



# TA Training CoP: Logistics and Admin - Turnover, Scheduling & Funding Pitfalls

Session Workbook

Jan 2025



# Recruiting New TA Training Coordinators

	Grad student coordinators	Faculty coordinators	Staff coordinators
Approaches for recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements at meetings/seminars</li> <li>• Faculty recommendations (i.e. “do you have a student looking to contribute to this or who would be a good fit)</li> <li>• Personal networks</li> <li>• Specifically recruiting returning TAs who exceeded expectations previously/who are dependable</li> <li>• 🍷 Lure them in with donuts and coffee at an event (before making the suggestion/putting out the call)</li> <li>• Post as a hiring position</li> <li>• Calls at TA training, grad student colloquia/events</li> </ul>	<p>Ask someone specific who has experience in training/working with TAs</p> <p>Similar to the point above, reach out to teaching stream faculty who works closely with TAs every semester. They usually have lots of comments/feedback on how to improve TA training. ^and they may be personally motivated as it could contribute to educational leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider staff positions that are directly related to working with TAs</li> <li>• A dedicated responsibility, not as an aside</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

## Advantages and disadvantages of grad student, faculty, staff coordinators

	Grad student coordinators	Faculty coordinators	Staff coordinators
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They know the needs of the TAs</li> <li>• Can share their experiences/what worked for them in the role</li> <li>• Potential for closer feedback/closer relationship with TAs</li> <li>• More in touch with TA experiences first hand as they happen now versus 10+ years ago</li> <li>• Likely have a good working understanding of union rights (not always)</li> <li>• 🍷 Opportunities for TAs to gain experience as facilitators/coordinators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ CV, letter of reference, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They know the needs of the faculty/staff working with TAs</li> <li>• Can leverage institutional knowledge to mold training to departmental needs/culture</li> <li>• 🍷 Greater access to University resources to make changes/deploy materials</li> <li>• Can provide consistent support or a fresh pair of eyes (if not rotational or if rotational)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They know the needs of the faculty/staff working with TAs</li> <li>• Consistent support (not rotational)</li> <li>• Greater access to University resources to make changes/deploy materials</li> <li>• 🍷 Has access to historic lists, materials, etc to maintain continuity and records</li> </ul>
disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited experience</li> <li>• Conflict of interest with colleagues (perceived or actual)</li> <li>• Requires training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Union rights, facilitation, course/task-specific training, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pressure from faculty for certain objectives?</li> <li>• Less access to University resources (ie. internal webpage modification)</li> <li>• Workload concerns</li> <li>• Lack of faculty/staff network/limited resources to connect with faculty/staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 🍷 Might not understand TA union rights as well as they could</li> <li>• Requires training</li> <li>• They might not prioritize TA training work over their teaching/ research</li> <li>• Power dynamics could be difficult if a situation arises between coordinator and TA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Concerns re: perceived or actual Col</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Workload concerns</li> <li>• Could be limited experience</li> <li>• This role could rotate every couple years and have a loss of continuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 🍷 Workload if not dedicated role</li> <li>• Requires training</li> <li>• Might not fully know the needs of the TAs</li> <li>• Power dynamics could be difficult if a situation arises between coordinator and TA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Concerns re: perceived or actual Col</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# TA Training Coordinator Challenges

**Instructions:** Discuss the following questions with your partner:

1. What are things that you had a challenge figuring out/doing?
2. How did you address those

	Challenges and Difficulties	Strategies to Address them
Room 1: Pair 1	Not enough information from previous TA Coordinators to do year 1 report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write-in hours dedicated to file organization &amp; SOPs</li> <li>- Overlap between incoming/outgoing coordinators</li> </ul>
	Less funding than previous years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborations with other units with similar disciplinary and teaching contexts</li> <li>- Prioritize most needed workshop topics based on roles and responsibilities of TAs</li> </ul>
	Lots of turnover for Senior TAs (facilitators). Lack of graduate students in the department/Lack of motivation to recruit student facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan for budget to hire outside facilitators (e.g., CTLT)</li> <li>- Recruitment for new Senior TAs</li> <li>- Training documents from previous Senior TAs</li> <li>- Incentives for facilitators (e.g., letter/certificate, honorarium)</li> </ul>
	Addressing diverse TA needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback surveys from TAs (Sept, Dec, May)</li> <li>- Gathering information from Faculty</li> </ul>
Room 2: Pair 2	People not wanting to be involved in leadership roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Bought out of TAships</li> <li>• Head TA - pool shrinking</li> </ul>	Appeal to those interested in education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentives are good for career and next steps</li> <li>• Draw from outside Faculty/Dept?</li> </ul>
	Financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider alternative funding (See slide #7)</li> <li>• Engage faculty on Educational Leadership track in TA training - They may be able to secure additional funding.</li> <li>• Consult with CTLT and explore options</li> </ul>
	Jumping into the current TA training program - what they have already done, hard to fit in	Lots of chats with previous coordinators Frequent chats within the group Could revamp documentation re: processes, procedures Organized documentation (doesn't always make sense)
	Delineation of roles and MORE PEOPLE	Create job description for each person involved in TA Training. Remember "more people" doesn't necessarily mean a better program. Somethings we need less people who dedicate more time to the program
Room 3: Pair 3	Keeping track of TA assignments, contracts, etc. to best support TAs	(Similar to below) TA "Town Hall"
	Addressing very diverse TA needs with responsibilities	Implementing regular get-togethers/discussion meetings to get an informal sense of where TAs are and what they are up to
	Getting constructive feedback from TAs, taking feedback and translating to concrete strategies (sometimes scope of feedback can be overwhelming or intersects with systemic/institutional situations)	Seeking out input from folks in other areas/faculties/departments—can help think out of the box or get a different perspective.
	No set system/workflow—having to figure a lot of things out ourselves!	Similar to above!



# Checklist for New Coordinators

## Group 1 Context: Overlapping Grad Coordinators

### Instructions:

- Discuss and create a checklist of what is important for new coordinators to know/have access to in each of these situations in the following categories:
  - **Access; Skills; Context; Key contacts; Getting paid**
- You can draw on your previous conversation in creating the checklist.

**Access:** (to materials, info, archives; templates; worksheets etc.); Where to store information - google drive? What format should information be stored in

- Materials in a shared space - transfer documents, historical accounts, training documents, all the TA training knowledge :)
- Knowledge as to access internal information, workflow, complete actionable items
- Access to internal information, like TA lists when appropriate

**Context:** (ie: Your TA Population needs; What has been done to support TAs in the past; Disciplinary teaching context; Buy-in, etc)

- Population needs (more TAs, less TAs)
- History of program, funding, problems
- Observation/shadowing/co-creation to help pass on institutional knowledge
- "Insider" knowledge of previous TA coordinator (esp. Regarding admin, faculty relationships)
- Who are your allies?
- Record of program history

**Communication (with TAs, faculty, etc):**

- Workflow/procedures to get announcements out;
- What are our goals/mission (overlap)? What can we change and what should we keep the same?
- Procedure to make faculty announcements
- List of TAs currently serving in a role

**Skills:** skills needed to do this job

- Time management, able to prioritize and making actional plans rather than dreams
- PATIENCE, self-compassion, leadership
- Communication skills
- Presentation skills, knowledge around teaching and learning relevant to field (ish, and generally) (buildable)

**Key contacts**

- Administrative contacts—back-end support (contracts)
- Union representatives :)
- Department-specific!

**Getting paid**

- Grant renewals and watching funding opportunities and changes
- Logistics of position (STA, GAA?)
- Budgeting hours—who's in charge



# Checklist for New Coordinators

## Group 2 Context: Faculty Overseeing Program

### Instructions:

- Discuss and create a checklist of what is important for new coordinators to know/have access to in each of these situations in the following categories:
  - **Access; Skills; Context; Key contacts; Getting paid**
- You can draw on your previous conversation in creating the checklist.

**Access:** (to materials, info, archives; templates; worksheets etc.); Where to store information - google drive? What format should information be stored in

- Access to student information/TA positions, where they come from (in theory?) -
- Listserv for TAs
- Info hub for TA training (Canvas, a blog) - resource, templates (good for communication between coordinators and TAs)
- MS Teams - archives, sharing materials (back channel communications)
  - What has been done previously

**Skills:** skills needed to do this job

- Facilitation skills - how to effectively training
- Outreach and communication - written, visual - advertising the sessions
- Grant writing - for funding requests
- Time management, organization

**Context:** (ie: Your TA Population needs; What has been done to support TAs in the past; Disciplinary teaching context; Buy-in, etc)

- Previous events and **feedback** from those events
- Needs assessment - what do the TAs in the program NEED to know; what do the faculty/staff/TA coordinators NEED from the TAs
- Current procedures and communications - reflection (we did X, it didn't work, because Y)
- What we proposed in the funding
- What tasks the TAs will be performing to inform what training is needed

**Key contacts:**

- Students - listserv
- University support - CTLT, training support,
- IT people
- Contact with TA coordinators

**Getting paid:** skills needed to do this job

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## Scheduling:

Tips for navigating Scheduling with admin team/TAs and Facilitators	
<p>Tips for navigating Scheduling with <u>admin team</u> (ie: people overseeing TA Training; getting TA list; etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create shared documents to reference (e.g. TA availability, academic schedules)</li> <li>• Have clear roles - responsible for schedule conflict resolution, assigning tasks, etc.</li> <li>• Send calendar invites</li> <li>• Have regular meetings (e.g., once a term, at start of the year)</li> <li>• Communicate priorities clearly so that admin team can best work around other schedules (e.g. beginning of term events, entrance exams, other training or professional development sessions, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p>Tips for navigating Scheduling with <u>Internal/external Facilitators</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out far in advance! &lt;- this</li> <li>• Consider being flexible in the exact date if you are hoping to secure a specific kind of support</li> <li>• Send calendar invites</li> <li>• Have an understanding of what you are needing/ looking for ahead of time when asking for facilitators</li> <li>• Have previous lesson plans/objectives/feedback on hand to be as efficient with timing as possible</li> </ul>
<p>Tips for navigating Scheduling <u>TAs/attendees</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask a general scheduling question in your needs assessment</li> <li>• Schedule far in advance - 3-4 weeks</li> <li>• Consider regularly scheduled events</li> <li>• Ask faculty if there are any big blocks of time that do not work for lots of TAs (e.g., seminars)</li> <li>• Send calendar invites</li> <li>• Send lots of reminders (to encourage RSVP and then to those who RSVPd)</li> <li>• Ask previous attendees for their feedback on the scheduling to try and make better changes for the future</li> <li>• Ask TAs for schedules/preferences to avoid schedule conflicts</li> <li>• If scheduling session during lunch time, provide lunch ;) (but seriously)</li> </ul>



# Funding: pitfalls and how to adjust

## Instructions:

- What are some things that you have tried in your department in order to maintain your TA Training program?

Note: take notes about

- the changes you made to your program;
- How you made those decisions?
- Additional funding/support you have looked into?
- etc

## ROOM 1

- Can the project/work be repurposed into a small TLEF?
- Collaboration with other departments/Faculties due to overlap of TA needs and disciplines (combining pool of TAs and sharing costs)
  - Caveat: number of TAs reporting is needed for grant request (only report TAs from your dept/Fac.)
  - Explain why the collaboration was necessary
  - Indicate why you need to submit separate TA Training applications (and not together with the other unit) and emphasize that your department/faculty specific training is not redundant
- StEAR Fund - <https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/funding-opportunities/strategic-equity-anti-racism-enhancement-fund/> need to make the case that the program is self-sustained - focus on EDIA, anti-racism - applications received 2-3 times per year
- Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP) - funding for Faculty and for students (<https://isp.ubc.ca/isi-fund/>)
- Catering change - more affordable options/reduce
- Consider what you can turn into a resource - ex. Online modules
  - How to ensure they are participating/how to monitor
    - Directly linking in-person activity to online module - use responses/engagement from online module in-person
- Narrow down the scope of the TA training to focus on what is most relevant to the role and responsibilities of your TAs
  - Sacrificing other workshops that would still be valuable
- Consider sending students to CTLT resources in lieu
  - Reduce redundancy
  - HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE ISW!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ask Shaya if you need support in registering in an ISW



## Key recommendations for outgoing Coordinator

- Send emails and introduce the in-coming coordinator to internal and external collaborating partners
- A snapshot of what's coming, and a micro timeline specific to each workshop
- Create a timeline for the position (note: template is available on page 17 of [this document](#))

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