

# A Conversation with Your Course Supervisor

## *Establishing clear expectations*

The best way to find out what your responsibilities will be as a TA is to talk to the course coordinator or supervising faculty. Responsibilities will vary from course to course and instructor to instructor. The following list of questions can be useful in guiding a discussion between you and your supervising faculty member to help you clarify expectations and responsibilities.

### **Overview of Primary Responsibilities**

Will you be required to:

- ♦ attend lecture, hold tutorial sessions, review sessions, or hold office hours
- ♦ create teaching materials, prepare questions and answers, or duplicate materials  
present material in a lecture, facilitate activities, or facilitate discussions  
set up a lab, giving instruction, demonstrating procedures, and/or cleaning up the lab
- ♦ mark student work providing feedback on assignments and exams
- ♦ assign course grades and keep class records

How many hours of work will be required per week, per term?

How many hours will be allocated for each of these duties?

*You will be able to better plan your time once you know what your responsibilities are.*

### **Course Overview**

What are the course goals/objectives?

Is there a course syllabus available? What are the course policies and where do I find these?

Who are the students (background with subject, level, class list, etc.)?

### **Preparation and resources**

Will you be provided with textbook, laboratory manuals or teaching guides?

Will you be required to use a course management system or website for the course?

How will you get access to the CMS and what functions will you be required to use?

Will you have access to and be required to read all class materials?

Are you expected to prepare teaching materials such as photocopies of handouts for the course? If so, what is the procedure for making these copies?

How frequently will you meet with the professor/supervisor to prepare for upcoming lessons?

What is the best way to communicate with the professor/supervisor?

What do you need to prepare prior to the first class meeting?

### **Lecture Courses**

Are you expected to attend every class, or only during exams, or not at all?

How early should you arrive to class or to teach?

What responsibilities will you have during a class meeting? (answering student questions, distributing materials, taking notes, facilitating activities, presenting lessons)

### **Student contact outside of class**

Does the instructor/professor hold office hours?

Are you expected to hold weekly office hours? How will students be informed of these?

How should students contact you?

Are you expected to conduct review or help sessions or tutor individuals or groups beyond office hours?

### **Assignments**

What kind of assignments are students expected to complete?

What responsibilities will you have in regard to preparing, collecting, grading, record keeping, and giving feedback?

What is the course policy regarding late assignments, grading, plagiarism etc.?

Will marking guides and/or rubrics be provided?

### **Exams**

When will exams be held for your course (midterms, final)?

Will you be expected to create questions for any of the exams?

Will you be expected to invigilate the exams? (Note: you may be required to invigilate a final exam in a different course.)

Are you expected to mark the exams? What is the time allotted to complete the marking?

Will marking guides and/or rubrics be provided?

### **Record Keeping**

Will you be required to keep track of attendance, assignment, quiz and exam grades?

Are the records kept electronically? Are the grades to be posted?

### **TA Performance Evaluation/Feedback**

How will your performance be evaluated (formal observations, peer observations, student evaluations)?

When will evaluation(s) be given (midterm, end of term, when requested, if there is a problem, or informally throughout the term)?

Who will have access to Student evaluation of TA's performance?

### **Course Evaluation**

What type of evaluation will be conducted for the course and the instructor?

### **Other concerns**

Do you need keys to the rooms you will be using? How do you get these?

Who do you contact if you or your students have technical problems?

Will you have the names/emails/phone numbers of other TAs assigned to this course?

What is the procedure to follow if you are ill or must miss a class/lab?

*Keep contact info for the supervisor and other TAs handy so that you know who to get in touch with in case of illness or emergencies.*