

Working with a Teaching Assistant

Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT) are appointments for graduate students interested in working as a teaching assistant and hired for a few hours per week throughout a semester to support the instructor of a course with instructional responsibilities. There is a [collective bargaining agreement](#) between the Board of Governors of the University of Calgary and the Graduate Students' Association indicates these appointments "may include teaching or instructional service, lecturing assistance, laboratory supervision, being available for office hours, grading assignments, providing tutorial direction and assisting in the preparation of demonstration and instructional aids" (p. 7). It is important to note GATs are not responsible for assigning final grades.

Support for Teaching Assistants

The Office of Teaching and Learning in the Werklund School of Education provides training and development to teaching assistants through the Teaching Assistant Preparation Program (TAPP). The program involves a series of sessions relevant to teaching assistants in the field of education. The Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning provides training across faculties, and offers a [Teaching Assistant Orientation](#), a self-paced online module and recommended for all teaching assistants.

Instructor – Teaching Assistant Relationship

The relationship between the instructor and teaching assistant are key to success and can begin with establishing a clear work plan, including a schedule with teaching assistant responsibilities and regular check-ins with the instructor.

Suggested Communications:

Consider the following instructor-teaching assistant communications at the start of the GAT appointment:

- review the [collective bargaining agreement](#)
- identify tasks you would like the TA to assist you with during course
- specify the number of hours per week including preparation time
- specify the amount of time required for check-in meetings with the instructor and/or other teaching teams, or TAs to coordinate work
- check that the TA has the resources needed to do their work
- discuss responsibilities and a schedule for check-ins with the instructor
- discuss how the instructor will support the TA and provide feedback
- recommend the [Teaching Assistant Orientation](#) self-paced module from the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning with the teaching assistant
- recommend the Teaching Assistant Preparation Program (TAPP)



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Resources from the University of Calgary

- [Graduate Teaching Assistant Guide to Teaching and Learning Continuity](#)
- [Online Teaching Assistant Orientation from the Taylor Institute](#)
- [Graduate Student Guide for Teaching Development](#)
- [Graduate Student Certificate in University Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Starting out as a teaching assistant: What I wish I knew](#)

Additional Resources from Other Institutions:

- [Professor and Teaching Assistant: Building a Good Relationship](#) (University of Ottawa)
- [Being a TA in Online Courses](#) (University of Waterloo)
- [Teaching Assistant Checklist: Questions to Ask](#) (University of Waterloo)
- [Supervisors of Teaching Assistants](#) (Vanderbilt University Centre for Teaching)

If you have further inquiries, contact:

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