

**UBC**

Land and  
Food Systems

# **Faculty of Land and Food Systems Teaching Assistant Handbook**

## **Version 2**



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A final thank you goes out to all the TAs 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!  
Last updated summer 2022 by A Deslippe, Dr. C Lomas and G Smith.

## **LFS Teaching Assistant Training Program overview**

This year, the Faculty of Land & Food Systems will employ more than 100 Teaching Assistants (TAs) to help deliver nearly 110 courses. 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. This program seeks to provide professional development and support for LFS TAs and promote a sense of inclusivity and community. 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.

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

- Explain the value of TA roles and responsibilities within the faculty and student learning.
- Articulate how skills acquired while working as an LFS TA contribute to research and professional development inside and outside of academia.
- Recognize and discuss how colonialism and white supremacy have impacted Indigenous groups within Canada
  - Identify how teaching practices in LFS can perpetuate these systems in learning environments.
  - Develop and list strategies to dismantle colonialism and white supremacy in teaching and learning environments within the LFS faculty.
  - Support student learning of Indigenous systems in LFS courses that discuss this content in inclusive and respectful ways.
- Develop technical and competency skills to adequately perform TA-related duties specific to LFS TAs including:
  - Recognition and application of equitable marking and constructive feedback strategies on student exams and assignments.
  - Compare and contrast of active learning techniques to support student learning in in-person and virtual environments.
  - Critique of different teaching strategies commonly used in the LFS faculty to facilitate discussions in in-person and virtual learning environments.
  - Discussion of the impact of power dynamics on verbal and written communication among all stakeholders in learning environments (i.e., professors, the teaching team and students).
  - Explain and list strategies to minimize barriers students face within in-person and virtual environments that can hinder student learning (e.g., accessibility).
- Grow collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching networks to promote social support and a spirit of collegiality within the LFS TA cohort.

- Explain role of faculty, LFS Learning Centre, CTLT, and CUPE 2278 in supporting LFS TAs.

The preceding sections are meant to help support your time as a TA in the LFS Faculty. They cover a range of information on how to prepare for your role, details on your responsibilities and rights as a TA and supports available.

## **Expectations – Topics to cover with your supervisor**

Before starting your active duties as a TA it is essential to have a meeting with your supervisor. This helps ensure that you are aware of the expectations required of you and timeline of course activities. It also provides you with an opportunity to discuss and plan for your development as a TA (e.g., evaluations, opportunities for feedback, training). Some important topics to cover with your supervisor include:

- **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.)?
- Are there other members of the teaching team?
- What is the procedure to follow if I am ill or must miss a class/lab?
- Are there print or online resources that I should be familiar with used in the course (e.g., textbook)?
- Am I expected to attend lecture(s)?
- Will there be regular TA/supervisor meetings?
- What will the primary mode of communication be among the teaching team?
  - If I am expected to communicate directly with students, is there a primary mode of communication to use?
- How many hours have I been assigned?
  - Are certain hours allocated for specific 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, is there a procedure to update 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 academic misconduct (e.g., copying answers on an exam)?
- 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 LFS students. You also can learn a great deal yourself and develop professional skills that are useful outside of the academic institution. The TA Performance Review Process can help promote professional development and teaching excellence in the context of the courses you TA. Three check points throughout the term with your supervisor provides an opportunity to implement this plan.

1. *Preliminary Orientation Meeting:* You are encouraged to 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 the “Orientation Guide” Checklist (see Appendix A) 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” form 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 (Appendix B or C).
3. *Formal Performance Review:* At the end of term, you are encouraged to meet with the course instructor to review the work you completed in the TA position. It is suggested to have the course instructor complete the first few sections of the “TA Performance Review Form”, and to record your comments and key points from the meeting. This is an opportunity to reflect upon your work as a TA, your contributions to the course, and your development as an educator (Appendix D).

This process is meant to enhance and encourage communication between you and your supervisor. Though it can be very helpful, it **does not** replace ongoing communication throughout the term! Additional tips for effective communication and feedback on performance include:

- Plan for 20-30 minute meetings with the possibility of a longer preliminary orientation, especially if several TAs for the same course are all meeting together at the same time.
- 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.
- Allow time for all parties to vocalize and questions or concerns. This includes any concerns TAs have regarding supervisor conduct.

### Getting Additional Feedback

One of the best ways to evaluate your progress as TA is to ask! 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.

UBC typically only collects TA feedback at the end of the term from students. 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 it gives you a chance to adapt during the term and tailor future teaching strategies to address student identified needs.

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?
- **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. Clear examples from a supervisor can save time in the long run.
- **Get another opinion.** Everyone has different learning styles and preferences. The more people you can receive feedback from, the better the understanding you'll have of your strengths and areas of improvement in teaching.
- **Remember, it's nothing personal.** It is easy to feel defensive when receiving feedback. Remind yourself that this feedback is meant to be constructive and improve your development.

## Professionalism

Professionalism in the classroom covers a range of expectations from how well prepared you are, to how you conduct yourself with the students, and how you deal with disagreements with your 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, union representative or Human Resources representative.

A key guiding principle to enact professionalism at all times comes from protection and



confidentiality of student's personal information. This includes student grades, class records, and work. This information should **never** be stored on a shared computer or discussed with anyone other than the course supervisor. All student communication needs to occur on secured channels that are housed in Canada as well (e.g., UBC email, Canvas, Microsoft Teams etc.).

### **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 ask for clarification if you are unsure about the material or how you should be instructing it. Many course faculty provide preparatory sessions for TAs. Read over any material provided to you by the instructor before attending meetings, lectures or labs. 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 so that you have sufficient time to contact your supervisor with any questions.

If you are instructing or facilitating a class, make sure that you know how much time is available for each student activity that you will cover. Good planning will make time management in the classroom much easier. Making and using a checklist or lesson plan (include the length of time you will devote to that topic or activity) is an effective practice to help you stay on track and manage your time effectively.

**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. In these cases, following up in a later class after looking it up or speaking to someone like your supervisor is good teaching practice. Not knowing the answer can be an excellent opportunity to spark an interesting class discussion and guide students to possible resources where they could investigate the question themselves. It is not acceptable to mislead your students by making up an answer instead of saying 'I don't know'. 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 inclusively with respect. When speaking to your students, make sure to be polite. When you are grading assignments, make sure to keep your feedback constructive and unbiased.

All of your students should have equal opportunities to ask you questions, both in and out of class. Make sure to provide all students with your contact information and office hours (if applicable). 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 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](http://www.writingcentre.ubc.ca)) for free tutoring.*

**Remember: 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 with equity, 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.

For good practices in undergraduate education, please see the Appendix E.

### **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, 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 have concerns about a supervisor's treatment of the teaching team or students, contact the LFS Human Resource department for guidance.

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.

**Remember: Marking guides are instructor and course specific. However, they should follow inclusive principles to support all students without disadvantaging certain groups. If something does not make sense, or is repeatedly challenging for students have a discussion with your supervisor.**

### **Overcoming Nervousness and Anxiety**

Most TAs, whether they are first time TAs or experienced instructors, often feel nervous when standing up in front of a class of students. It is perfectly normal for you to be nervous about teaching, especially if this is your first time as a TA. 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%. Practices that support reducing stress, like going for a walk beforehand, can also be helpful.

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.

### **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 at the beginning of your contract 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, let them know immediately. You can work together to come up with a new strategy to correct this hour imbalance. The solution is not working more hours for no pay. An excel file TA hour tracker can be found on the [LFS TA Portal](#).

## **Teaching Assistant Awards**

There are two TA awards for LFS students:

### **Land and Food Systems TA award**

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)

### **UBC Killam Graduate teaching assistant award**

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>

## **Resources for TAs and Graduate Students**

### **Teaching focused**

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) provides educational services based on scholarly research that advances understanding in teaching, learning and curriculum. They have programs and resources specifically designed to improve TA 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.
- Grad/TA Institute. Series of workshops on various topics in teaching and learning offered for graduate students in mid-January.
- Certificate in Advanced Teaching and Learning: 1-year cohort program with practicum component, intended for TAs.
- Foundations of Pedagogy: 1-term course for effectively teaching STEM undergraduate courses.
- Instructional Resource Guide for TAs [www.cflt.ubc.ca/resources/teaching/teaching-assistants/](http://www.cflt.ubc.ca/resources/teaching/teaching-assistants/)

### ***The LFS Learning Centre***

Nurtures and supports excellence in learning and teaching by supporting students, instructors, faculty and staff through training, design, problem solving, workshops, and supporting risk training. Learn more at: <https://lc.landfood.ubc.ca/about-us/>

### ***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 (Adult and higher education) courses*- 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](http://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.

### **Student-focused Resources for TAs**

#### ***Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication***

This campus unit aims to support all members of the UBC community from undergraduate students to faculty across many types of writing situations by offering various services (including one-on- one writing consultations), programs, and resources. If a student’s writing skills are affecting performance, this is a great learning resource. For more details, visit: <https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing/>

### ***Student Health Service***

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 Student Health Service at <https://students.ubc.ca/health/student-health-service>, 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

### ***UBC Research Commons***

Students wanting to learn more effectively can visit the UBC Research Commons at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre for support programs and services on topics including:

- Quantitative/qualitative data analysis software
- Citation style guides to help cite sources correctly
- Conducting literature/systematic reviews
- Preparing manuscripts for publication

For more information, visit [http://guides.library.ubc.ca/library\\_research\\_commons](http://guides.library.ubc.ca/library_research_commons).

### ***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. Visit their website for more details: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>.

## **Rights and entitlements under the CUPE 2278 Collective Agreement**

### ***Wages***

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

- Senior TA (in a MSc or PhD program with lead hand duties): \$37.59 / hour
- GTA I (in a MSc or PhD program with 2 years' experience as a GTA): \$35.13 / hour
- GTA II (in a MSc or PhD program with <2 years' experience as a GTA): \$33.80 / hour
- Undergraduate TA I (in a BSc with substantial student contact): \$22.77 / hour
- Undergraduate TA II (in a BSc without substantial student contact): \$20.33 / hour
- Marker (ONLY marking, no substantial student contact): \$16.18 / 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](http://www.cupe2278.ca) and you can email us at [administration@cupe2278.ca](mailto:administration@cupe2278.ca)*



## Important Contacts

<b>LFS Academic Coordinator</b>		
FNH Main Office <i>Virginia Frankian</i>	lfs.ta@ubc.ca	LFS TA administrative inquiries like joining the TA email list to stay up to date on training & events.
<b>LFS Learning Centre <a href="http://lc.landfood.ubc.ca/">http://lc.landfood.ubc.ca/</a></b>		Assists with technology related inquiries.
MCML 264	it@landfood.ubc.ca	IT/Tech Support
	is@landfood.ubc.ca	Connect/Instructional Support
	web-requests@landfood.ubc.ca	Web requests
<b>TA Training program <a href="http://blogs.ubc.ca/lfsta/">http://blogs.ubc.ca/lfsta/</a></b>		
Steven Bristow	<a href="mailto:sbristow@student.ubc.ca">sbristow@student.ubc.ca</a>	Ask questions about anything TA related.
Lexis Ly	<a href="mailto:lexisly@mail.ubc.ca">lexisly@mail.ubc.ca</a>	
<b>Human Resources</b>		
HR Director <i>Barbara Hsiao</i>	barbara.hsiao@ubc.ca	Inquiries or formal complaints about TA or professor misconduct. Help with mediation.
<b>Finance concerns</b>		
UBC Workday or your supervisor	<a href="https://isc.ubc.ca/news-tags/workday-support">https://isc.ubc.ca/news-tags/workday-support</a>	If you need to confirm hours speak with your supervisors. If you are missing pay etc. contact UBC Workday.
<b>Union</b>		
CUPE 2278	administration@cupe2278.ca	Visit the <a href="#">CUPE 2278 website</a> to learn about union policies and notices. Contact them if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a TA.
LFS Department Representative	jennifer.lipka@ubc.ca	Connection to CUPE through LFS Faculty. Inquiries about anything CUPE related or advice on current grievances.
<b>LFS Administration</b>		
Associate Dean, Academic <i>Sandra Brown</i>	sandra.brown@ubc.ca	Faculty sponsor of the TA training. Consult for anything funding related.
Office of the Dean	dean.landfood@ubc.ca	Your connection to the LFS Dean's Office!
LFS CTLT associate <i>Judy Chan</i>	judy.chan@ubc.ca	Judy can help provide connections and support for teaching and learning questions and concerns.



## 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](mailto:vpassist@mail.ubc.ca) if you have any questions regarding a student in crisis.

<b>INCIDENT</b>	<b>WEEKDAYS</b>	<b>AFTER HOURS</b>
Death*	<b>Police 911</b>  <b>Campus Security 604-822-2222</b>  <b>VP Students Office 604-822-3955</b> (after hours via Campus Security)	
Suicide / Imminent threat or attempt*	<b>Emergency Services 911</b>  <b>Campus Security 604-822-222</b>	
Suicide / Suicidal thoughts	<b>Counseling Services</b> 604-822-3811  <b>Student Health Service</b> 604-822-7011	<b>Crisis Counseling and Suicide Prevention</b> 24-hour crisis lines BC-wide: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) Greater Vancouver: 604-872-3311  <b>Emergency, Vancouver General Hospital</b> 920 West 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver 604-875-4995 (24 hours)
Acute Emotional Distress	<b>Counseling Services</b> 604-822-3811	<b>Crisis Counseling and Suicide Prevention</b> 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)	<b>Emergency Services 911</b>  <b>Campus Security 604-822-2222</b>	

Illness, injury	<b>Student Health Service</b> 604-822-7011	<b>UBC Urgent Care, UBC Hospital</b> (until 10:00pm) 604-822-7662  <b>Emergency, Vancouver General Hospital</b> (24 hrs) 604-875-4995
Sexual Assault <i>In the event of a life-threatening situation call Emergency Services or Campus Security.</i>	<b>Counseling Services</b> 604-822-3811  <b>Student Health Service</b> 604-822-7011	
	<b>Emergency Services 911</b>  <b>Campus Security</b> 604-822-2222  <b>Sexual Assault Service at VGH Emergency</b> If sexual assault has occurred within the past seven days, sexual assault services can be requested at: Vancouver General Hospital Emergency, 920 West 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver (Female patients can arrange for a Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) rape crisis counselor to meet them at the hospital.)  <b>Sexual Assault Services at UBC</b> Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC) <a href="tel:604-827-5180">604-827-5180</a> Located at Room 3130 on the third floor of the UBC Nest.  <b>Women Against Violence Against Women</b> <a href="tel:604-255-6228">604-255-6228</a> <a href="tel:604-255-6344">604-255-6344</a> (24-hour crisis line)  Report incidences of sexual assault to UBC and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD).	
Emergency funding for students	<b>Student Financial Awards</b> 604-8225111	
Missing Student	<b>Campus Security</b> 604-822-2222	
Students endangering the safety of themselves and/or others*	<b>Police 911</b> <b>Campus Security</b> 604-822-2222 <b>VP Students Office</b> 604-822-3955 (after hours call Campus Security)	

\*You must call all listed entities.

# Appendices

## Appendix A) 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Breakdown of Hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Vacation time as per contract (requires advance approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Office Hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. for Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. for TA	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. TA / Instructor Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Frequency - once a month (Winter) or bi-weekly (Summer)	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exchange contact info and review Emergency procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Schedule informal check-in (mid-term)	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Schedule formal check-in (end of term)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Expectations and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Importance of communication	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Attending lectures – required (paid hours) or optional?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Preparing for lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Duties during lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. exams	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Delivery / invigilation	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Appendix B) Teaching Assistant Informal Check-In Form**

<b>Teaching Assistant Name:</b>	
<b>Course (ex APBI 523 002):</b>	
<b>Year and term:</b>	
<b>Instructor's name:</b>	

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Teaching assistants (TAs) 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 discussion between a TA and the instructor to:

- Encourage growth and improvement to enhance teaching performance
- Recognize successful teaching
- Clearly specify expectations
- Provide space for bidirectional conversation on instructor and TA needs moving forward

The evaluation process will include both an informal and formal evaluation during the academic term or appointment. 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**

<b>1</b>	Does Not Meet Expectations
<b>2</b>	Approaches Expectations
<b>3</b>	Meets Expectations
<b>4</b>	Exceeds Expectations
<b>N/A</b>	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%).*

<b>1. Communication Skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N A</b>

<b>2. Interaction with Students</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>

<b>3. Time Management Skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>

<b>4. Accuracy and Attention to Detail Skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>

<b>5. Attitude and Behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>

<b>6. Overall Contribution to the Course</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>

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

**Comments from the discussion:**

**By signing the TA and instructor confirm a discussion regarding this informal check-in took place.**

Instructor signature:	Date:
TA 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](mailto:lfs.ta@ubc.ca))*

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**Appendix C) Sample TA Feedback Form – Midterm informal student feedback**

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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:

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I would suggest:

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**Appendix D) Teaching Assistant Performance Evaluation Form**

<b>Teaching Assistant Name:</b>	
<b>Course (ex APBI 523 002):</b>	
<b>Year and term:</b>	
<b>Instructor's name:</b>	

**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 discussion between a TA and the instructor to:

- Encourage growth and improvement to enhance teaching performance
- Recognize successful teaching
- Clearly specify expectations
- Provide space for bidirectional conversation on instructor and TA needs moving forward

The evaluation process will include both an informal and formal evaluation during the academic term or appointment. 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**

<b>1</b>	Does Not Meet Expectations
<b>2</b>	Approaches Expectations
<b>3</b>	Meets Expectations
<b>4</b>	Exceeds Expectations
<b>N/A</b>	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%).*

<b>1. Communication Skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>
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					



<b>2. Interaction with Students</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>
a) Creates student interest and involvement					
Shows enthusiasm when working with students, demonstrating interest in the course and class material					
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					

<b>3. Time Management Skills</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>
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					

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

<b>5. Attitude and Behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>
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					

<b>6. Overall Contribution to the Course</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NA</b>
a) Performs duties as outlined in job description					
b) Quality of contributions to course planning / coordinating meetings					
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):**

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

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**Comments from the discussion:**

--

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

Instructor signature:	Date:
TA 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](mailto:lfs.ta@ubc.ca))

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## **Appendix E) Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education**

(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 helps students persevere during rough. Knowing faculty members or TAs enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages thinking about their own values and 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 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 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.

### **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.