

# Working with TAs

The following are some tips for working successfully with Teaching Assistants (TAs).

## Important Facts

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- Teaching assistantships are assigned to students as a means of providing monetary support; there is no “application” process.
- TAs are graduate students whose first priority is their graduate work.
- A single TA unit is an average 5 hours of work per week for the term (16 weeks), giving a total of 80 hours. TAs are also members of the Math Faculty proctoring pool and may be selected to proctor for other courses. Therefore you should not assign more than 73 hours per TA.
- Graduate students are often enrolled in their own courses with lectures, tests and assignment deadlines.
- Keep in mind that some graduate students have families.

## Tips for working with TAs

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- Get to know your TAs by name.
- Indicate to the TAs the importance of their role in conducting a course successfully.
- Communicate all expectations with regards to deadlines and responsibilities clearly and regularly and preferably in writing. Written instructions may lead to fewer misunderstandings.
- At the beginning of the term provide a schedule that indicates, at least approximately, how the 73 hours of work will be spread over the term. Be sure to factor in preparation time for responsibilities such as conducting tutorials. See, for example, [https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-student-association/sites/ca.graduate-student-association/files/uploads/files/ta-time-allocation-form\\_1.pdf](https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-student-association/sites/ca.graduate-student-association/files/uploads/files/ta-time-allocation-form_1.pdf)
- Set consistent and reasonable deadlines for marking.
- Send email reminders about meetings, proctoring or marking close to the date of the event.
- Keep notes of work done by the TAs so that you can complete the TA evaluation form for the TAs at the end of the term.
- Providing the TAs with a week-by-week schedule of topics that are covered in the course will help them answer student questions more effectively.
- Provide the TAs with assignments in advance so they can prepare for office hours.
- Encourage TAs to communicate any problems with the marking scheme to you as soon as possible so that any clarifications can be passed on to everyone. In particular, encourage TAs to ask about marking schemes for solutions which differ from those provided by the instructor.
- Solicit individual feedback from TA's especially those who might not feel comfortable asking questions.