or be nominated by faculty supervisors, colleagues and students who worked closely with the nominee,

The Killam award follows the same format and evaluation criteria as the LFS TA award.

For more details on the Killam graduate TA award, please refer to:

<https://academic.ubc.ca/awards-funding/award-opportunities/teaching-awards>

Teaching Resources for TAs

The Center for Teaching and Learning Technology (CTLT)

CTLT is a powerhouse for teaching and learning resources. It provides educational services based on scholarly research that advances understanding in teaching, learning and curriculum. They have programs and resources specifically designed to improve Graduate Student Teaching Assistants instructional skills, including:

- *Instructional Skills Workshop* – an intensive 3-day workshop that provides hands on skills and the opportunity to practice them in a safe and supportive environment
- *Presentation Skills Workshop* – a two-day interactive workshop that enables you to increase your confidence and try new approaches in any presentation setting
- One-on-one peer coaching
- Refresher Series, Reading Break Series, and Summer Institutes – week-long workshops designed for graduate student TAs
- Graduate Student Certificate Program - cohort-based program aimed at preparing graduate students for a career teaching in higher education
- Instructional Resource Guide for TAs (www.ctlt.ubc.ca/resources/teaching/teaching-assistants/)

And more...check out www.ctlt.ubc.ca to learn about programs and to register for events.

Teaching and Learning Related Courses

Check out the [UBC Course Calendar](#) for classes related to teaching and learning.

EOSC 516 – a 2 credit course specifically made for graduate student TAs of science based/ lab based courses, but will provide useful skills to all TAs

ADHE- The Department of Educational Studies (EDST) offers a selection of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) courses that focus on the development of scholars and practitioners from a variety of perspectives.

The Carl Weiman Science Education Initiative (CWSEI) at UBC

The CWSEI is a multi-year project aimed at improving undergraduate science education. Check out their website (www.cwsei.ubc.ca) to find new research into how we learn, to join their reading group or newsletter mailing list., and to access a variety of teaching resources.

Websites

Biology TA Resource and Interaction Place – www.blogs.ubc.ca/biotaproduct/

- created for Biology Teaching Assistants and has lots of helpful resources and TAing information

E-learning at UBC – www.elearning.ubc.ca

- Check under the toolkit tab to learn about online teaching tools

Student-focused Resources for TAs

The Writing Center

The Writing Center offers a variety of services to assist students with creative, academic, and professional writing skills. Fee-based part-time courses (not for credit) and **FREE** Tutorial Clinics are offered from September to April. If a student's writing skills are affecting performance, this is a great learning resource. <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/writing/>

Live Well, Learn Well

University can be very stressful and difficult for many different reasons. If a student comes to you because they are struggling on a personal level and it is affecting their performance, you can direct them to the Live Well, Learn Well website, which has information on:

- Assessing wellbeing
- Early signs of difficulty coping and strategies for getting back on track
- Upcoming wellness events
- When to seek professional help and how to book an appointment

<http://www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/index.cfm>

The Learning Commons

Students wanting to learn more effectively can visit the Learning Commons online or in person on Level 3 of the IKB Learning Centre for **FREE** support programs and services:

- Student toolkits on note-taking, exam/study prep and more
- Citation style guides to help cite sources correctly
- Tutoring in 100-level math, physics, economics, and chemistry
- Writing support to improve writing skills

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca>

Academic English Support (AES) Program

AES offers **FREE**, professional, individual support to students with English as an additional language who are seeking help in reading, writing, taking better notes, speaking more clearly, or participating more actively in seminars. Applicants are assessed and paired with a language coach. The AES learning plan includes self-study websites and/or short, focused courses. The language coach will check in with their student as they work through the AES learning plan. <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/academic-english-support-program/>

Early Alert

This campus-wide support system allows faculty, staff, and TAs to act on concerns about students sooner and in a more coordinated way. Faculty and staff that notice a student is facing difficulties should report their concerns using the Early Alert secure online form. Early Alert advisors review reports and identify appropriate resources. Academic advisors reach out to students and offer to connect them with resources and support to help them get back on track. This gives students the earliest possible connection to the right support.

<http://blog.students.ubc.ca/earlyalert/>

CUPE 2278 Collective Agreement

[CUPE 2278 Quick Reference Guide](#)

WAGES

There are four categories of Teaching Assistants, in the [CUPE 2278 Collective Agreement](#):

- GTA I (someone who already has a MSc or PhD) gets paid \$31.34 / hour
- GTA II (someone who already has a BSc) gets paid \$ 30.15 / hour
- Undergraduate TA (someone who doesn't yet have a BSc) gets paid \$15.04 / hour
- Marker (someone who grades 'bubble sheet' exams ONLY): \$14.43 / hour

HOURS

- A full TAship is 384 hours (192 hours per term), which averages 12 hours a week.
- Some TA appointments are for only one term or a different number of hours, such as a ½ TAship of 96 hours per term.
- When you are appointed as a TA, you must be told what your duties are and how many hours you will work.
- You are entitled to a written summary of this information.
- Any work you do as a TA counts towards these paid hours, including: class preparation, training, marking, conducting labs or tutorials, meeting with your students or with the instructor, reading and answering course-related email, or anything else associated with your TA position.
- If you work all your allotted hours, tell the instructor. You will then either stop working (while still getting paid) or be paid extra for any additional hours. Always record the number of hours you work. (See Article 12, Article 14 and Schedule A of the collective agreement for more information about hours)

REAPPOINTMENT

- Once hired, you are guaranteed future TA appointments: 2 years total for MA; 5 years for PhD students (Refer to Article 13 of the collective agreement for more information)

LEAVE & VACATION

- A full TAship includes 16 hours of paid vacation per year (prorated for part TAships).
- You are entitled to 12 hours of paid sick leave/term, and unused sick leave can be carried forward to next term. It is not your responsibility to organize someone to cover your work. You just must notify your department you are sick.
- Maternity and parental leave is available for TAs. Sometimes this is unpaid, but you may be eligible for EI payments or support from the Hardship Maternity Fund. (See Article 16 and Article 17 of the CA for more information about leave and vacation)

All inquiries will be treated with absolute confidence. The Union's website is www.cupe2278.ca and you can email us at administration@cupe2278.ca

Important Contacts

| Grad Manager | | | |
|--|------------------|--|--|
| MCML 344d | Dan Naidu | dan.naidu@ubc.ca | Dan processes appointments and addresses LFS TA inquiries |
| Learning Center http://lc.landfood.ubc.ca/ | | | The Learning Center can assist you with technology |
| MCML 264 | | it@landfood.ubc.ca | IT/Tech Support |
| | | is@landfood.ubc.ca | Connect/Instructional Support |
| | | web-requests@landfood.ubc.ca | Web requests |
| TA Training program http://blogs.ubc.ca/lfsta/ | | | |
| | Colin Dring | colind@mail.ubc.ca | Ask them about TA Training and any other questions you have. |
| | Jun Obayashi | jun.obayashi@ubc.ca | |
| Finances and Human Resources | | | |
| Senior Finance Clerk | Lisa Rooney | lisa.rooney@ubc.ca | Lisa can help with reimbursements for expenses, vehicle bookings, and wage payment errors. |
| Human Resources Administrative Clerk | Mona Lee | mona.lee@ubc.ca | |
| Union | | | |
| CUPE 2278 | | administration@cupe2278.ca | Visit the CUPE 2278 website to learn about union policies and notices. Contact them if you have any questions or concerns about your rights. |
| LFS Administration | | | |
| LFS Associate Dean | Christine Scaman | christine.scaman@ubc.ca | Faculty sponsor of the TA training program |
| Dean's Office Coordinator | Rebecca Lee | dean.landfood@ubc.ca | Your connection to the LFS Dean's Office! |
| LFS CTLT associate | Judy Chan | judy.chan@ubc.ca | Judy can help provide connections and support for teaching and learning questions and concerns |
| LFS Grad Council | George Furey | lfsggrads@gmail.com | The grad student council supports you as a student. |

Students in Crisis

- The [VP Students Office](#) coordinates the University's response to critical incidents involving students, works with faculties and departments to gather information, supports the affected students and surrounding student community, and coordinates communication.
- [Student Health Service](#), [Counselling Services](#), [Campus Security](#), the [RCMP](#) and other resource groups work with the VP Students Office to ensure students receive the support they require.
- Please contact the VP Students Office at **604-822-3955** or email at vpassist@mail.ubc.ca if you have any questions regarding a student in crisis.

| INCIDENT | WEEKDAYS | AFTER HOURS |
|---|---|---|
| Death | Police 911 and Campus Security 604-822-2222 and VP Students Office 604-822-3955 (after hours via Campus Security) | |
| Suicide • Imminent threat or attempt | Emergency Services 911 and Campus Security 604-822-222 | |
| Suicide • Suicidal thoughts | Counseling Services 604-822-3811 or Student Health Service 604-822-7011 | Crisis Counseling and Suicide Prevention 24-hour crisis lines BC-wide: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) Greater Vancouver: 604-872-3311 Emergency, Vancouver General Hospital 920 West 10 th Avenue, Vancouver 604-875-4995 (24 hours) |
| Acute Emotional Distress | Counseling Services 604-822-3811 | Crisis Counseling and Suicide Prevention 24-hour crisis lines • BC-wide: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) • Greater Vancouver: 604-872-3311 |
| Medical Emergency (e.g. heart attack, severe bleeding, life threatening injury in a lab) | Emergency Services 911 and Campus Security 604-822-2222 | |
| Illness, injury | Student Health Service 604-822-7011 | UBC Urgent Care (UBC Hospital) 604-822-7662 (until 10 pm) Emergency, Vancouver General Hospital 604-875-4995 (24 hours) |
| Sexual Assault <i>Services should only be called if requested by victim or if a life threatening situation exists.</i> | Counseling Services 604-822-3811 Student Health Service 604-822-7011 | |
| | Emergency Services 911 Campus Security 604-822-2222 Sexual Assault Service at VGH Emergency If sexual assault has occurred within the past seven days, sexual assault services can be requested at: Vancouver General Hospital Emergency, 920 West 10 th Avenue, Vancouver (Female patients can arrange for a Women Against Violence Against Women (WAWAW) rape crisis counselor to meet them at the hospital.) Women Against Violence Against Women 604-255-6228 24-hour crisis line: 604-255-6344 | |
| Students in need of emergency funding | Student Financial Assistance and Awards 604-822-5111 | |
| Missing Student | Campus Security 604-822-2222 | |
| Extremely disruptive student endangering the safety of themselves and/or others | Police 911 and Campus Security 604-822-2222 and VP Students Office 604-822-3955 (after hours via Campus Security) | |

LFS TA Training Program 2018/2019

Term 1 TA Orientation: September 5, 2018

- Introduction to key people, policies, resources and expectations for TAs in LFS
- Learn about the TA evaluation process at LFS: When, how, and why it will be done
- Meet and connect with other TAs!
- Address different challenges that participants will face in their roles as TAs
- Summary of TA mentorship program

Term 2 TA Orientation: January (TBA), 2019

- For new TAs and those who did not attend in September

Technology Seminar: September, 2018/January, 2019

- Seminars will explore the use of Canvas, Wikis, blogs, and/or other platforms in LFS

Instructional Skills Workshops: October, 2018 to February, 2019

- An internationally accredited program that develops/enhances instructional skills through a learner-centered approach
- Work with peers and facilitators to teach 3 short lessons and receive feedback

Marking & Assessment Workshop: October, 2018/February, 2019

- Create a grading rubric, recognizing that expectations change based on year level/course format
- Learn to mark and provide constructive feedback on assignments from students of different backgrounds

Early Alert Training: November, 2018

- Learn how to identify students at risk and use the early alert program to ensure they relate to resources to support them to succeed and thrive at UBC

Facilitation in the Classroom Workshop: March 2019

- Workshop will focus on facilitation skills, conflict resolution and embracing diversity in the classroom.

TA Community of Practice Coffee Hours: Monthly (TBA)

- Provides an open forum for TAs to come together and share challenges/successes
- Incorporate teaching themes, brief readings, discussions, and guest speakers
- Flexible training and development opportunities determined by TAs

Registration and exact dates of many of the workshop can be viewed on the [CTLT event calendar](#)

Please submit your ideas for Community of Practice topics/speakers to jun.obayashi@ubc.ca