

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Teaching Assistants  
All Faculties

FROM: Clarence Woudsma and Justin Wan  
Interim Co-associate Vice Presidents - Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

DATE: May 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Teaching Assistants  
Re: Harassment and Discrimination  
Responding to an Initial Complaint

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Dear Colleagues:

Teaching Assistants (TAs) play incredibly important roles in delivering the academic mission of the University. For a variety of reasons, students may feel more comfortable communicating with a Teaching Assistant than other members of the University community.

The attached guidelines, prepared by the Conflict Management Office (CMO), are to assist in the rare, but difficult cases, when a TA is presented with an initial human rights complaint. Since these issues can be complex and serious, the guidelines focus on that initial meeting where TAs are asked to respond *on their own* to the student bringing a concern.

After the initial encounter, TAs are directed to consult with their course instructor or department chair. In addition, a number of other resources are available on campus (CMO, Counseling Services, Health Services, and Special Constable Service).

I urge all of you to take a moment to review these guidelines. In your role as TA, you are in a very visible and accessible position and could be called upon for assistance. Where an initial complaint is handled well, with sensitivity and understanding, the potential for a successful resolution increases dramatically.

Please contact Jeremy de Boer at CMO, [jdeboer@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jdeboer@uwaterloo.ca), with any questions regarding these guidelines.