

Understanding Your TA or TM Contract

TAs and TMs are paid in **base units (BU)**. Each BU represents \$1031 in salaried wages, or max. 42 hours of work. For more detailed instructions on how to interpret your TA/TM contract, please visit tssu.ca/workload/

Base Units Assigned	Max # of work hours	Base Pay	Scholarship Portion (Master's students)	Scholarship Portion (PhD students)	Contact hours/week (TAs only)	# of students (TMs only)
2.17	84	\$2,237	\$288	\$722	1	-
3.17	126	\$3,268	\$432	\$1,083	2	20 or fewer
3.42	136.5	\$3,526	\$468	\$1,173	2.25	21 - 25
3.67	147	\$3,784	\$504	\$1,264	2.5	26 - 30
3.92	157.5	\$4,041	\$540	\$1,354	2.75	31 - 35
4.17	168	\$4,299	\$576	\$1,444	3	36 - 40
4.42	178.5	\$4,557	\$612	\$1,534	3.25	41 - 45
4.67	189	\$4,815	\$648	\$1,625	3.5	46 - 50
4.92	199.5	\$5,072	\$684	\$1,715	3.75	51 - 55
5.17	210	\$5,330	\$720	\$1,805	4	56 - 60
6.17	252	\$6,361	\$864	\$2,166	5	-
7.17	294	\$7,392	\$1,008	\$2,527	6	-

Resources

Are you looking for support as a graduate student?
Contact the **Graduate Student Society (GSS)**:
sfugradsociety.ca

Are you looking for professional training and development related to teaching?
Contact the **Teaching + Learning Centre**:
sfu.ca/tlc.html

Are you looking for more work as a TA/TM?
TA/TM positions are posted here:
sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/job-postings.html

Have you or a student experienced emotional distress?
Contact **Health & Counselling Services**:
sfu.ca/students/health

Do you have questions or concerns about accommodating a student with disabilities?
Contact the **Centre for Students with Disabilities**:
students.sfu.ca/disabilityaccess.html

Do you have questions or concerns relating to sexual violence and misconduct?
Contact the **Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office**:
sfu.ca/sexual-violence.html

Resources

Do you feel harassed or intimidated by a student, colleague, or supervisor, or are you in any other kind of danger?

Contact **Campus Security**:
sfu.ca/srs/security.html
Emergency contact 778-782-4500

Contact **Safety & Risk Services**:
sfu.ca/srs.html

Do you require audio/visual classroom equipment?
Contact **Audio/Visual Classroom Support**:
sfu.ca/itservices/technical/av_services.html

Do a student need help with academic writing?
Refer them to the **Student Learning Commons**:
lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/slc

Do you need to access your pay stub or tax form?
Log in to **myinfo** with your SFU ID:
myinfo.sfu.ca

Do you need to get in touch with your union?
Contact **Teaching Support Staff Union**:
tssu.ca or email tssu@tssu.ca

A Pocket Guide for TAs and TMs

Version: August 2018



Prepared by Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU)

Valid for the 2014-2019 Collective Agreement

You've been hired as a TA or TM: Getting Started



What are TAs and TMs?

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Tutor Markers (TMs) are slightly different roles:

TAs assist students in-person during tutorials and/or laboratory instruction and/or mark assignments.

TMs assist and instruct students in online distance-education credit courses.

You and Your Course Supervisor

Duties: Before your TA or TM position begins, you should meet with your course instructor to discuss and agree upon your duties. Duties associated with TA and TM jobs vary between departments and courses, and duties not described below may be required. If in doubt, ask your course supervisor for clarification and do not assume anything. It may help to maintain regular contact with your course supervisor and let them know if you need additional support or guidance.

Protections against overwork: You and your course supervisor must complete a Time Use Guideline (TUG) form together in the first week of the semester. The TUG lists the total maximum hours in the assignment and gives a guideline of how it will be distributed among different types of work. This distribution can change over the course of the semester, but if additional classroom contact is added, you should immediately contact the union.

Additionally, your supervisor must conduct a Workload Review (WLR) once the course is sufficiently advanced to assess the workload (e.g. after the first major marking assignment, mid-term, etc.). In the WLR, you and your course supervisor will evaluate how many hours you have worked. If it appears that you may exceed the allotted hours in your TUG, your course supervisor is required to either reduce your workload to prevent overwork or inform the department you may work over your allotted hours so they can authorize additional pay.

Be sure to track your hours! Find an electronic logbook here: tssu.ca/forms/ It is illegal for anyone to attempt to intimidate you to work more than the number of allotted hours in your contract. If this happens, contact the TSSU immediately so we can help.

Evaluation: You must be evaluated by your course supervisor at least once a semester. Evaluation criteria must be made available to you when the position starts.

TA Basic Duties

Some of the most common roles played by TAs are **Tutorial Leader, Laboratory Teaching Assistant, Marking Assistant, or Head TA**. TAs often occupy more than one of these roles. Common duties typically associated with these roles are outlined below.

- **Tutorial Leaders** regularly meet with groups of students in smaller sub-sections of lectures known as tutorials. Tutorial leaders may be required to attend lectures, read materials assigned to students, take attendance, evaluate student participation, lead discussions, review and clarify course concepts, administer tutorial assignments (e.g. presentations or quizzes), respond to student correspondence, mark student assignments, and/or hold office hours.
- **Laboratory Leaders** attend and supervise students during laboratory sessions. These can either be a sub-section of a larger lecture or the only component of a for-credit course. Laboratory teaching assistants may be required to attend lectures, complete pre-lab activities, read reference materials, grade laboratory assignments, educate students about and enforce safety regulations, demonstrate laboratory techniques, respond to student correspondence, and/or hold office hours.
- **Marking TAs** are responsible for grading papers, assignments, and exams. Marking may be distributed throughout the term or may fall in clusters, depending on when assignments are due. Markers may be required to develop a marking rubric, provide written and/or oral feedback to students, hold office hours, communicate expectations for assignments, and/or respond to student correspondence.
- **Head TAs** typically perform any number of the above duties, as well as additional ones assigned by their instructor. Head TAs may be required to coordinate with and offer guidance to other TAs, create course materials, hold review sessions for all students, and/or hold office hours.

If you have any questions or concerns about your duties, contact your course supervisor or TSSU.

TM Basic Duties

TMs have similar duties across various distance education courses and departments. TMs may be required to respond to student correspondence, facilitate online discussions, evaluate student participation, grade exams and assignments, read reference materials, invigilate in-class exams, and/or hold online office hours.

Training Opportunities

You have several opportunities for professional development before and during your TA/TM job. At the beginning of both the spring and fall semesters a TA/TM Day event is held on the Burnaby campus. TA orientations are also held in Surrey. These free, one-day events include information sessions and workshops that offer tips and strategies to improve your teaching.

The Collective Agreement guarantees you up to six hours of paid professional development activities per contract held, and additional hours for software training. These hours should be recorded under "other" on your TUG form. While many TAs and TMs allocate them towards the aforementioned TA/TM Day, they can be used for any training initiative.

Rights and Benefits

As a TSSU member, you are guaranteed a number of rights, which you may exercise to ensure that you receive fair treatment and respect in your workplace. You are also entitled to a number of benefits, including those pertaining to safety, health, sick leave, and parental leave. These rights and benefits are laid out in our **Know Your Rights!** pamphlet, which can be found in the GSS lounge, or the TSSU offices and website.

NOTE: The information contained in this document is not exhaustive! View the full Collective Agreement at:

www.tssu.ca/collective-agreement/