

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 (~2.5 months prior to the semester) at:

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

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

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

- Designing course content (such as lecture notes) and instructional methods
- Grading practices and assigning final grades
- Carrying out academic dishonesty procedures (beyond notifying your supervisor of suspected cheating)

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

- Indicate all your course preferences on your application, and have the department take all reasonable steps to meet them
- Statutory holiday pay (in the form of reduced hours on your TUG)
- Up to 6 hours of paid professional development, and up to 7 hours for software training
- Discussion and input into your Time Use Guideline (TUG) before it is completed
- A workload review during the course
- Getting paid for any hours worked beyond your contracted hours (be sure to track your hours diligently!)
- Medical benefits and various leaves (please see over for details)

Sessional Instructors

All sessional instructors **accrue seniority** for each semester they teach at SFU (including semesters when they are on maternity or parental leave), commencing with their first Sessional Instructor appointment.

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

If you teach a threshold of 16 courses in a four-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. Posting dates and deadlines might vary by department.

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
- finding replacement for 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 denied any rights or benefits that you are legally entitled to as a TSSU member, please contact 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) contact info:

Rooms: AQ5129/5130 (Burnaby)
UM134 (Harbour Centre)

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

Email: tssu@tssu.ca

Website: www.tssu.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/TSSU.ca/

Instagram: instagram.com/TSSU1978/

Twitter: twitter.com/TSSU

PLEASE NOTE:

The rights and benefits listed in this document are not exhaustive. View the full Collective Agreement at: www.tssu.ca/collective-agreement/

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

Know Your Rights!



Version: August 2018

Prepared by Teaching Support Staff
Union (TSSU)

Valid for the 2014-2019 Collective
Agreement

Did You Know?

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

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

General Rights

The employer must also provide all materials and facilities required for you to perform your job for free, including textbooks, whiteboard markers, etc.

You have the right to receive a copy of the Collective Agreement from the department. If you do not receive one, please contact us.

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 written consent. You can find your pay information 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.

Other Benefits of Union Membership

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, rather than pay all at once. You must apply before the payroll run occurs for that pay period, and ensure that your tuition is fully paid by the last payroll period of the semester to avoid late fees. See: tssu.ca/tuition-deferment/

You can set up the deduction at: myinfo.sfu.ca

TSSU members with children under the age of 13, or under 18 with special needs, are eligible for the TSSU Membership Childcare Fund. This negotiated benefit disburses tens of thousands of dollars per semester.

If you create materials for your course, you maintain all intellectual property rights. See: www.tssu.ca/your-intellectual-property-rights/

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 training and orientation covering all hazards you might be exposed to in the workplace. This training should include:

- bullying, harassment and violence in the workplace;
- chemical safety and lab safety training;
- proper use of protective equipment, etc.

You always have the **RIGHT TO REFUSE** unsafe work. You cannot be disciplined if you refuse to do work you reasonably deem unsafe. It is important to follow the right steps, so please contact the Union immediately before you exercise this right.

You have the **RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE** in SFU's Health and Safety Programs and Committees. If you would like to join a safety committee email us. Committee time is paid in addition to your TA/TM/SI 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 frequently 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 always have the right to see your evaluation. You also have the right to challenge it and, if demonstrated to be unfair, it can be removed from your file, by following the grievance procedure.

Health Benefits & Leaves (not including ELC/ITP)

When you are employed as a **TA/TM/Sessional Instructor and if you have enrolled for benefits**, you are entitled to:

- **BC Medical Services Plan (MSP)**, 100% paid by employer (total cost of plan: approx. \$37.50/month single; \$75/month for a couple)
- **Pacific Blue Cross Extended Health Plan** 75% paid by employer (total cost of plan: \$21.97/month for single; \$61.58 for two or more)
- **Individual Dental** reimbursement value: \$11.35/month for single; \$22.70/month for a couple; \$34.50/month for family
- out-of-province or international students can have *part of the MSP replacement premiums* (e.g. Guard.me or similar plan) *reimbursed*

These benefits are not automatic. You must enrol to access them. For more information, see: tssu.ca/benefits-and-leaves/

Leaves (not including ELC/ITP instructors):

You are entitled to the following leaves, per appointment except as noted:

- One week of short-term leave through pre-arranged substitution (as approved by your Supervisor)
- Five days of paid compassionate leave
- Five days of unpaid family care leave
- One month paid sick leave
- Paid leave for court appearance
- Up to a year of unpaid maternity/parental leave (not per appointment)

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 & 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 parental/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