

Teaching Assistants & Tutor/Markers

Graduate students have **priority access** to TA/TM work across campus. They have the **highest priority** within their own department and **second highest priority** in other departments. All TA/TM jobs are posted on the same day (~2 months prior to the semester) at:

sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/job-postings.html

As a TA or a TM, **you may be responsible for** a variety of duties assigned by your course supervisor, including teaching tutorials, marking assignments, and designing course materials.

As a TA or a TM, **you are not responsible for:**

- Designing course content & instructional methods
- Grading practices and assigning final grades
- Carrying out academic dishonesty procedure (*once your supervisor is notified*)

As a TA or a TM, **you have the right to:**

- Indicate your course preferences on your application, and have the department take all reasonable steps to meet them
- Discussion and input into your Time Use Guideline (TUG) before it is completed
- Statutory holiday pay in the form of reduced hours on your TUG
- Up to 6 hours of paid professional development
- A workload review during the course.
- Pay for any hours worked beyond your contracted hours (*be sure to track your hours diligently!*)
- Medical benefits and various leaves (*see the dedicated section for details*)

Sessional Instructors

All sessional instructors accrue **seniority** for each semester they teach a course at SFU, or are on maternal or parental leave.

Sessional instructors have the right to apply for **any position in any department**. The department must determine which applicants are qualified and then hire the **qualified applicant** with the **highest seniority**.

If you reach a threshold of **16 courses taught in a 4 year period**, the employer must offer you a **Limited Term Lecturer appointment** of at least one year.

All sessional instructor jobs must be posted on the central website and the normal posting practices must be listed on each department website.

As a sessional, **you may be responsible for:**

- Preparing and presenting course material
- Supervision of TAs/TMs, including: completing a Time Use Guideline (TUG) with them, reviewing their workload, providing a fair evaluation
- Assigning final grades and dealing with appeals/deferrals

As a sessional, **you are not responsible for:**

- The enrolment of students
- Replacing yourself when you are sick

As a sessional, **you have the right to:**

- Present course content in a manner you deem appropriate (*within department limitations*)
- Maintain all intellectual property rights for course materials you create
- Medical benefits and various leaves (*see the dedicated section for details*)

Contact Us

If you are being denied any rights or benefits that you are legally entitled to as a member of the TSSU, please see the Union.

All discussions are private and confidential, and the TSSU will only pursue action on your behalf after having received your **express permission**.

In the event that you do choose to file a formal grievance or complaint, **you have the right to Union representation**.

Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU)

Room: AQ5129/5130

Telephone: (778) 782-4735
or (778) 782-4695

Email: tssu@tssu.ca

Website: <http://www.tssu.ca>

Facebook: [facebook.com/TSSU.ca](https://www.facebook.com/TSSU.ca)

Twitter: twitter.com/TSSU

PLEASE NOTE:

The rights and benefits listed in this document are not exhaustive. View the full collective agreement at:

<http://www.tssu.ca/collective-agreement/>

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Version: June 2016



A guide to your collective rights as
TAs, TMs, Sessional Instructors
and ELC/ITP Instructors.

Did You Know?

As soon as you receive an appointment as a Teaching Assistant, Tutor-Marker, Sessional or Language Instructor, you automatically become a member of the **Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU)**.

SFU **cannot penalize you** for recognizing your rights and benefits as a member of the TSSU.

General Rights

Every member has **the right to receive a collective agreement** from the employer. If you do not receive one, please contact the Union.

Under BC law and a recent grievance, **you have the right to be paid on time**, and to have a manual cheque cut within 3 days if the employer fails to do so. The employer **cannot deduct money from your pay** without your express prior consent. You can find your paystub at:

myinfo.sfu.ca

You also have **the right to a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying**. If you experience any of these at work, you can contact the Union for assistance.

The employer must also provide **all materials and facilities required for you to perform your job** (e.g., textbooks, whiteboard markers, chalk).

Other Benefits

If you are enrolled as an SFU student and are working in a TSSU appointment, **you may have your tuition deducted bit by bit from your paycheque**, instead of paying it all at once. See tssu.ca for details.

TSSU Members with children under the age of 13, or under 18 with special needs, are eligible for the **TSSU Member Childcare Fund**. This negotiated

benefit disburses tens of thousands of dollars per semester. This fund has its own dedicated application form and may be found here:

<https://esas.its.sfu.ca/faa/childcare>

If you create materials for your course, **you maintain all intellectual property rights**. Contact the Union for more information.

Health and Safety Rights

You have the right to know about things that could affect your safety. As a new or young worker in BC you have **the right to an extensive training and orientation covering all hazards you might be exposed to** in the workplace. This training should include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying, harassment and violence in the workplace
- Chemical safety and lab safety training
- Proper use of protective equipment

Additionally, **you always have the right to refuse unsafe work**. This means that **you cannot be disciplined if you refuse to do work you reasonably deem unsafe**. If you have any questions, please contact the Union immediately.

Finally, **you have the right to participate in SFU's Health and Safety Programs and Committees**. If you would like to join a safety committee, please contact us. Health and Safety Time is paid in addition to your TA/TM/ST appointment.

Evaluations and Employee File

As part of the Collective Agreement **you have the right to a fair evaluation** of your work. You must be informed of the criteria for the evaluation at the beginning of your appointment. If your supervisor takes issue with your performance, they must indicate how you can improve and give you the chance to do so before putting it on an evaluation.

We often see supervisors ignore the requirements of a fair evaluation, including discrimination on the basis of race, illness, and gender.

If you have any concerns about your evaluation, please contact us immediately. **You have the right to challenge your evaluation** and, if demonstrated to be unfair, it can be removed from your file.

Health Benefits & Leave¹ (not including ELC/ITP)

When you are employed as a TA/TM/Sessional Instructor, you are entitled to:

- Have **100% of your BC Medical Services Plan (MSP)** employer paid (*value: \$150/month for a couple*)
- Have **75% of your Pacific Blue Cross Extended Health Plan** employer paid, should you choose to enroll (*value: \$50/month per for a couple*)
- Have approximately **15% of your Individual Dental costs** employer paid (*value: \$22/month for a couple*)
- Have part **of your MSP replacement premiums** (e.g., Guard.me or similar plan) reimbursed before you are eligible for MSP coverage

You are also entitled to the following leaves, per appointment (unless otherwise noted):

- One week of **short-term leave** via pre-arranged substitution (*via your Course Supervisor*)
- Five days of **paid compassionate leave**
- Five days of **unpaid family care leave**
- One month of **paid sick leave**
- Paid leave for **court appearance(s)**
- Up to 37 weeks of **unpaid maternity/parental leave** (*not per appointment*)

More information on your benefits can be found at:

tssu.ca/benefits-and-leaves

¹ These benefits are not automatic; you must enroll to access them. For more information, please visit: www.tssu.ca/benefits-and-leaves

ELC/ITP Instructors

ELC/ITP instructors are hired and placed on the seniority list once they have taught for 9 weeks (*i.e. the start of their 2nd appointment*).

As an ELC/ITP Instructor, **you may be responsible for:**

- Preparing, creating and presenting a course
- All aspects of teaching and grading in your classroom

As an ELC/ITP Instructor, **you are not responsible for:**

- The enrolment of students
- Replacing yourself when you are sick

As an ELC/ITP Instructor, **you have the right to:**

- Access to work and vacation by seniority
- A medical and dental plan, once you attain continuing status and work regularly
- Maintenance of benefits while on paternal/maternal leave (*you must pay your portion*)
- Vacation pay (*either paid out on each cheque, or accrued for payout while not teaching*)
- Statutory holiday pay, for those holidays falling between semesters
- Access to a professional development fund
- Sick leave of 12 days per year for full time continuing employees, pro-rated for part time
- Substitution pay at your regular contact rate of pay, if you fill in for another employee
- Overtime pay beyond 17 contact hours /week
- Annual step increases. if you work beyond a threshold
- Various leaves (*see the collective agreement for full details*)
- Request an unpaid leave of a duration of your choosing up to 12 months