

SAS TA TRAINING WORKSHOP

Sep 15, 2026

Presented by TA Program

sas-ta-program@uwaterloo.ca

FACILITATOR INTRODUCTIONS

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INTRODUCTIONS

In your table groups, introduce yourself.

What program are you in?

Where were you before you started your graduate studies?

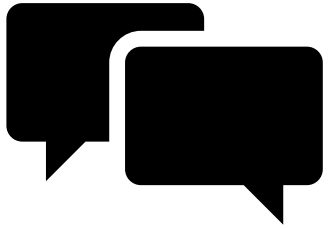
How do you feel about being a Teaching Assistant (TA)?

THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR TA

Students need you to support their learning.
Instructors need you to support their teaching.

YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

What we value in our TAs



Responsive and communicative

Check your email and Teams message daily. Stay in communication with instructors.



Reliable and timely

Show up for all duties on time and complete all tasks before the deadline.



Prepared and knowledgeable

Keep up to date with course material.

Communication is Key!

- It is crucial for you to stay in touch with your assigned instructional team (other TAs, instructor, and potential ISC).
- This communication may be done via email, Teams messages, etc.
 - If you are unclear about how communication will be handled for a particular course, just ask!
- Ask questions

SAS TA Program

- Teaching Assistant (TA) Program encompasses training and development for TAs assigned to SAS courses.
- TA Program members include:
 - Chelsea Uggenti (Director), Jenny Tieu (Interim Director)
 - Reza Ramezan, Funmi Adeku, Pam Bandara (Committee Members)
- Currently offering the **Foundations for University Teaching in Statistics and Actuarial Science** training certificate program
 - Jointly supported by UW's Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the SAS Department



Breakdown of the Training Certificate Program

Levels	Durations (approx.)	Offerings	Essentials	Recommendations (not required)
1. Fundamentals	4 hours	Fall	- Faculty of Mathematics Teaching Assistant Training Course✓ SAS TA Training Workshop*✓	
2. Interactions	2 hours	Fall	SAS TA Training Workshop*✓	CTE 1203: Building Rapport with Students
3. Facilitation	5 hours	Every term	- CTE 1106: Giving and Receiving Feedback - CTE 1111: Teaching STEM Tutorials SAS Practicum: Level 3	- CTE 1234: Teaching with Confidence - CTE 1226: Classroom Delivery Skills
4. Creation	5 hours	Every term	- CTE 1202: Effective Lesson Plans SAS Practicum: Level 4	- CTE 1260: Interactive Lessons - CTE 1190: Effective Questions Strategies

*SAS TA Training Workshop is one in-person session

Upon completion of the program, you receive a:

- **Certificate of Completion** issued jointly by the SAS Department and CTE, and
- **Letter of Experience** outlining the details of your experiences

Completion of the program is taken into account when reviewing applicants for sessional teaching positions in undergraduate SAS courses



Points of Contact

TA Program Members

Jenny Tieu
Reza Ramezan
Funmi Adeku
Pam Bandara



Contact for training and general TA support.

Instructional Support Coordinators

Funmi Adeku
Pam Bandara
Jenny Tieu



Contact for course-specific support.

Course Instructors

Faculty members



Contact for your TA duties.

Graduate Team

Steve Drekić
Associate Chair of Graduate Studies

Heather McLaughlin
Graduate Studies Manager

Mary Lou Dufton
Administrative Coordinator of Graduate Studies



Contact for graduate information.

SAS Instructional Support Coordinators (ISCs)

ISCs support instructors and teaching assistants.

You may be a TA in a course that has ISC support. If not, you can still contact an ISC for guidance.

Talk to an ISC when you:

- Want training for a platform
- Have questions about your workload or tasks
- Want advice and support to resolve challenges

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Agenda

SESSION
[5:30 to 6:45]

Introductions
Expectations
Marking

DINNER + PANEL
[6:45 to 7:15]

Q&A with Experienced TAs

SESSION
[7:15 to 8:30]

Proctoring
Office Hours
Online Forums
Tutorials
Closing

Throughout the session, write down questions and/or concerns that you have about TAing.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Heather McLaughlin, Graduate Studies Manager

Assignment of Duties Form

- You will receive an Assignment of Duties form for every course you are assigned to. As per the union agreement, this form should be provided to you within 5 days of the start of the appointment. As this is a new process, it may be late this term.
- It will outline assigned tasks and associated time allocations.
- You are required to review the AOD to understand the expectations for the course.
- TAs may request a meeting with their employment supervisor to discuss any reasonable concerns related to the expectations in the AOD form and are entitled to have a union representative present in this meeting. Prior to requesting a formal meeting, we recommend communicating with the instructor/ISC to see if the concerns can be addressed informally.

Availabilities and Workload

- Employees must reside in Ontario for the duration of their appointment and can be assigned in-person duties at any time. Failure to show up for in-person duties is grounds for disciplinary action.
- Remote work from outside Ontario is not permitted. At the end of the term, TAs may not leave campus/Ontario until the instructor/ISC confirms that all duties have been completed.
- SAS offers 0.5 unit appointments totaling 80 hours of work. Students may have 1 or 2 guaranteed appointments per term, as specified on their offer letter/revised notice.
- Workload varies week-by-week but expect to spend about 5 hours per week per TA appointment.
- 3.5 hours are reserved for pool proctor duties, so the maximum number of hours available to each course is 76.5 hours.



Employment Supervision

- There are two different types of supervisors with respect to TA duties
 - Functional supervisor: the instructor of the course and/or ISC. Provides day-to-day direction and support for assigned tasks. Cannot approve absences, discipline, or terminate the appointment. Can have performance coaching conversations.
 - Employment supervisor: Grad Manager and/or Grad Chair. Approves and monitors absences, addresses performance issues, issues discipline, hires/terminates appointments.
- Day-to-day questions about assigned duties or the course should be directed to the functional supervisor. HR questions (leaves, concerns about workloads or course assignments etc.) should be directed to the employment supervisor.
- Concerns or issues with the collective agreement rules should be directed the union. <https://cupe5524.ca/>

Absence from TA Duties

- For each 0.5 unit appointment, TAs are entitled to the following paid leaves:
 - 3 hours sick leave
 - 3 hours bereavement leave (death of immediate family member)
 - Jury/witness duty (documentation required)
- To request approval for an absence permitted under the union agreement, complete this form: [TA Absence Request form](#). You will receive an email confirming the approval.
- Discuss your approved absence with the instructor/ISC. You are not required to make up the hours for the absences listed above. If you exceed the allowed absence limits, your pay will be deducted.

Absences for Conference Travel

- Leave may be approved up to one (1) week for conferences/professional development.
- No loss of pay if the missed hours of work can be rescheduled, subject to employment and functional supervisor approval; there is no automatic entitlement for employees to be able to reschedule.
- To request approved conference leave, you must complete both the [SAS Conference Travel Preapproval Form](#) and the [TA Absence Request form](#)



Termination of Employment

- TAs may voluntarily terminate their employment at any time. Contact SAS Grad Manager to do so.
- Enrollment as a University of Waterloo graduate student is a condition of employment for GTA and GRA positions. If an employee loses their graduate student status during the appointment period, including through graduation, withdrawal, or expulsion, their appointment must end on the date their graduate student status ceases



Pool Proctoring

- Run by the Mathematics Undergraduate Office (MUO).
- Every TA is entered into this pool and can be randomly selected to proctor courses within the Faculty of Mathematics which they are not involved in (ex. courses in AMATH, PMATH, CS, etc.).
- 3.5 hours of your 80-hour contract are pre-allocated to pool proctoring.
- If you are contacted by MUO for pool proctoring, you **must** respond within one business day. You **must** attend or let them know if you have an academic reason why you cannot proctor.



Duties

Duties are specified by instructor and can change over the course of the term

- Marking
- Proctoring
- Office hours
- Online discussion board monitoring
- Tutorials
- Any additional jobs specified by the instructor (e.g. proofread assessments, creating solution sets, creating assessment questions, etc.)

Platforms

**WATERLOO
LEARN**

LEARN

Go here to view course material

Learning management system with:

- Course content (course outline, announcements, assignments, notes, etc.)
- Student list
- Gradebook

 **crowdmark**

Crowdmark

Go here to grade work

Online marking system for assignments, quizzes, tests, and exams.

piazza

Piazza

Go here to answer forum questions

Online question-and-answer discussion forum where students post questions.

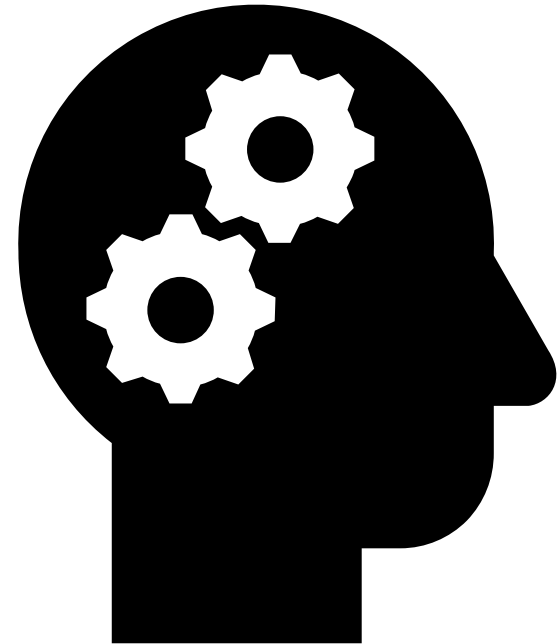
Your instructor may use other platforms. You can contact an ISC for in-depth training.

MARKING

Reflection

Think back to your personal experiences:

- What is the most useful feedback on an assignment you've received?
- What made it useful?



Marking Process

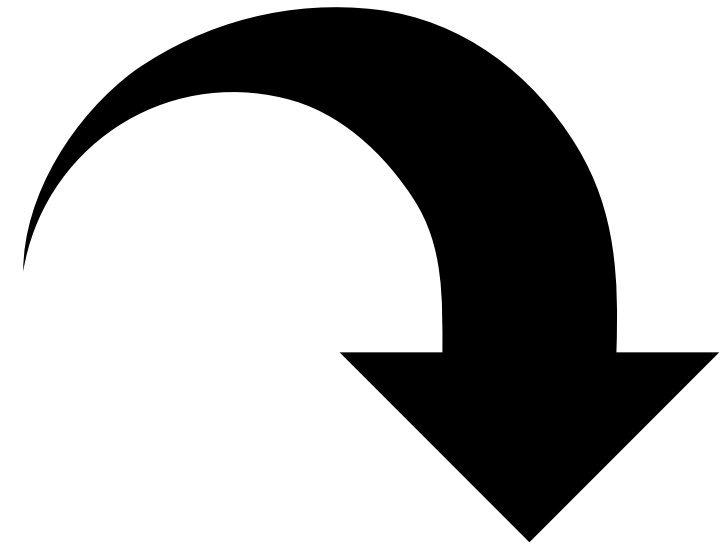
- The instructor or ISC will share marking instructions (solutions, marking scheme, important dates, etc.).
- Mark. Be accurate, consistent, and timely. Provide constructive comments.
- Report common mistakes or issues to the instructor.
- Marking is usually done online through Crowdmark, but you may be required to mark on another platform or by physical pen-and-paper.
- Note: Final exam marking typically has a short turnaround time – be prepared!

Marking Tip: Understand marking instructions

- Carefully read marking instructions.
- Look through a few submissions to anticipate types of mark deductions.
- If needed, clarify marking scheme with the instructor (e.g. alternative solutions) or report any errors.
- If you are marking the same question as other TAs, maintain communication so that grading is consistent (e.g. create a Teams group chat, view their graded evaluations and comments).

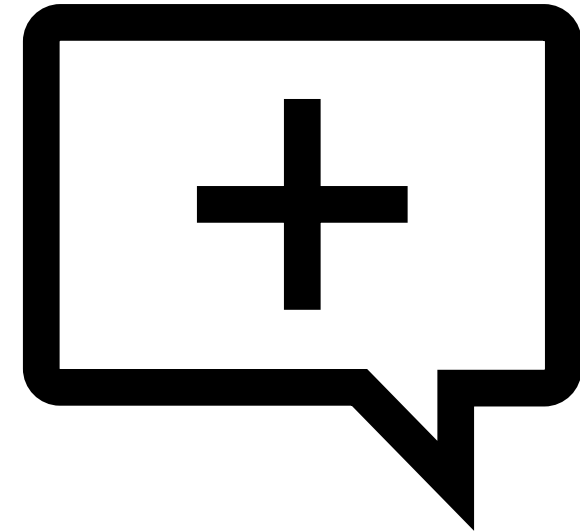
Marking Tip: Carry forward errors

- If a student made an error in one part that is used for a following part, do not deduct extra marks in those following parts.
 - This can also occur within a single question part (e.g. constructing a CI with an incorrect estimate).
- As long as the answer follows the correct process and is correct based on the values from the prior parts, then full marks should be provided.



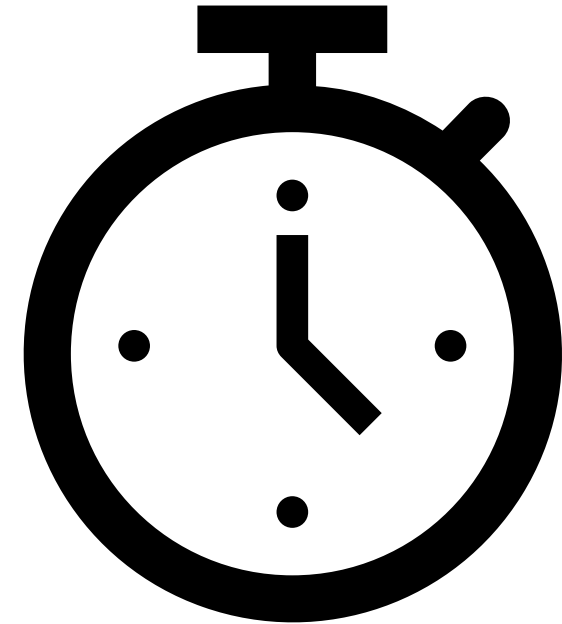
Marking Tip: Descriptive feedback and comments

- The most important part of marking is to try and help the students improve. Leave comments that help students correct the mistake.
- Comments should clearly:
 - state where the student made the error,
 - state what that error was,
 - and assign an appropriate mark deduction.



Marking Tip: Time management

- Do not leave marking to the last minute.
 - Leave enough time to be able to ask the instructor any clarifying questions.
 - Rushing can result in poor marking.
- Grade only one question or topic at a time so you can stay focused.
- Take breaks when marking!



Marking Features on Crowdmark

Comment library

Reuse comments from your comment library to maintain marking consistency.

Click and drag comments from your comment library to speed up marking.

Crowdmark supports LaTeX so mathematical notation can be used in comments.

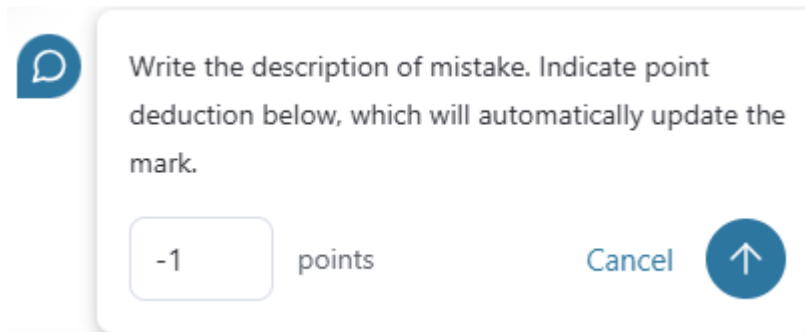
- 1 A) You should compute interest rate for each year and use...
- 0.5 A) calculation error in solving for $A(0)$
- 1 B) i. You should set up $1 + 3i = (1.02)(1.045)(1.07)$
- ⌵ B) i. OK - carry forward error of accumulation factor from A)
- 1 B) ii. did not solve for $d^{(2)}$
- 0.5 B) ii. calculation error in solving for $d^{(2)}$
- ⌵ B) ii. OK - carry forward error of principal from part A)

Automatic grade calculation

Do not manually enter a grade. Use point deductions in comments so the grade for the question is automatically calculated.

If a student should receive full marks for the question, add a comment that says "Good!" and assigns the full marks.

***Warning:** Do not combine mark deduction comments with mark addition comments for the same question.



Write the description of mistake. Indicate point deduction below, which will automatically update the mark.

-1 points

Cancel

↑

Tags

Tags are only viewable by the grading team (not visible to students). Use tags to identify and categorize submissions, such as "possible cheating" or "review grading".



MARKING ACTIVITY

How would you mark the following?

Read the question, solution and/or marking scheme. Then complete the corresponding activity.

Academic Offences while Marking

- As the TA, you must keep solutions **confidential**.
- Examples of student academic offences include plagiarism or excessive collaboration.
- If you suspect an academic offence, collect the evidence and inform the instructor or ISC.
- Note that it is not your responsibility to discipline or penalize the student for their academic offence. Leave that to the instructor or the ISC. Your sole responsibility is to identify, record and report the offence.

Marking Scenario: What would you do?

An instructor asked you to create the solutions and marking scheme for an assignment. Though you do not have previous experience in this task, you tried your best to create them on your own.

Then, you graded all 80 assignments using your marking scheme. After the instructor reviewed your grading, they tell you that your marking scheme was improper. As a result, you must revise your marking scheme and grade all 80 assignments again.

How could this situation have been avoided?

Marking Scenario Discussion

Start tasks early so there is enough time to complete the job satisfactorily. Mark a few assignments first and then ask the instructor for feedback.

If you are ever unsure how to perform a task, reach out to the instructor or ISC for guidance.

Warning: If you do an unsatisfactory job, then you can be asked to redo your work.

Creating Marking Schemes

Instructors usually provide solutions and marking schemes but may decide it is your duty to create them.

- Break the solution into essential steps
- Allocate marks for each step
- Consider alternate solutions
- Apply your marking scheme to a few submissions and assess whether your marking scheme is fair
- When you are new to this task, you should ask the instructor to review your solutions and marking schemes before grading all assignments

DINNER + PANEL

Brief break to get pizza. Return in 10 minutes.

Q&A WITH EXPERIENCED TAS

Victor Malinowski, PhD Statistics (Biostatistics)

Madison Cranstone, PhD Statistics (Biostatistics)

PROCTORING

Proctoring Process

- The instructor or ISC will email you proctoring instructions.
- Meet the instructor or ISC at the specified location and time.
- Distribute tests according to the seating plan.
- Proctor. **Circulate**, complete attendance, look for academic offences, and help students.
- Do not be on your cellphone when proctoring!
- Switching proctoring, if needed, must be done with a TA from the same course.

Proctoring Scenario: What would you do?

You are proctoring a test in a room with three other TAs. The instructor is in a different classroom.

You notice that a student has glanced over at their neighbour's test paper a few times and you suspect that they are copying from their test. How should you handle the situation?

Proctoring Scenario Discussion

Warning: When proctoring, you may be in a room without the instructor. Be sure to discuss with the instructor how you can contact them during the test (where the instructor will be, will they be accessible by Teams or phone, etc.)

Stay alert and circulate the room.

Academic integrity is important. Get a second witness when possible and do not reprimand the situation. It is your duty to report the situation to the instructor. If you cannot get in contact with the instructor, then you could ask the student to move to a different seat and give them a blank test.

Academic Offences while Proctoring

- As the TA, you must keep tests and solutions **confidential**.
- Examples of student academic offences include use of unauthorized aids, impersonation, and copying from another student.
- Never accuse or touch the student. Get a second witness (TA or instructor).
- If the instructor is present, notify them and let them handle the situation.
- If the instructor is not present and cannot be contacted, then:
 - If you suspect a student is copying from another student, move them to a different seat which could be more easily monitored. Take away their test and give them a blank test, instructing them to work on the questions they have yet to answer.
- Note that it is not your responsibility to discipline or penalize the student for their academic offence. Leave that to the instructor or the ISC. Your sole responsibility is to identify, record and report the offence.



PROCTORING ACTIVITY

In your table groups, discuss how would you handle the provided proctoring scenarios.

Proctoring Activity Scenarios

Scenario 1: A student has a question.

Scenario 2: A student needs to go to the bathroom.

Scenario 3: A student is in distress (e.g., crying, panicking)

Scenario 4: A fire alarm in the building starts to ring.

Proctoring Activity Scenarios

When you are unsure what to do, follow the direction of the instructor.

Student has a question

Be careful not to give out too much information. You can clarify the wording of a question but should not discuss the answer. If you are unsure how to answer, ask the instructor.

Student is in distress

Notify the instructor. You can ask the student if they would like to have a moment outside the test room to collect themselves. You can escort them to a water fountain for a drink.

Student needs to go to washroom

Ask the student to show the inside of all pockets to confirm they are not carrying mobile devices or other unauthorized materials. Walk with them to the washroom and wait outside.

Fire alarm rings

Ensure students leave in an orderly and calm fashion without their tests.

INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS

Office Hours, Online Forums, Tutorials

How to Interact with Students

You will interact with students during **office hours**, **online forums**, and **tutorials**.

Be friendly, approachable,
supportive, and helpful



- Students may feel nervous to ask questions.
- Be encouraging! Congratulate them when they've solved a problem well or figured out a problem that was giving them trouble (especially one that took multiple attempts).
- We want to encourage them to come back to seek help.

Guide students in learning



- Help them through the problem-solving process so they have a deeper understanding.
- Ask them to explain what the question is asking and what they tried so far.
- Provide hints, not answers.
- Show a relevant example from the lecture or textbook. Provide a reference to lecture notes, syllabus, LEARN if possible.

OFFICE HOURS

Interacting with Students: **Office Hours**, Online Forums, Tutorials

Office Hours

The instructor may ask you to hold office hours in the following formats. The way you deliver help will depend on the chosen format.

In-person

Tutorial Centre M3 2101

Online meetings

Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx, etc.

Online forums

Piazza, CampusWire

Office hours will be scheduled in consultation between you, the instructor, and the ISC team.

Office hours will always be busiest before assignments and tests.

Attend the session you signed up for and note that the instructor may change your schedule throughout the term.



Office Hour Tips

- **Preparation:** Review recent class material, assignment questions, recent online forum posts to anticipate questions.
- **Show up and stay:** Students plan their schedules around the office hours. Be punctual and do not leave early.
- **Off-duty questions:** If students try to contact you outside of office hours, tell them to visit during scheduled help times.
- **Use the space:** Though you will be assigned a cubicle in the Tutorial Centre, feel free to work at the group tables and use whiteboards to help students. Be mindful of your volume to minimize distractions to other students

Managing Busy Office Hours

- Limit time with each student so you have the chance to speak to all of them
- Consider offering group help at the group table or whiteboard
- You do not need to extend your hour. Let students know about other available help times (instructor office hours, Piazza, TA office hours)
- Notify the instructor about your busy office hour so they can consider adding more sessions.



ONLINE FORUMS

Interacting with Students: Office Hours, **Online Forums**, Tutorials

Online Forum Tips

Treat the forums as a discussion and welcome follow-up questions.

Before responding

- Carefully read the question.
- Check to see if the question was already posted. Use the search function and @Tag (if applicable) the other post.
- Make posts with full or partial solutions or rude comments private. Inform the instructor if necessary.
- If there's a question about course logistics, you can tag the @Instructor for a response.

Review your response

- Ensure you addressed all parts of their post
- Maintain a polite tone
- Write in clear and concise sentences
- Avoid using short forms (students may not know them)
- Provide hints, not answers
- Use proper titles (Professor; Dr) and preferred names/pronouns (if indicated)
- If a student has posted anonymously, do not respond using their name



Managing Busy Piazza times

- Start by answering oldest unanswered questions and unresolved follow-ups first. If a similar question has already been asked, use the @Tag to refer back to the relevant post/response.
- It's okay that you cannot answer all questions and you do not need to extend your hour. Inform the next TA and/or instructor/ISC.
- If it is a recurring trend, notify the instructor so they can consider adjusting or adding monitoring times

TUTORIALS

Interacting with Students: Office Hours, Online Forums, **Tutorials**

Tutorials

We encourage you to deliver at least one tutorial this year.

Improve communication



Practice teaching skills



TA Program support available
(Foundations for University Teaching
in SAS Level 3 training certificate
program)



Tutorials may not run every week and may have different formats.

Quiz

You will proctor as students write a quiz.

Q&A Tutorials

You will answer students' questions, similar to a group-style office hour.

Problem-Solving Tutorials

You will prepare review problems and present full solutions.

Tutorial Preparation Tips

Prepare the content ahead of time

- Instructor will provide guidelines such as topics, questions, and/or solutions.
- Prepare your problems and detailed solutions. You may create slides that contain the questions and then work through solutions on the board, document camera, tablet/iPad during tutorial.
- Discuss your tutorial plans with the instructor and submit your tutorial materials for feedback.
- Practice working through solutions so you can deliver all content in 50 minutes. Note how long to spend on each section and include time for student questions.

Check the room before the tutorial

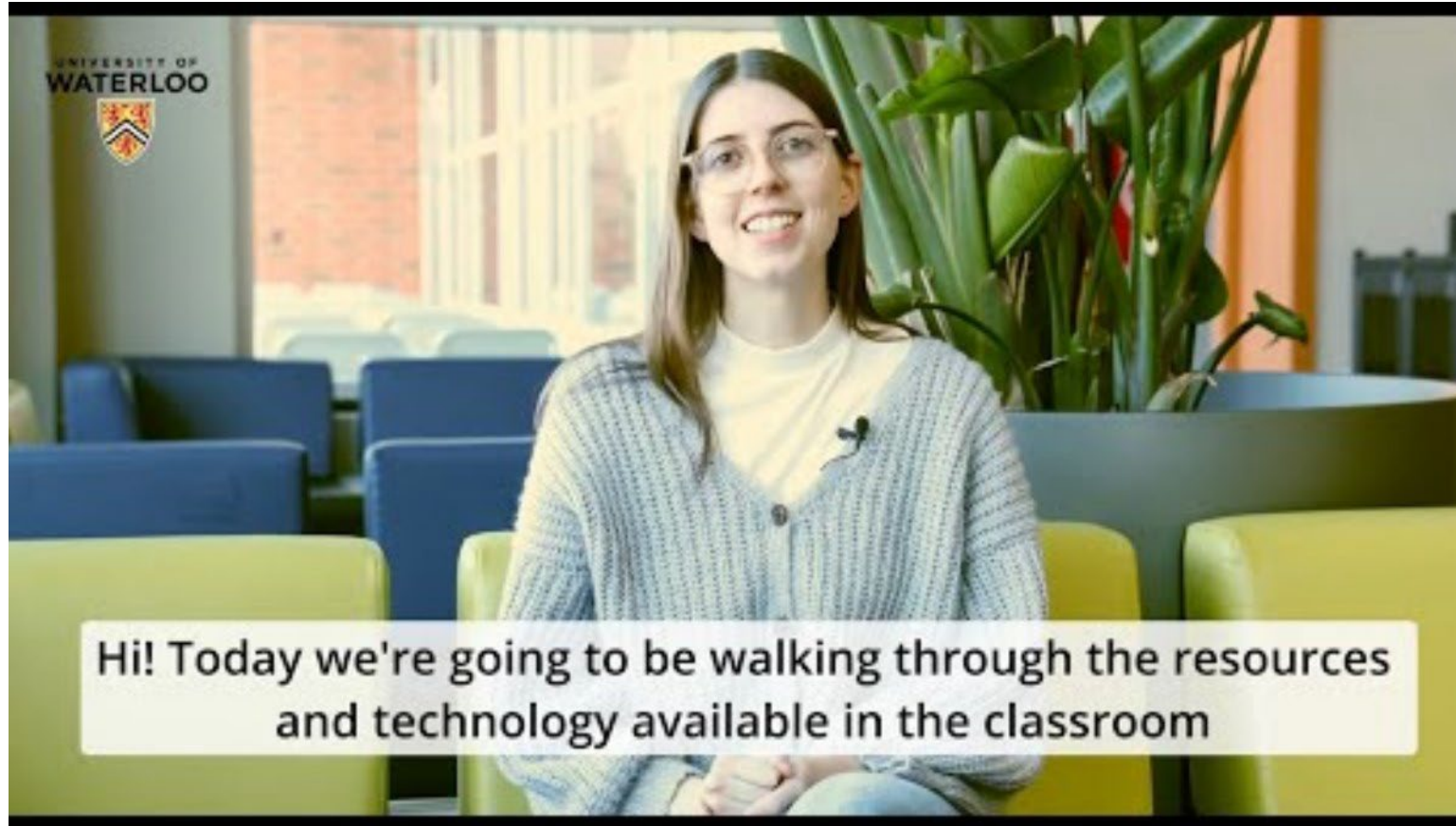
- Watch the [Classroom Walkthrough](#) video
- Ask ISC for room schedule and suitable adapters.
- Check your device connects to the projector.
- Familiarize yourself with podium equipment.
- Practice projecting your voice so students at the back of the room can hear you.

Tutorial Delivery Tips

- Ensure your devices are fully charged and notifications are turned off.
- Prepare a contingency plan in case there are technology disruptions.
- Show up to the tutorial room 10 minutes prior to the start to set up.
- Introduce yourself and let students know the structure of the tutorial.
- Keep track of the time and make adjustments so that all necessary content is delivered.
- Explain all your steps. Speak slowly, clearly, and loudly. Write legibly.
- Encourage students to ask questions.



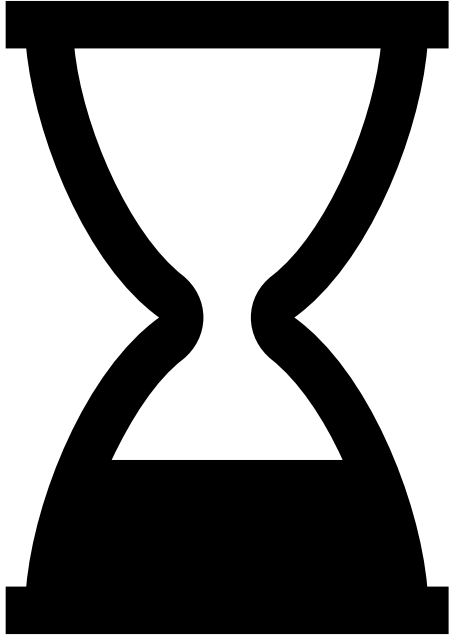
Classroom Technology Walkthrough



[View "UWaterloo Math Classroom Technology Walkthrough" on YouTube](#)

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time Management



Sometimes, your TA workload deadlines will overlap with your own graduate student deadlines and this can be stressful.

How would you handle the demanding TA workloads and successfully navigate through these busy times of the term?

Time Management Suggestions

- In addition to your personal calendar and academic calendar, create a calendar which lists all of your TA course deadlines and duties so that you can plan and manage your time effectively
 - Read the course outline carefully
 - Assessment deadlines
 - Marking deadlines
 - Proctor duties
 - Office hour duties
 - Tutorials
 - Meetings or other tasks



Time Management Suggestions

- Communicate with your instructor or ISC in case they can adjust TA duties.
- With permission from the instructor/ISC, consider trading duties with another TA in the course if it is mutually beneficial for both parties.
 - Example: Take over another TA's assignment marking right now in exchange for reduced test marking later.
- If you feel a particular duty is taking too long to complete, contact the instructor or ISC who can give suggestions to improve your time efficiency.

Main Takeaways



Your job is important!

Students and instructors value your knowledge, help, and support.



Stay connected!

Keep in constant communication with your instructor and ISC.



Ask for help!

Discuss concerns about your TA role with the instructor and ISC.

Next Steps

For the courses you are assigned:

- Review your Assignment of Duties form
- Access the LEARN site, check the course outline, and note important dates on your calendar
- If you have questions about your duties or expectations, contact the instructor (and ISC, if applicable)

Optional SAS TA Training Certificate

- Level 1 and Level 2 are complete!
- Recommended for Level 2: [CTE 1203: Building Rapport with Students](#), Thursday, Oct 29th, 2026, 10:00-11:30am online
- Level 3 and Level 4 in future terms

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THANK YOU

Students, instructors, and ISCs look forward to working with you!