Math Grad TA Training

9/6/18

Thursday, September 6, 2018; 4:30PM-8PM
Who are we?

Francis Poulin - Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Christiane Lemieux - Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
Paul Kates - CTE Faculty Liaison for Mathematics
Dan Wolczuk - Lecturer in the Dean of Mathematics
Carmen Bruni - Lecturer in the David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science
Jordan Hamilton - Director of the Tutorial Centre
Caelan Wang - Ph.D. Candidate in Combinatorics and Optimization
Agenda

- Math Grad TA Workshop - Part 1 - Introduction
- Math Grad TA Workshop - Part 2 – Marking skills
- Break
- Panel Discussion
Required Training Credit and Bonus Credit

- Mandatory - Mathematics Graduate Orientation
- Mandatory - CMAHRO TA Responsibilities: Harassment and Discrimination (Online)
- Mandatory - Mathematics TA Training
- Bonus CTE credit!

You get a credit for completing this workshop with the Math Faculty AND you get a credit towards the Fundamentals of University Teaching with the Centre of Teaching Excellence
Learning Objectives

By the end of the online training and the first half of this workshop, you should be able to:

- List general responsibilities of TAs and expectations
- Recognize and report breaches in academic integrity
- Summarize proctoring expectations and duties
- Identify traits that make a strong TA
- Respond to harassment and discrimination (+ online)
- Respond to student behaviours

NOTE: this workshop will introduce you to the fundamentals of TAing in Math (Math Courses and department specific), but expectations and responsibilities will differ between instructors, courses, units, etc.
Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies

Francis Poulin

- The Math Undergraduate Office relies heavily on our Graduate students to serve as TAs
- Winter 2017 – Math has 6645 undergraduates with 1800 new undergraduates coming this Fall
- The Math Undergraduate Studies has a large set of core and service courses where TAs are assigned by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies (not your home department)

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies is responsible for assigning 189 graduate TAs to 33 core and service courses. They spend nearly $750,000.
Why TA?

A required part of many graduate students funding (i.e. its your job)

Your program requires you do well in all areas of your program (including TA'ing)

Marking and Tutoring helps you learn how to present ideas clearly

Students need feedback to learn Math and how to express themselves

Develop interdisciplinary skills (with students, instructors, other TAs, etc.)

Learn group skills by working in a team
TA Assignments and first steps

- Graduate TA’s are assigned duties as a Marker in first year
- Experienced TA’s can be assigned tutorials
- Some PhD students are assigned as instructors
- Most students are assigned to either a faculty course (e.g., MATH###) or a course from their respective units (e.g., CO###, AM###, PM###, CM###, etc.)

- Contact/meet with your course coordinator/instructor right away

- Make sure you understand the expectations of you (ask questions)
TA Expectations and Responsibilities

- Breakdown of hours
  - One TA unit = ~ 5 hours/week over 16 weeks = 80 hours
  - Two TA unit = ~10 hours/week over 16 weeks = 160 hours
  - Hours may not be evenly distributed throughout the term
- Expect to be available from the first day of class until grades have been submitted
  - Example, last day of exams is Dec. 21 so you might have to mark on Dec. 22 or 23
- Attend regular marking meetings (depends on course)
- Time needed to learn course material is not included in these hours, unless otherwise stated by your instructor
- If you cannot fulfill your duties (e.g., illness, attending a conference, etc.), please contact the course coordinator/instructor
Pool Proctoring

- Not all TA’s will have to do this but all get credit for 3.5 hr
- This leaves 76.5 hr per TA unit per semester
- Assigned by Mathematics Undergraduate Office (MUO)
- Must respond soon after contacted
- If you cannot make it then please find someone to fill your role
- You will be given information where to go and when
- Please make sure to follow instructions carefully
- Instructor will give you information on what is expected of you
- If find evidence of cheating, contact an instructor asap
TA duties

Some responsibilities can consist of:

- Marking
- Proctoring
- Office hours
- Tutorials
- Recording grades
- Monitor discussion boards
- Etc (be sure to ask your instructor)

Where do we learn to do all of this?
TA Evaluations

- Every grad TA will be evaluated at the end of each course
- This information will be shared with the units involved
- Goal is to give you constructive feedback
- The categories include
  - Overall
  - Quality of Work
  - Timeliness
  - Communication
- Please ask questions throughout the semester
Policy 30 - Employment of Graduate Student Teaching Assistants

• Currently being reviewed
• Policy itself does not say much but it connects to other useful documents
• Namely: Grad Calendar section on “Guidelines on graduate student support”:
  o The student must also satisfactorily perform the particular duties required for the support. Performance is assessed by the instructor, department chair or graduate officer for teaching assistants.
  o A student whose performance as an RA/TA is judged to be unsatisfactory will normally receive written warning and suggestions for improvement.
  o If the student's performance does not improve sufficiently within a reasonable time period, financial support may be reduced or discontinued. Written warning and an opportunity for improvement need not be given in cases of serious misconduct or serious neglect of duties.
Dispute resolution and appeals

• Relationship between TA and instructor is based on collegiality and mutual respect.

• As it is in the best interests of all parties to address concerns informally and in a timely manner, a TA is encouraged to communicate with his/her instructor when a question arises about a decision or action affecting him/her.

• If this doesn’t work, TA should reach out to Grad Officer, who may be able to informally resolve the issue.

• If not, Challenge can be filed with Associate VP Grad Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (Jeff Casello), as per Policy 70.
Privacy Policy

- The University of Waterloo manages all information (including personal information) in compliance with:
  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
  - University policies (e.g., Policy 46 – Information management)
  - University guidelines and procedures

- The University of Waterloo affirms:
  - the principle of freedom of information; and
  - is committed to the protection of the privacy of those who work and study at the university.
Privacy Office

- Provides privacy leadership, guidance, and advice
- Develops and facilitates implementation of privacy policies & procedures

Responds to:
- information access requests
- privacy breaches
- questions and concerns
privacy-related questions?

**contact:**
1. your supervisor/manager
2. privacy officer  – Kathy Winter X. 36101
- You are now an employee of the University
- You will now have access to sensitive student information - abide by the Golden Rule
- Fully understand your role
  - know your job description and operate within it!
  - discuss this with your supervisor/manager
- Protect information in accordance with the law and university rules (policies/guidelines)
- **Access:** Limit your access to information on a strictly necessary, need to know basis.

- **Use:** Use information properly. That is, only for the purpose for which it was obtained. Do not use information obtained outside of work. **Refrain from being curious as this is a breach!!**

- **Disclose:** Share information on a strictly necessary, need to know basis only to a person who is authorized to have the information (parents are generally not authorized to have information unless consented to by the child or in an emergency). When in doubt—check it out (ask your supervisor)

- **Audit Capabilities:** Understand that electronic systems make a record of what information you have looked at.
Physical
- Locked drawers, cabinets, doors
- “clean desk”, shredder
- Handle confidential material confidentially

Administrative
- Legislation, policy, procedures
- Good business practices (verify IDs)
- Training

Technical
- Secure passwords, VPN, updates, anti-virus
- Encryption, encrypted portable devices
Also, be mindful that:
- Materials taken from the photocopier are yours and not someone else’s
- Sensitive material is securely disposed of and not placed in a recycle bin or trash can
- Do not create or make unnecessary copies of student information

Your own account
- Do not download or store any sensitive information in a non-work account or on a non-work device
- Ensure that you have no university records in your possession at the conclusion of your work placement
Email:

- Verify the e-mail address of recipients before sending messages
- Use blind copy (BCC) when emailing more than one person
- Avoid using “reply to all”
- Ensure correct attachments!!
- Don’t forward lengthy email chains
- Include confidentiality warning with directions for returning email sent in error
Email:

- Correspond to students using their UWaterloo account
- Verify identity of the email author before responding to their requests for information. Is the individual really who they say they are?
- Watch out for spam/phishing attempts
- Recognize that any email could be released in an access to information request
What is a Privacy Breach?:

- Loss
- Unauthorized access
- Unauthorized disclosure
- Whether these are unintentional or intentional
In case of a privacy breach

Immediately contact:
1. your supervisor/manager
2. privacy officer – Kathy Winter X. 36101
CMAHRO TA Harassment and Discrimination Online Module*

Harassment refers to unwanted comments or conduct that negatively affects the work environment:

- Unnecessary touching
- Leering or suggestive remarks
- Reprisal for rejection of sexual advances
- Explicit pin-ups and graffiti
- Degrading jokes and comments
What is LEARN?

- LEARN is the University of Waterloo’s learning management system. Students who take fully online and face-to-face courses access their course materials through LEARN.
- How and when do I get access to LEARN? Log in using your WatIAM credentials. It may take a few days to add your WatIAM account to the LEARN system and then to add you to the course itself.

- Difficulties Logging into LEARN
  Contact your instructor first to confirm whether the request has been sent. Otherwise, contact the LEARN Support Team (learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca) or Paul Kates (pkates@uwaterloo.ca).
Proctor Training

- Before midterm/examinations
  - Communicate with the instructor: often they would have their own preferences and specific instructions*.
  - Be there at least 30mins before the start of the exam
  - Count papers
  - Distribute papers, etc.

- During midterm/examinations
  - Count students
  - Match front page signature
  - Check Watcards/collect signatures*
  - Constantly move around
  - Do not allow students in after the first 30 or 60min*
  - Announce that there are 10min remaining

- After midterm/examinations
  - Collect and count papers
**Proctor Training Manual**

- Cheating at a Midterm/Exam
  - Never accuse students
  - Never touch students
  - Inform instructor ASAP
  - Take evidence (e.g., midterm/exam)
  - Give fresh exam
  - Record observations

Examination Procedures Manual for Academic Proctors

March 2017
Office of the Registrar

University of Waterloo
What to do if students are caught cheating and the chain of command

- Please review Policy 71 - Student Discipline
- Assignment:
  - Collect the evidence
  - Inform your instructor/Coordinator

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to University of Waterloo (University or UW) students, including individuals who were students at the time of the event(s) upon which a disciplinary proceeding is based.

A discipline decision of an academic support unit (e.g. athletics, library, parking, on-campus pubs and student residences) is handled under the unit’s internal mechanism and not under this policy unless the matter is referred to an associate dean.

Resources to advise students include the Conflict Management and Human Rights Office, Student Resource Centre, Secretariat and faculty undergraduate and graduate offices. Resources to assist students include Counseling Services, Health Services, and Accessibility Services.

Authority to deal with matters under this policy rests with the undergraduate and graduate associate deans. In cases where criminal proceedings have been initiated against a student, the authority usually vested in an associate dean rests with the vice-president, academic & provost, who will keep the associate dean of the student’s home faculty informed. A decision of the vice-president, academic & provost is appealable to the University Committee on Student Appeals but remains in effect during the appeal process.
What Makes a Great TA? What Makes a Bad TA?

Some of our ideas:

• Caring (realistically everything else is a subset of this)
• Responsible
• Diligent/punctual
• Inquisitive (Don’t just accept the status quo)
• Have effective communication
• Confidence
The Socratic Method

Main idea: Question what you know; don’t just preach.

Get students to think about what they did wrong and force them to communicate

Ask probing questions. Don’t bluntly give answers.

(See also 3:20 below after repeat)

https://bookwalk.app.box.com/s/nv2p0f8ut7romri23w3m

http://collegemathvideocases.org/cases/case.php?VCID=5
Socratic Method

Questions not directions

Hints not answers

Constructive and non-constructive errors

Harmful feedback
Responding to Disruptive or Emotionally Charged Students

In general:
- Be calm and courteous
  - Lose your temper = Lose your credibility
- Give students the benefit of doubt
- Focus on the behaviour, not the student
- Don’t take disruptions personally
- Talk to students one-on-one/email

Tips:
- Safety first!
- Recommend Campus Services
  - Counselling, Health Services, Student Success Office, AccessAbility Services, **Campus Police (ext 22222)**
- Calm students down - ask them to take a seat or you can stand and have water/tissues handy
- Ask to understand the student (e.g., why do you need this mark?)