



# TA Training CoP: Time & Structure of Training

## Session Workbook

January 2023



# Structure of TA Training Program

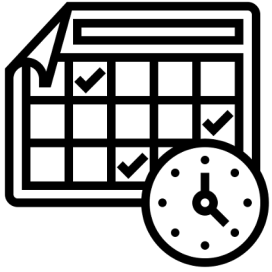
**Large group discussion:** What different **structures** have you used for your training? (E.g., timing, one long workshop or multiple small ones, etc)

Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Orientation in the FALL and smaller events the rest of the year</li><li>• (used to have January training) - Winter TAs invited to attend fall training</li><li>• Collaborating with LSI to reach more people and create community. There is overlap between the fields.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most TA Training workshops in term 1 - split the orientation across two days and across modalities</li><li>• A couple of other workshops later on (more difficult to engage TAs in the second term)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Similar structure on both terms. Longer orientation training sessions for new TAs and smaller CoP type meetings later in the term (to check- in)</li><li>• Higher attendance rate in term one - only in-person</li><li>• Shorter Orientation in term 2.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canvas based + drop in office hours with faculty - experienced TA offer TAed in other units/departments</li></ul>



# Challenges you have experienced with different TA Training Structures

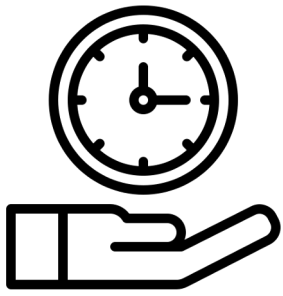
GROUP 1: Room 1		
TA Training Structure	Challenge	Solution
One Full day training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability for folks who are just coming back from the holidays. If they're not available, they miss all the training.</li> <li>• Hard to schedule during the term for undergraduate TAs and for some grad TAs who are taking classes</li> <li>• Takes up alot of time, TAs often don't have a day so they don't attend at all.</li> <li>• Getting people to stay for workshops which are full day format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a summary of the training with links to where to find the information on your own - Take away for everyone - like Canvas course with resources</li> <li>• Async format? Remote training followed up by a shorter in person training</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
One workshop/event per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard for TAs to make time to join each workshop/event</li> <li>• Commute for students who don't come in often, 'doesn't seem worth it'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe do two half-days? So not a full day of training, but also not several days of just 1 hour workshops.</li> <li>• ^^This has been our solution as well</li> </ul>
Only training in the fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's joining in Jan miss any formal training or introduction</li> <li>• We often end up hiring TAs for January at the last minute, if another TA drops out (e.g., due to concerns about graduating on time)</li> <li>• ^^ Yes! Then there are only, say, two new TAs in the winter. These TAs should have the same training and support as fall TAs, but hosting the same 1.5 hour workshop with n of 2 is awkward.</li> <li>• Trainings in fall may not catch all new TAs OR TAs who did not TA in fall te</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out/communicate with new TAs in Jan</li> <li>• Mentorship program for Sept TAs to Jan TAs (paired)</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Training split between fall and winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement by winter (especially if workshops are front-loaded in the fall)</li> <li>• For TA Training Coordinators, it's hard to decide which workshops are most "relevant" for each term. What can wait till the winter term? What is necessary right off the bat in the fall?</li> <li>• Trainings split between fall and winter require twice the time commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on mentorship, community of practice meetings, etc. so that new TAs can meet with Term 1 TAs</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Asynchronous training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miss opportunities for community, TAs meeting each other and forming supportive connections</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Asynchronous training - will people actually do this? Doesn't build community in the same way. Can't 'lure' with food or coffee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair asynchronous training with some in-person workshop/meeting (e.g., TA orientation online, then meet other TAs for coffee + chat later in the term)</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Do a synchronous workshop online, and record it for folks who can't attend. If that hampers attendance, include a second in-person day that is not recorded, and instead discussion-based. People have the formal training online, and a space to chat at large about specific issues.</li> </ul>
General Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be open to change plans</li> <li>• Keep all these formats in mind and adjust</li> <li>• Offer a schedule for what's coming</li> </ul>	



# Scheduling challenges you have experienced with different TA populations

## GROUP 2: Room 2

TA Population	Challenge	Solution
<b>New graduate TAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Busy, may feel overwhelmed or not know where to what about different resources from yet</li> <li>• If still taking courses - scheduling conflict</li> <li>• May not recognize that they need training for TAship</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss why TAships are useful (transferable skills: leadership, presentation, discussion, etc.)</li> <li>• Schedule training before the term to avoid clash with classes, or schedule around graduate classes/departmental seminars</li> <li>• Weekend training: last resort?</li> <li>• Asynchronous or hybrid training?</li> <li>• Multiple, informal options to check in (e.g., Slack channel, coffee with a senior TA or faculty member)</li> </ul>
<b>Returning graduate TAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't feel the need to attend - sometimes false confidence?</li> <li>• Same as above here!</li> <li>• Increasingly busy schedule with each year of the program (year 1 might be more flexible, but year 4 might be dedicated to dissertation writing)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship opportunities</li> <li>• Survey TAs about the type of training that they would find beneficial</li> <li>• Informal meetings to check in (CoP) rather than formal training</li> <li>• Join forces with other groups in the department (e.g., EDI or wellness committee) to offer specific meetings for TAs (e.g., EDI for TAs)</li> </ul>
<b>New undergraduate TAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate TAs have classes - need to schedule around</li> <li>• Workshops may be scheduled on days where there are no graduate classes, but this will not be the case for undergraduates doing classes in different programs.</li> <li>• Undergraduate TAs are less likely to live in Vancouver year-round, so might not be available for training before the term</li> <li>• In my experience, UTAs have signed up for events and not shown up, whereas GTAs were more likely to show up</li> <li>• May not recognize that they need training for TAship</li> <li>• May have a different role from GTAs (e.g., no marking), so some training might not be relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Offer recurring workshops at different dates for undergraduate TAs (ones that graduate TAs can afford to "skip")</li> <li>• Making other online resources available if they absolutely can't make the workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Returning undergraduate TAs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't feel like they need to continue to do training (already done it)</li> <li>• Undergraduate TAs may ultimately need multiple income sources (if they are working another part-time job where schedules are not confirmed until a week before, expecting them to do TA training is unfeasible)</li> <li>• Pressure from supervisors to focus more on research with research progression</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above, show why it's useful/how it can be beneficial outside of just being paid or TAing at UBC</li> <li>•</li> </ul>



# Timing of training

Strategies
● Avoid scheduling sessions early in the morning (commute challenges)
● Survey people for their availability
● Don't send out a survey more than a month in advance of the session (people's availability changes)
● Schedule over department meetings (when there are not classes scheduled)
● Schedule over lunch and offer food
● Schedule short workshops right after other events where all TAs are already attending (try to book the same room where the event was - or close by)

# Icon Attributions

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