

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Teaching Assistants  
All Faculties

FROM: Jeff Casello  
Associate Vice President - Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

DATE: January 1, 2023

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 and Human Rights Office (CMAHRO), 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 professors or department chair. In addition, a number of other resources are available on campus (CMAHRO, 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 CMAHRO, [jdeboer@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jdeboer@uwaterloo.ca), with any questions regarding these guidelines.