



GUIDING TEACHING ASSISTANTS

York University Teaching Commons
TC 2016©

Debra is a new doctoral student and has some experience as a Teaching Assistant (TA) from her previous institution where she completed both her undergraduate and master's degrees. Her TA experience mainly falls within the category of Marker/Grader. She has received her first TAsnip in a tutorial setting with 19 students in her class. She has no idea how to begin or what she should teach and do with her students.

1. **Set up a meeting between the Course Director (CD) and TA as soon as possible** – This will allow both sides to discuss expectations of the course, and workload requirements. Completing the TA Workload Form will further help to guide this conversation.
2. **Attend TA Orientation and TC workshops** – The Teaching Commons has numerous face to face workshops, courses, and online resources available to TAs in all experiential levels.
3. **Read the TA Start Up Guide** – This guide provides tools that are essential to those new to the role of TAing. This includes suggestions and activities for what to do in your first class, providing feedback, how to encourage student engagement in the classroom, and much more.
4. **Meet each other on a regular basis** – Maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the CD and all TAs involved in teaching the course helps to ensure consistency. This may be of particular importance around the use of rubrics and marking keys, responding to issues and student needs, and questions or concerns from TAs that may arise throughout the course.
5. **Review all assignments, rubrics, and marking keys** – TAs are the conduit between the CD and students in the class. Providing clarity on the assignments and the use of rubrics/marking keys to assess the assignments is a critical component of any teaching work. It requires a great deal of communication around expectations, what constitutes a final grade, and how to provide students with helpful and meaningful feedback.
6. **Provide Support to TAs** – TAs are university teachers AND graduate students. There are supports offered across campus like the Teaching Commons. As university teachers, we need to be mindful that we have numerous competing and conflicting priorities. For TAs, provide support for their efforts in all capacities; funding applications, professional development, etc.
7. **Be Organized** – Lesson planning is key. This will assist in greater consistency and clarity between lecture and tutorials.

If you would like to explore this topic further consider these events at the TC :

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/graduate-students/courses-workshops-and-events/>

Further reading on this topic:

See [The TA Start Up Guide](#), [Resources for New TAs Conducting Tutorials and Laboratories](#), [the International Teaching Assistant Handbook](#) and the [TA Feedback Guide](#)

Resources on this topic:

Resources for TAs, see: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources-2/resources-for-tas-2/>