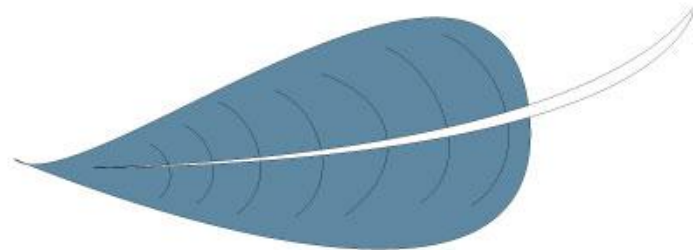


a place of mind



FACULTY OF LAND AND FOOD SYSTEMS
Grounded in Science | Global in Scope



UBC Faculty of Land & Food Systems
Teaching Assistant Handbook 2015/2016

To accompany Teaching Assistant Orientation Day

September 8, 2015

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
LFS TA Training Program 2015/2016 Overview.....	4
LFS TA Orientation Day Learning Objectives.....	4
Expectations – Topics To Cover With Your TA Supervisor.....	5
Professionalism.....	6
Preparation for Teaching.....	6
TA Conduct with Undergraduate Students.....	6
Disputes with Faculty Supervisors.....	7
Mandatory Tracking Hours.....	7
Overcoming Nervousness & Anxieties.....	8
Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.....	11
“Am I Doing This Right?” – Receiving Feedback.....	12
The LFS TA evaluation process.....	14
Important Contacts.....	23
Teaching Resources for TAs.....	24
Student-focused Resources for TAs.....	25
“Students-In-Crisis” Reference Sheet.....	27
TA Union Policy Reference Guide.....	29
LFS TA Training Program 2014/2015– Some More Details.....	30

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Sincerely,

The 2015/2016 LFS Teaching Assistant Training Coordinators
Carrie James (MSc Candidate, Integrated Studies in LFS); Sara Moukarzel (PhD candidate, Human Nutrition); Theresa Schroder (PhD candidate, Human Nutrition)

Please direct all feedback to Theresa Schroder (schrod10@mail.ubc.ca)

Overview of the LFS Teaching Assistant Training Program 2015/2016

The Faculty of Land & Food Systems has around 167 Teaching Assistantships, filled by 100 Teaching Assistants. All of these TA positions involve very different duties and skills. 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 more.

We are excited to offer LFS TAs with a faculty-wide development program. This Orientation Day is just the first portion of an entire TA Training Program to follow. The full 2015/2016 LFS TA Training Program is outlined in a detached hand-out within this handbook. (More details about each event can be found on the final page of this handbook.)

Through participation in this TA Training Program, you will be able to:

- Navigate the TA role professionally and be knowledgeable about relevant policies and resources.
- Provide clear, student centered instruction in lab, field trip, office, discussion/tutorial, PBL, or lecture settings.
- Competently, efficiently, and fairly assess a variety of assignment types.
- Be respectful and aware of different disciplines, cultures, backgrounds, and learning styles and create classroom environments that support diversity and inclusion.
- Facilitate small group interactions effectively
- Participate in a supportive community of teaching practice with other TAs and instructors in the Faculty

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 CV. Please contact the grad student coordinators if you have questions about this program completion process.

TA Orientation Day Learning Objectives

After today, TA Orientation participants will:

- Be familiar with key contacts and policies relevant to the TA role in LFS such as: the grad managers, union policies, what they can expect as a TA and what the Faculties expects of them as a TA.
- Be aware of the newly-developed TA evaluation process at LFS: when, how, and why it is important to document TA progress for career development
- Be aware of resources on campus that they can use to build their teaching skills (ie. CTLT ISW, Reading Break Series), and recommend to undergraduates who may be struggling in some areas (ie. free tutoring services).
- Have begun to meet and connect with other TAs in Land & Food Systems.

Expectations – Topics to Cover With Your TA Supervisor

It is important to have a meeting with your supervisor early in the term to ensure you are clear on what their expectations of you are, and how to handle various situations you may be faced with. With the new TA evaluation process now in place, the first meeting with your TA supervisor will be documented and a form submitted to the grad manager. (Please refer to page 16 for details on the TA evaluation process). Make sure you and your supervisor are clear on the following points.

- What are my responsibilities (ie. 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, etc).
- 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 (ie. 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 flexibility to change it?
- How long will I have to grade material once it's submitted?
- How to handle grade complaints (bring to instructor, or handle on own)?
- When will exams be held, will I be expected to help prepare or invigilate?
- What if I notice cheating/copying?
- Are you both familiar with the TA Union's (CUPE 2278) Collective Agreement?

Professionalism

Professionalism in the classroom ranges in meaning 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.

Preparation for Teaching

You are responsible for arriving to your class on time and fully prepared to teach. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the material that you will be teaching, and to ask your faculty supervisor for clarification if you are unsure about the material or how you should be teaching 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 teaching 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 running 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 so that you can clearly keep track of the material you have covered and what you still need to do. Beside each item on your checklist, write the length of time you will devote to that topic or activity, as well as at what time you should move on to the next topic or activity.

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) where they can get free tutoring on all elements of the writing process.

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.

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.

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, and that you spend the right amount of time on each task. 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. **It is mandatory that the TA hour tracker is completed and submitted to the grad office manager at the end of the term.**

- Sections taken from Biology TA Resource and Interaction Place
(blogs.ubc.ca/biotaprod/)

Overcoming Nervousness and Anxieties

Mark Twain said it best: “There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars.” Most teachers, 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) you should 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 the session 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, 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 rightly.
- **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 think you have with your speech, you’ll only be calling attention to it. Had you remained silent, your listeners may not have noticed at all.
- **Concentrate on Your Message** – Not yourself. 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.
- Your audience is there because they believe that you have something important to say.

- Adapted from Biology TA Resource and Interaction Place (blogs.ubc.ca/biotaprod/)

Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

From Chickering and Gamson (1987)

1. Encourage Contact between Students and Faculty

Frequent student-faculty/ TA contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty/ TA concern help students during rough times to keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members or their TAs enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages thinking about their own values and future plans.

2. Develop Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, 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.

3. Encourage Active Learning

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

“Am I Doing This Right?” – Getting 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 are able to 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 16 for more details on the TA evaluation process between you and the course instructor.

Some key points on asking for and receiving feedback:

- **Ask & check-in.** Assuming that a course instructor will provide feedback if and when they think is necessary may not always work, and that feedback may come after a certain level of tension and frustration has already been reached. If you are uncertain and want some feedback on your work – ask! 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 a particular aspect of your TAing you would like the other person to focus on? You can even specify if you want the feedback in a particular format (ie. one thing that was really effective, one thing that could be improved, on a scale of 1 to 10, etc.).
- **Remember, it’s nothing personal.** It is easy to feel defensive when receiving feedback. Remind yourself that this feedback is actually a helpful gift that the other person is giving you.
- **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 an example.** 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!

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 particular 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. Below 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:

The TA Performance Review Process: An Opportunity to Reflect Upon Your Performance and Professional Development

In your role as a TA, you will have the opportunity to make an important contribution to the educational experience of our undergraduate students – and you will also have the opportunity to learn a great deal yourself! The TA Performance Review Process was developed to promote both of these aspects of your work: it will support teaching excellence in the context of the course and also 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**)
2. An informal mid-term check-in (**OPTIONAL**)
3. A formal Performance Review to be completed at the end of term (**MANDATORY**)

1. Preliminary Orientation Meeting: This meeting with the course instructor will take place 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. You may refer to the "TA Informal Check-in" document on page 21 for suggestions of what could be discussed during this meeting. Take advantage of this opportunity to discuss any questions you may have or challenges you may be experiencing. This 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 also be recorded. This meeting 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.

**Faculty of Land and Food Systems
TA Orientation Guide for Instructors and Teaching Assistants**

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 supervisors, 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. TA's will have to strike a comfortable balance between the acting as a professional and the contract under which they have been hired.
- 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.

<i>COURSE NAME:</i>	<i>DATE</i>
INSTRUCTOR NAME:	
<i>TA NAME:</i>	

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, in the event that 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
<i>Instructor Signature:</i>	<i>DATE</i>

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)

Faculty of Land and Food Systems Teaching Assistant Informal Check-In

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 in order 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.

Brief 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)

Faculty of Land and Food Systems Teaching Assistant Performance Evaluation

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 in order 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.

Brief 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
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)

Teaching Assistant Awards:

I. UBC Killam Graduate teaching assistant award:

- In recognition of the valuable role that TAs play at UBC, the university annually awards teaching prizes to UBC TAs, which include 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 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 more details on the Killam graduate TA award, please refer to:

<http://vpacademic.ubc.ca/killam-awards/killam-graduate-teaching-assistant-awards/>

II. Land and Food Systems TA award:

- The LFS TA award follows the same format and evaluation criteria of the Killam award, but targets LFS TAs only.
- For questions about this award, please email Shelley Small, LFS grad manager at shelley.small@ubc.ca

Important Contacts

Grad Managers			
	Shelley Small	shelley.small@ubc.ca	Shelley is in charge of processing appointments and addressing TA inquiries within the Faculty.
Learning Center			
			The Learning Center can assist you with any technology related inquiries:
	Cyprien Lomas	cyprien.lomas@ubc.ca	Director
	Duncan McHugh	duncan.mchugh@ubc.ca	Learning Technologies Specialist
	Morgan Reid	morgan.reid@ubc.ca	Multimedia Developer
	Edmund Seow	edmund.seow@ubc.ca	Computer Systems Manager
	Wayne Tamagi	wayne.tamagi@ubc.ca	Computer Systems Coordinator
	Patrick Leung	patrick.leung@ubc.ca	AV/IT Technician
TA Training Program			
	Carrie James	carrie.james@alumni.ubc.ca	Ask them about TA Training opportunities and any other questions you have, but aren't sure who to ask. They are happy to field your questions and connect you to the right people.
	Sara Moukarzel	mksara@alumni.ubc.ca	
	Theresa Schroeder	schrod10@mail.ubc.ca	
Financial Office			
	Lisa Rooney	lisa.rooney@ubc.ca	You can go to LFS Finances to sort out reimbursements for course expenses, to book vehicles, and to follow-up on TA wage payment errors.
	Judy Chow	judy.chow@ubc.ca	
Union			
LFS TA Union Rep	Adrienne Levay	alevay@alumni.ubc.ca	Visit the CUPE 2278 blog to learn about union policies and strike notices. E-mail them, or Adrienne, if you have any questions or concerns about your working rights.
CUPE 2278	cupe2278.ca/blogs/	cupe2278@interchange.ubc.ca	
LFS Administration			
LFS Associate Dean	Christine Scaman	christine.scaman@ubcc.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!
FNH Administrative Support	Barbara Wakal	barbara.wakal@ubc.ca	
CTLT			
	ctlt.ubc.ca	ctltofgrads@ubc.ca	Visit their website to learn about events and workshops aimed at TA's. E-mail them if you have any questions about workshops, mentoring services, etc.
PBL Network	Judy Chan	judy.chan@ubc.ca	Judy can help provide connections and support to TAs involved in PBL.
LFS Grad Council			
		lfsgrads@gmail.com	The council supports you as a student and as a TA. e-mail them with any questions or concerns you have, and stay tuned for e-mails from them.

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 that are based on scholarly research that advances understanding in teaching, learning and curriculum. They have programs specifically designed to improve Graduate Student Teaching Assistants instructional skills such as:

- Instructional Skills Workshop – an intensive 3-day internationally celebrated workshop that provides instructors with 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, including: academic conferences, lecture halls, thesis defenses, job interviews.
- One-on-one peer coaching
- Refresher Series, Reading Break Series, and Summer Institutes – full weeks of workshops designed for graduate student TAs
- Seminars and workshops throughout the year
- Graduate Student Certificate Program - cohort-based program aimed at preparing graduate students for a career teaching in higher education
- Reading library
- Instructional Resource Guide for TAs (<http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/3/3d/Ta-handbook.pdf>)

And more...check out ctl.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 – Teaching and Learning in Earth and Ocean Sciences, is a 2 credit course specifically made for graduate student TAs. It is aimed at TAs of science based/ lab based courses, but will provide useful skills to any and all TAs. Check out the course description at www.eos.ubc.ca/courses/eosc516.eosc516.htm.

The Carl Weiman Science Education Initiative (CWSEI)

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

Websites

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

- 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 their academic, professional, business, and creative writing skills. They offer part-time courses at a fee (not for credit) in preparing for the Language Proficiency Index Test (LPI), improving grammar, writing academic essays, scientific, writing, and writing reports. The Writing Center also provides **FREE** Tutorial Clinics for UBC students from September to April. Students can sign up in person for appointments at Ponderosa Annex C during the day or drop in for sessions in the Chapman Learning Commons at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre in the evening. If you feel that a student is doing poorly because their writing skills are holding them back, and not necessarily because they don't understand the content, this is a great learning resource to suggest to them. You can even go here for graduate writing consultation yourself! Website: <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/writing/>

Live Well, Learn Well

As you all know, university can be very stressful and difficult for many different reasons. Social support, emotional and physical wellbeing, healthy diet, good sleep practices, and a balanced lifestyle will contribute to a student's academic success. If a student comes to you for help because they are struggling on a personal level, and it is affecting their performance in school, you can direct them to the Live Well, Learn Well website. Students can access this site for **FREE** to learn about:

- Assessing their wellbeing
- Early signs of difficulty coping and strategies for getting back on track
- Strengthening their physical and mental wellbeing
- Upcoming wellness events
- Great resources like the Healthy Minds at UBC blog
- When to seek professional help and how to book an appointment with a counsellor or doctor

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

The Learning Commons

This is an evolving collection of UBC-selected learning resources. Students can visit the Learning Commons online or in person on Level 3 of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre to find **FREE** learning support programs and services to help them learn more effectively. Some services provided include:

- 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
- Peer academic coaching to develop effective study skills

Website: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/>

Academic English Support (AES) Program

AES offers **FREE**, professional, individual support to students with English as an additional language who seek help in reading, writing, taking better notes from lectures, speaking more clearly, or participating more actively in seminars. Applicants are assessed and paired with a language coach. The AES learning plan includes specific self-study websites and/or short, focused courses, mostly online. The language coach will check in with their student at subsequent meetings and online as they work through the AES learning plan.

Website: <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/academic-english-support-program/>

Early Alert

This is a campus-wide support system that allows faculty, staff, and TAs to identify their concerns about students sooner and in a more coordinated way. Faculty and staff notice a student is facing difficulties and identify their concerns using the Early Alert secure online form. Early Alert advisors review concerns and identify the most appropriate resources for students in need of support. 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 resources and support, before difficulties become overwhelming.

An Early Alert Training session will be offered to LFS TAs -as part of our community of practice (CoP) hours!

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



University of British Columbia
Vancouver
Office of the Vice President,
Students

Students in Crisis

As you work with students, you may be confronted with critical incidents. It is important that you contact the resources below or assistance.

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	Counselling Services 604-822-3811 or Student Health Service 604-822-7011	Crisis Counselling 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	Counselling Services 604-822-3811	Crisis Counselling 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>	Counselling 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 (WAVAW) rape crisis counsellor 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)	

- 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.
- The VP Students office is a resource for instructors and administrators who need help with a student who is in very difficult circumstances and past efforts to resolve their problems have not been successful.
- 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](tel:604-822-3955) if you have any questions regarding a student in crisis.

CUPE 2278 Collective Agreement Quick Reference Guide

WAGES

There are four wage categories of Teaching Assistants, which are:

- GTA I (someone who already has a MSc or PhD) gets paid \$30.73 / hour
- GTA II (someone who already has a BSc) gets paid \$ 29.57 / hour
- Undergraduate TA (someone who doesn't yet have a BSc) gets paid \$14.75 / hour
- Marker (someone who grades 'bubble sheet' exams ONLY): \$14.15 / hour

HOURS

- A full TAship is 384 hours work (192 hours per term), which averages at about 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 of 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 CA for more information about hours)

REAPPOINTMENT

- Once hired, you are guaranteed further TA appointments : 2 years total for MA; 5 years for PhD students (See Article 13 of the CA for more information about reappointment)

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 have to 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.

LFS TA Training Program 2015/2016 – Some More Details

- Problem-based Learning Workshop: August
 - ➔ Overview of the PBL method
 - ➔ Facilitate small groups and receive feedback from experienced facilitator
 - ➔ Receive a Certificate of Completion of the LFS learning centre
- TA Orientation Day: September 8, 2015
 - ➔ Introduction to key people, policies, and expectations relevant to TAs in LFS
 - ➔ Learn about the newly-developed TA evaluation process at LFS: When, how, and why it will be done
 - ➔ Learn about resources on campus that TAs can use to build their teaching skills and to better support their students and TA awards
 - ➔ Meet and connect with other TAs!
 - ➔ Identify different forms of diversity, learning preferences, and cultural educational background of students in the classroom
 - ➔ Address different challenges that participants face in their roles as TAs (i.e.: communication challenges)
 - ➔ Identify strategies to invest in diversify for better education.
- Term 2 TA Orientation Day: January 6, 2015
 - ➔ For TAs who were absent for the Sept. 8th Orientation Day
- Instructional Skills Workshop: January 31, February 1, and February 7, 2015
 - ➔ Develop/ enhance instructional skills through a learner-centered approach
 - ➔ Work closely with peers and trained facilitators to teach 3 short lessons and receive feedback
 - ➔ Receive a Certificate of Completion and entry on your transcript indicating that you have participated in the ISW
 - ➔ Marking & Assessment Workshop: Create a grading rubric and raise awareness around how our expectations may change between different courses (year level, course format)
 - ➔ Learn methods for providing constructive feedback/comments, and strategies for how to mark and provide feedback on assignments from students of different backgrounds
- Monthly TA Community of Practice Coffee Hours
 - ➔ Oct. 8th, Nov. 5th, Feb. 11th, March 11th
 - ➔ Provide a space for TAs to come together and share challenges/successes
 - ➔ Incorporate teaching themes, brief readings, discussions, and guest speakers
 - ➔ Please submit your ideas for Community of Practice topics/speakers to schrod10@mail.ubc.ca

A TAship is more than a job...It can open career doors for you!
Have fun teaching...and exploring!