



Department of Psychology
University of Waterloo

2009-2010

**TEACHING ASSISTANT
HANDBOOK**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK	1
1.2 THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY	1
2 ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS	1
2.1 DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES	1
2.1.1 <i>Teaching Assistants (TAs)</i>	1
2.1.2 <i>Teaching Fellowships (TFs)</i>	2
2.1.3 <i>Research Assistants (RAs)</i>	2
2.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT	2
2.3 RESTRICTIONS.....	2
2.3.1 <i>Major External Award Holders</i>	2
2.3.2 <i>Maximum Allowable Hours</i>	3
2.4 COMPLICATIONS	3
2.4.1 <i>Foreign Students</i>	3
2.4.2 <i>When your Instructor is also your Advisor</i>	3
2.4.3 <i>Conflicts surrounding TA duties</i>	4
2.5 TA COURSE PREFERENCES	4
2.6 GETTING PAID.....	4
3 TYPES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS IN PSYCHOLOGY	5
3.1 RESEARCH EXPERIENCES GROUP (PARTICIPANT POOL) TAS	5
3.2 UNDERGRADUATE COURSES.....	5
3.2.1 <i>Psychology 292 - Basic Data Analysis</i>	5
3.2.2 <i>Psychology 391 - Advanced Data Analysis</i>	6
3.2.3 <i>Research Courses</i>	6
3.2.4 <i>Distance Education</i>	6
3.3 GRADUATE COURSES.....	6
3.3.1 <i>Psychology 633 - Observation, Interviewing & Cognitive Assessment</i>	6
3.3.2 <i>Clinic</i>	6
3.3.3 <i>Statistics (630, 632, 800, 801)</i>	6
4 TA SKILLS	7
4.1 CONTACT WITH STUDENTS	7
4.2 RELATING TO STUDENTS	7
4.3 SOME TEACHING TIPS	7
4.4 FIELDING QUESTIONS	8
4.5 HELPING STUDENTS	8
4.5.1 <i>Helping with Academic Problems</i>	8
4.5.2 <i>Helping with Personal Problems</i>	8
4.6 SAFETY TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES	9
4.6.1 <i>Students / TAs in Behavioural Neuroscience</i>	9
4.6.2 <i>All TAs</i>	9
5 OFFICE HOURS	9
5.1 EFFECTIVE OFFICE HOURS	9
5.2 HOW TO DETERMINE THE PROBLEM.....	10
5.3 SHARING THE LOAD WITH YOUR TA PARTNER(S)	10
6 TUTORIALS	11
7 MARKING	11
7.1 CONTACT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR	11

7.2 ESTABLISHING MARKING GUIDELINES WITH THE INSTRUCTOR	12
7.3 MARKING HINTS/ASSIGNING GRADES	12
7.4 REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION	14
7.5 DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT MARKING.....	14
7.6 OTHER COMPLAINTS	15
7.7 KEEPING RECORDS	16
8 PROCTORING EXAMINATIONS.....	16
8.1 CHEATING.....	17
9 EVALUATIONS.....	17
9.1 EVALUATION OF YOUR TA PERFORMANCE.....	17
9.2 COURSE EVALUATIONS	17
10 ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR	18
10.1 RELEVANT UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO POLICIES.....	18
10.2 POLICY #33, ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR.....	18
10.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS & PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING PARTICIPANTS.....	19
11 RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO TAS	19
11.1 CENTRE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE (CTE)	19
11.2 GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)	19
11.3 LIBRARIES	19
11.4 PHOTOCOPYING AND SUPPLIES	19
11.5 AUDIO VISUAL AIDS.....	19
11.6 TEXT BOOKS/DESK COPIES	20
11.7 DEPARTMENTAL MEETING ROOMS.....	20
11.8 STAFF SUPPORT FOR TAS	21
11.9 IN-HOUSE COMPUTING SUPPORT	21
11.10 THE GRADUATE ASSOCIATION OF STUDENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY (GASP).....	21
11.11 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS	22
11.12 OTHER HELP RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS.....	22

USEFUL DEPARTMENT CONTACTS FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Chair	Mark Zanna	ext .32546	PAS 3025
Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs	Daniela O'Neill	ext. 32545	PAS 4015
Associate Chair, Undergrad Studies	Colin Ellard	ext. 36852	PAS 4036
Administrative Officer	Sharon Adams	ext. 32032	PAS 3019
Admin. Co-ordinator, Graduate Studies	Rita Cherkewski	ext. 32043	PAS 3013
Assistant to Chair and Admin Officer	Yvonne Wepler	ext. 32547	PAS 3020
Support Services Staff	Helen Simon	ext. 32813	PAS 4030
U/G Advisor & Program Administrator	Heather Smith	ext. 32819	PAS 4006
U/G Program Assistant, HRM Advisor	Theresa Bauer	ext. 36535	PAS 4005
U/G & Grad Program Assistant	Louise Porter	ext. 36512	PAS 3023
Computer Consultants	Bill Eickmeier	ext. 36638	PAS 4008
	Carlos Mendes	ext. 35669	PAS 3006
Animal Care Technician/Histologist	Nancy Gibson	ext. 34825	PAS 1250
Early Childhood Education Centre	Valerie Rozon (Director)	ext. 33904	PAS 1039
	Dianne Foreman (Assistant)	ext. 33167	PAS 1031
Centre for Mental Health Research	Christine Purdon		
	(Executive Director)	ext. 33912	PAS 3038
	Walter Mittlestaedt (Director)	ext. 33171	PAS 1421
	Maureen Stafford (Coordinator)	ext. 35099	PAS 1419
Research Experiences Group (REG)	Marg Ingleton (Coordinator)	ext. 32690	PAS 4007
Division Heads:			
Behavioural Neuroscience	James Danckert	ext. 37014	PAS 4040
Clinical	Jonathan Oakman	ext. 33659	PAS 3037
Cognition/Perception	Jonathan Fugelsang	ext. 37097	PAS 4055
Developmental	Ori Friedman	ext. 33054	PAS 4014
Industrial/Organizational	Doug Brown	ext. 35421	PAS 4045
Social	Steve Spencer	ext. 33046	PAS 3046
Special Programs	Daniela O'Neill	ext. 32545	PAS 4015
GASP Representatives:	Daniel Nadolny, President		
	Lana Ozen, Vice President		
	Corey Bainerman, Secretary		
	Carolyn Daniels, Treasurer		

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Material was collected from various sources, both within the University and external to the campus, and adapted to our own special circumstances. In particular, source material was collected from handbooks already prepared by other UW Faculties and the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Handbook

The Department has compiled this Handbook as an aid to Teaching Assistants (TAs)¹ and basic information and advice for our newly arrived students and for experienced TAs it serves as a reference manual to develop advising, teaching, and evaluation skills. This Handbook attempts to answer some common concerns about the mechanics, duties, and expectations of TAs. Although we cannot expect to anticipate every situation a TA might encounter, we hope that the guidelines will prove useful, particularly to new TAs. Any questions related to TA assignments, or questions about responsibilities and policies, may be directed to Rita Cherkewski and/or Sharon Adams.

1.2 The Undergraduate Program in Psychology

TAs are normally involved in undergraduate courses, offered both on campus and through correspondence; a limited number of TAs are available for graduate courses as well. Although it is not necessary to be thoroughly familiar with all the complexities of the program and the rules concerning course prerequisites or requirements for Psychology Majors, it is useful to find out where your particular course fits into the Undergraduate Program and to be able to answer general questions about our Program that students routinely ask. If students require more information, they are encouraged to speak to Heather Smith, our Undergraduate Advisor and Program Administrator.

A Bachelors degree in Psychology provides opportunities for students to develop distinctive marketable skills and to obtain prerequisites for various areas of further study. Students at UW can study such diverse areas of psychological investigation as: how people see, hear, think, and solve problems; workings of memory and attention; acquisition of linguistic, cognitive, and social abilities in infants and young children, interpersonal and intergroup relations; communication and persuasion; cultural influences on behaviour; cognitive factors that influence reading disabilities and attention disorders in children; schizophrenia, depression, self-esteem, and anxiety disorders in adults; neural, physiological, and chemical bases of behaviour; feelings, thoughts, and behaviour of people in work situations; employee stress; and leadership and motivation processes in work organizations.

As their first Psychology course, students normally take the introductory course, Psych 101, which is the prerequisite for all others. With few exceptions, first- and second-year courses are large lecture introductions to the main divisions of our undergraduate program and are prerequisites for third- and fourth-year courses. Third-year courses are generally smaller in size, and some include tutorials and labs. Fourth-year courses are seminars of relatively small enrollment which are taught at an advanced level.

2 ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

2.1 Description of Duties

2.1.1 Teaching Assistants (TAs)

TAs in the Department of Psychology are required to carry out duties specified by the Instructor(s) in a particular course. Graduate TAs are students who do not have full responsibility for teaching courses, but who are appointed to carry out teaching-related duties, such as proctoring, marking, tutoring, laboratory supervision, attendance at TA meetings, occasional lecturing, and other duties as assigned.

Graduate students will receive an official offer of a TA in writing, on a term-by-term basis, usually 2 to 3 weeks prior to the start of term; the offer indicates the TA assigned, the Instructor of the course and the level of TA assigned (i.e. a Full TA or Half TA) for a given term. A "Full TA" position in Psychology requires an average of 10 hours/week over the term; a half TA requires an average of 5 hrs/wk. The nominal hours of work are an estimate of the time, including preparation that would normally be required by a graduate student to carry out the assigned duties. TA duties officially start the first day of lectures, but occasionally, duties may start before that date, depending on the structure of the course; therefore TA's are responsible for contacting instructors immediately

¹ The letters "TA" stand for Teaching Assistant; throughout this document "TA" stands for either "Teaching Assistant" or "Teaching Assistantship".

following receipt of TA notification. **TA duties continue until the marks for the course are handed in and TAs are expected to remain in the department throughout the final exam period to assist as exam proctors. The TA contract provides salary until the end of the full 4-month term.**

Additional TA Duties:

You will be **required** to be available for up to 3 hours per term to assist with other assignments such as, proctoring a midterm or final exam in a course other than your regular TA or assisting at the Psychology Orientation, Campus Day, or the Undergraduate Thesis Orientation. Louise Porter is responsible for notifying TAs of these extra assignments. Typically TAs are called upon during the term to proctor one 3 hour midterm or final exam which may be during the evening or on a Saturday. Occasionally TAs are asked to proctor two 1 1/2 hour midterms over the term. Louise keeps detailed records of these assignments so that the work is balanced. **If Louise calls upon you for one of the above tasks and you are not available, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and to notify Louise.**

2.1.2 Teaching Fellowships (TFs)

Graduate students with full responsibility for teaching courses must be appointed as Part-time Lecturers. In the Psychology Department, we refer to these appointments as Teaching Fellowships (or TFs), which are made by arrangement with the Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies and Administrative Officer. The minimum rate of pay for graduate students teaching courses is specified in a table of UW compensation rates, which is updated annually by the Vice President's Office.

2.1.3 Research Assistants (RAs)

Not all graduate students receive RA's; you should refer to your offer letter, or contact Rita Cherkewski or the Head of your Division. RA duties are specified by the faculty member(s) who pays for the assistantship from funds set aside for research. If you are unsure about your RA Supervisor, contact the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies or Rita Cherkewski. You should contact your RA Supervisor upon your arrival on campus and before the beginning of subsequent terms.

2.2 Eligibility for Financial Support

Prospective graduate students are provided with a written offer of acceptance and financial support. Financial support will normally continue as promised if the student maintains full-time registration in the degree program, is within program time limits, is satisfactorily performing the duties required for the support, and is in good academic standing. Students receiving major external awards such as CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research), NSERC (Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council), SSHRC (Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada), OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarships) or OGS-ST (Ontario Graduate Scholarships - Science & Technology) are normally eligible for one Full TA (i.e. 10/hrs/week) over a period of three terms; students without external funding are eligible for two Full TAs over this period.

2.3 Restrictions

2.3.1 Major External Award Holders

Some scholarships place restrictions on the number of TA assignments a student may accept. For example, NSERC restricts recipients of Post Graduate Scholarships (PGS) to spend more than 450 hours per year on such duties. Commonwealth Scholarship holders are not allowed to undertake any TA duties unless permission is granted by the agency prior to acceptance of duties. Please note also that NSERC does not allow award holders to be paid from NSERC research funds; this restriction rules out the possibility of NSERC-funded RAs for Post Graduate Scholarships (PGS) recipients. If you have a scholarship, be sure that your TA assignments are allowed by the granting agency.

2.3.2 Maximum Allowable Hours

The Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities stipulates that full-time graduate students may not engage in work for more than 10 hours per week, taken as an average over the term, for the period they are registered as a full-time graduate student. (The 10 hour maximum does not normally include Research Assistantships which are related to thesis work, etc.; however, the maximum does include your TA duties.)

2.4 Complications

2.4.1 Foreign Students

Student Authorization: A Student Authorization is a document giving permission to an international student to study at a Canadian educational institution. The Student Authorization must be applied for and obtained from a Canadian government representative outside Canada, with the exception of students from the USA, Greenland, or St. Pierre and Miquelon (who may apply for a Student Authorization at a Canadian port of entry).

Requirements for a Student Authorization

To obtain a student authorization you need:

- * A valid passport.
- * Evidence of acceptance at UW.
- * Evidence of adequate funds.
- * A letter from your sponsor.
- * A letter of reference.
- * Medical Clearance.

Where to get a Student Authorization

Once you have your documents you can apply for STUDENT AUTHORIZATION from the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate. If your country does not have a Canadian representative you can obtain one at the British embassy.

Visa and Student Authorization

A visa is not the same as a Student Authorization. A visa is sticker placed in a passport by the Canadian Immigration officials at a Canadian consulate or embassy abroad. A Student Authorization is issued or endorsed at the Canadian port of entry.

Term and Conditions

At the port of entry, Canadian Immigration officials will enter the TERMS AND CONDITIONS on the Student Authorization. Generally, these will specify that the student:

- *Must not accept employment without authorization from Employment Canada.
- *Must be in attendance at a Canadian university while in Canada, pursuant to immigration regulations.
- *Must enroll only in a specified course of study.

When you are in Canada, if you wish to change the terms and conditions of your Student Authorization you may do so by obtaining an application mail-in kit available at the International Student Office.

Employment Authorization

Students receiving TA and/or RA must acquire a valid employment authorization prior to commencing work. Canada Immigration issues an Employment Authorization for a fee of \$125. Both undergraduate and graduate students may take a job related to their field of study, **but only on the University campus**. The application mail-in kits are available at the International Student Office.

2.4.2 When your Instructor is also your Advisor

This situation has the advantage that you are familiar with your Advisor's style and with the course material. As well, you are likely accustomed to working together and your Advisor is likely to be flexible regarding work arrangements because (s)he has a vested interest in your performance as a graduate student. On the other hand, there are disadvantages. If your Instructor/ Advisor asks you to perform extra duties or gives you short notice about "special" tasks they would "appreciate" your performing, it is very hard to say no. When the Instructor is your

Advisor your job can be inappropriately combined with your academic apprenticeship. If such problems arise, and you find it difficult to discuss this directly with the Instructor/ Advisor, you should consult with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies or the Department Chair.

2.4.3 Conflicts surrounding TA duties

TAs should identify any known academic obligations that may interfere with their TA Duties and discuss them with their instructor and, if you have any problems carrying out your TA assignment because your duties require substantially more than 10 hours/week, you should first talk with the Instructor. It is also a good idea to discuss any problem you have with your supervisor. If you are still not satisfied, discuss the issue with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. If the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies cannot resolve the problem then the Department Chair should be consulted. Generally, such problems are satisfactorily resolved in an informal way, but if a problem remains unresolved, a formal dispute resolution can be undertaken. Procedures for formal dispute resolution and appeals are available from the Administrative Co-ordinator, Graduate Studies. At any time during this process you are encouraged to speak confidentially with either Rita Cherkewski or Sharon Adams.

2.5 TA Course Preferences

Graduate students who are eligible to receive TAs will receive an electronic TA preference documents late in June; it contains a separate ranking list for each of the 3 subsequent terms, i.e. Fall, Winter and Spring. Generally, graduate students who have been promised financial assistance in their original offer of acceptance and are in compliance with eligibility criteria are eligible to receive TAs. Most graduate students receive TAs in the Fall and Winter terms, with a smaller number of students receiving fractional TAs in the Spring term. All assignments are the responsibility of Rita Cherkewski.

Each questionnaire includes a listing of the courses being offered during a given term. You will be asked to indicate your preferences, ranked from one to eight. Your background must be appropriate for those courses that you list. Though very tempting, it is probably unwise to TA a specific course more than twice. It is certainly easier to assist in a course with which you are very familiar, but it is much better to gain as broad an experience as possible by TAing several different courses. Ranking lists are distributed once every year, so it is possible that your TA preferences or status as a graduate student (e.g., changing to Part-time from Full-time status, being away on an internship, etc.) may change during the year. If this occurs, please advise Rita Cherkewski promptly. Any problems with your TA assignment (for example, questions about the suitability of the TA or conflicts that prevent you from accepting a specific TA) should be reported immediately to Rita Cherkewski. Acceptance or refusal of offers must be signed and returned to Rita by the prescribed due date noted on the offer. The department will try to accommodate your preferences, but you should be warned that this is not always possible - you may be asked to TA one of your least preferred choices.

In rare situations, you may be asked to TA a course that you do not prefer, but are nevertheless qualified to TA because of your background. This situation does not arise frequently, but when it does occur it is because of a shortage of students qualified to TA a particular course or because of heavy TA demands in some large courses. As a rule, the department tries to accommodate your preferences and the needs of the courses being offered. In exceptional cases, a student may wish to postpone a TA, usually for reasons such as pressing research work or unforeseen problems. The department will try to accommodate such a request, but only after consultation with the student and the supervisor. If, on the other hand, a student declines a TA because (s) he is unwilling to accept a particular TA assignment for which (s) he is qualified, there is no guarantee that the TA can be reinstated in a subsequent term.

2.6 Getting Paid

TAs and RAs are paid in four equal monthly installments over the term, normally on the last Friday of every month; 4% vacation pay is included in your final pay cheque at the end of each term. Employees can view their pay advice on-line at a secure website: <http://www.hr.uwaterloo.ca/myhrinfo/myhrinfo.html>. Follow the instructions to authenticate your password. You can view your pay information, current and the past 12 months. If, after you have authenticated your password, there is no payroll information available, contact Rita Chekewski immediately to ensure that all the necessary paperwork has been processed.

In order to be paid for a TA and/or RA, you are required to go to the Human Resources Department, GSC (General Services Complex) to "sign up" on the monthly payroll system - you should take along:

1. Your Canadian Social Insurance Number. (If you do not have one yet, Human Resources will explain how to apply for one.)
2. Your health card number or an equivalent identification of your medical insurance policy.

Foreign Students please note: The University Health Insurance Plan or UHIP provides you and your eligible family members with basic health care protection. The cost for UHIP depends on the number of people covered. Dependents must enroll in UHIP within 30 days of arrival in Canada. The cost of purchasing this coverage will be your responsibility. UHIP is compulsory for all international students attending UW and their dependents. The plan provides for doctor's services, hospital ward accommodation, all maternity claims, even if pregnancy began before you arrived in Ontario, and in combination with supplementary coverage will cover medical care outside Ontario or Canada. For info: <http://www.uhip.ca/intro.aspx>

3. The name of your current bank, branch, and bank account number for salary deposit purposes and a (voided) sample cheque. Salary payments are deposited directly into this account through the University Payroll system.
4. Your permanent home mailing address. Your income tax slips will be mailed to this address if you are not a registered student at the time of income tax processing. You will also be required to fill out a TD1 tax form at Human Resources for income tax purposes, and in order to do this you will need to know the amount of your tuition fees.

Please remember - you will not be paid until you sign up at Human Resources and complete term registration

3 TYPES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS IN PSYCHOLOGY

A great many TAs are assigned to traditional courses such as Introductory Psychology, Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, etc., but there are a number of more specialized, less traditional TAs available as noted below.

3.1 Research Experiences Group (Participant Pool) TAs

The Research Experiences Group (REG) coordinates the participation of Psychology students in studies being conducted by Psychology students and faculty members. Students in participating introductory and upper year courses receive grade credit (or pay) for study participation and/or alternate assignments. TA's assigned to REG courses will interact with the course instructor and REG regarding the creation and grading of alternate assignments and the application of credit to student grades..

REG coordinates the selection of REG courses, the recruitment and participation of students, and with the use of an online software system (SONA), ensures that all participants receive appropriate class or pay credit for their participation. REG is coordinated by the REG Coordinator (full-time staff member, Marg Ingleton) and is overseen by divisional department faculty representatives who form the REG Management Committee. See the REG link for information: <http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~regadmin/>

3.2 Undergraduate Courses

In addition to the many undergraduate classes requiring TA support, the following courses require unique skills:

3.2.1 Psychology 292 - Basic Data Analysis

The 292 TA is considered a fairly demanding one. Only in unusual circumstances are these positions held by students in their first year of graduate school. If you enjoy statistics, however, do well in the graduate level statistics courses, and have an interest in eventually teaching quantitative courses, this can be a very rewarding TA. In the past there have been five graduate students assigned to the course, each of whom has had responsibility for about 20-25 students. The duties at the moment include giving tutorial sessions once a week (using SPSS software),

marking assignments and helping the other TAs and the course Instructor mark mid-term exams and a final exam. Each TA is also expected to hold office hours each week. The TAs and the course Instructor meet once a week to discuss the content of tutorials and any concerns and/or problems the TAs may have concerning course material or individual students. TAs are also called upon to proctor one of the two mid-terms as well as the final exam. Though this may sound like an onerous TA, the students who have been TAs for this course in the past have very much enjoyed the experience, and substantial numbers of them request this TA for a second time!

3.2.2 Psychology 391 - Advanced Data Analysis

The 110+ students in Psychology 391 are divided into 5 sections, and each section has its own TA. Each week the TA conducts a one-hour tutorial, maintains one-hour of office help, and participates with the other TAs and the Instructor in grading assignments, exams and course organizational meetings. (The coursework of Psychology 630 and 632, both graduate level courses, provides preparation for assisting in 391.) Assisting in this course provides an opportunity to practice, with supervision, classroom and individual teaching, and to enhance one's knowledge of experimental design and statistics.

3.2.3 Research Courses

Research courses (Psych 39x courses) are largely content-specific research courses. These courses are intended to allow senior undergraduate students an opportunity to combine material from content courses with methods and analytic procedures learned in statistics and research design courses. The experience of such courses is intended to enable students to plan, conduct, and evaluate research in specific areas of Psychology. Courses typically involve small classes of 20 students or less. As a TA you will likely get to know the individual students more intimately than you might in larger lecture courses. There is a large lab component to these courses and you will likely be responsible for organizing, or assisting in organizing, some class projects as well as advising individual student projects and/or proposals. Such courses generally require TAs who are senior graduate students specializing in the general area covered by the course as well. A significant feature of research courses is that the TAs usually obtain experience in advising students in carrying out empirical research. A TA for such a course may be called upon to suggest options for students developing research projects, give advice regarding data collection and analysis, provide guidance on ethics of research, and provide comments on final research reports.

3.2.4 Distance Education

Distance Education TAs have somewhat different tasks than some of the campus courses and include marking and some communication with students. The majority of students enrolled in distance education courses are mature, often working full time and learn from a distance, therefore their approach to learning can be quite different from a full-time on-campus student. Grading occurs at specific times within the term and requires a quick turn-around of marked assignments. Distance Ed works with the course coordinator to ensure prompt delivery and return of assignments.

3.3 Graduate Courses

In addition to the several graduate classes requiring TA support, the following courses require unique skills:

3.3.1 Psychology 633 - Observation, Interviewing & Cognitive Assessment

The TAs for Psychology 633 must be advanced graduate students in the Clinical Division who have expertise in clinical report writing and cognitive assessment. Assignment is often co-ordinated with instructors.

3.3.2 Clinic

TAs in the Clinic, associated with Psychology 633, must be advanced graduate students in the Clinical Division who have expertise in personality assessment. Assignment is co-ordinated with Director.

3.3.3 Statistics (630, 632, 800, 801)

Specific statistical analytical skills and completion of graduate stats courses are requirements for this TA.

4 TA SKILLS

4.1 Contact with Students

Depending on the course, you may find yourself consulting with students in either group or individual sessions. In our department, a few courses feature regular tutorial sessions that are led by the TA; however, for the bulk of the courses, contact with students is mostly through office hours.

Office Hours provide students with the opportunity to receive individual attention. During these sessions students characteristically inquire about, or discuss, assignments and tests for which they are preparing, or seek clarification about work that has already been marked.

Tutorial sessions usually involve teaching and answering questions about the course readings, lectures, or assignments. For example, a TA might provide further teaching about a topic introduced in class, answer questions about assignments, or go over the answers to exams or assignments. A TA is not normally expected to introduce new material, unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Instructor.

4.2 Relating to Students

Experience suggests the following guidelines are useful:

- **BE PREPARED** - to ensure that contact with students is enjoyable for you and useful for students. This means that before the course begins, you should familiarize yourself with the course material, including course outline, course requirements, textbooks, readings and lecture notes, assignments and exams. If the course material concerns your own research interests, you should know the sequence in which topics will be taught and the depth to which they will be taught. Knowing the sequence in which topics will be introduced into the course enables you to assist students with material that has already been covered, without confusing them. Try to think back to when you first learned the material, and remember the kinds of difficulties you encountered - you may find you have some useful tips and shortcuts to share with students.

If the course to which you have been assigned is not in your research area, try to read all course material before classes begin. (Make sure the Instructor is aware that you are not thoroughly familiar with the subject material to ensure that (s) he has reasonable expectations of you.) At the very least read the course outline in detail and skim the chapter headings in all texts and readings. This will make it easier for you to know where to look up information to answer students' questions. In addition, read the assignments and exams carefully, ask the Instructor for answer keys, and make sure you prepare yourself for potential questions.

- **BE RECEPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE** - A professional, friendly manner on your part is more likely to encourage students to come to you to have their concerns addressed. Treat students with respect - this does not mean you need to be overly friendly and constantly available, but it does mean that you should be available at arranged times, listen carefully, and attempt to answer students' questions in a professional way.

Don't be condescending, arrogant or sarcastic in your interactions with students. If an interaction with a student is uncomfortable, either for you OR the student, for any reason, end the meeting promptly and politely and refer the student to the Instructor. Make sure that the Instructor knows that you referred the student to him/her and the reasons for the referral. As well, be careful with humor when dealing with students because humor is often easily misunderstood.

- **ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN LEARNING** - It is tempting simply to answer students' questions when they indicate they do not understand a particular point. However, as a teacher, you should, where possible, try to get students to articulate the problems and encourage them to come up with answers on their own.

4.3 Some Teaching Tips

1. Remember the "Golden Rule of Teaching": Teach others as you would want yourself to be taught.
 2. Try to make your lectures interesting.
-

3. For the sake of students in the back row, try to make your handwriting clear and large enough. Be as complete as possible. Don't write in half sentences.
4. Be enthusiastic about teaching and the material. If you really enjoy it, chances are good that the students will too.
5. Make sure you have tested equipment ahead of time. It is embarrassing to have the unwanted surprise of not knowing what you are doing in the middle of a presentation.
6. Listen to the students. They will tell you what you are doing well and what you are doing poorly.
7. Watch for confused looks, and check with these students for the source of their confusion. Encourage students to ask questions, but ask that they raise their hand to get your attention. Whether or not you believe a question is worth your consideration, treat it as if it were a worthwhile question.
8. Appearance is important. Although your appearance can be casual and informal, bear in mind that some clothing, for example T-shirts with slogans, may be offensive and should be avoided.
9. Pay particular attention to voice modulation - monotonous or indistinct voices are difficult to listen to. Don't talk to the chalkboard.

4.4 Fielding Questions

Although you can never expect to answer every question you are asked, you should be able to answer questions that are fundamental to your course. Again, the most important thing to remember when dealing with students is to treat them with respect. Try to get to know them by asking them their name and then remind them of yours. Don't approach them with remarks such as, "what's your problem?" as this can be taken the wrong way.

Chances are the most common questions you will be asked are "What do I do next?" and "What's wrong with this?" Both questions are tricky to answer without giving too much or too little away. It takes a lot of practice to be able to provide useful and enlightening hints. Some good methods are:

1. If course notes are available for your course, remind students to read the material.
2. Ask the students to explain their reasoning. This enables you to discover what problems they are having so you can point them in a more productive direction - this approach also will indicate how much of the necessary background information they have read.
3. Ask the student to explain what (s) he thinks the problem is. If (s) he doesn't really understand, try to work through some specific examples whenever possible.
4. Some first year students are not aware of how to use their textbooks as resource materials. If they don't understand something basic, assist them to look it up in the text.

4.5 Helping Students

4.5.1 Helping with Academic Problems

Sometimes the best way to learn how to become an effective TA is to listen to the students. They will be very honest with you and will give you signs as to what they like and don't like. Although different TAs will have different styles, it is equally true that different students like different things. Try to keep in mind which students like which style and try to modify your behaviour accordingly. Refer students who have problems with note taking, essay writing or study skills to the Counseling Services Center located in Needles Hall. Although it is not your job as a TA to teach these skills, you may often be able to offer useful suggestions that relate specifically to the course.

4.5.2 Helping with Personal Problems

If students trust and respect you, they may pour out their feelings about the other TAs, the Instructor, and other students. Treat this as confidential information and deal with it in a professional manner. Often students turn to TAs or the Instructor for help, believing that graduate students or faculty in the Psychology Department may have the kind of insight that can help them. Whether or not that belief is true, it is clear that students taking Psychology classes often believe that it is true. Because of this, TAs and Faculty must have a greater responsibility than those in other disciplines to be aware of what to do if a student asks for help with personal problems. If you encounter a student who seems depressed, very lonely, or appears to be having personal problems, you might suggest a visit to

the Counseling Services Center in Needles Hall to discuss his or her difficulties in confidence. The subject of referral itself can be broached by a comment such as "you know, lots of students I know have that same problem; in fact, there's a group that's been formed at...to deal with this issue - which you might find helpful. Here's the telephone number." Don't try to be a counselor. You may be able to avoid this role to a great extent, if, as a general rule, you keep your door open while advising students because this approach usually discourages students from becoming overly personal. Students may need to consider dropping a course either before or after the formal "drop/add" date due to specific personal circumstances. TAs should be aware of this procedure, in general, but should suggest students contact Heather Smith, for details. Any concerns you have regarding these situations can be discussed with Heather Smith who is well trained and knowledgeable about UW policies and procedures.

4.6 Safety Training and Responsibilities

It is the department's responsibility to ensure that graduate students receive adequate information about safety, regardless of whether or not they are employed as TAs and/or RAs. TAs should be aware that they, as well as the Instructors, can be held liable for problems that arise from failure to enforce safety regulations. Applicable UW Policies are included in TA orientation packages and from Sharon Adams.

4.6.1 Students/TAs in Behavioural Neuroscience

In particular, Behavioural Neuroscience students and TAs are required to undergo an orientation session prior to taking on any duties in labs - graduate students should not start TA or RA duties until they have undergone the department's safety orientation and training program. The department's safety orientation program as it relates to TAs assigned to Behavioural Neuroscience courses, is organized and supervised by Nancy Gibson. As well, Nancy is responsible for registering all graduate students TAing laboratory courses for the WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) course offered through the University, prior to commencing their TAs. These safety procedures range from handling of hazardous chemicals and equipment to ensuring that students wear appropriate safety equipment such as goggles or gloves. Students and TAs alike should become familiar with the location and operation of the first aid shower and wash, fire blanket, and first aid kit in the laboratory, as well as the location of the nearest fire alarm and telephone. All accidents should be reported to Nancy Gibson so that necessary paperwork can be completed in compliance with Health and Safety regulations.

4.6.2 All TAs

In general, all TAs should know how to handle an emergency. Learn the location of the Health and Safety Office on campus and become familiar with the location and operation of the fire extinguishers and the nearest telephone. In emergencies, when telephones and elevator telephones are not available - use fire alarms. In case of fire, pull the fire alarm and vacate the building immediately. If a fire alarm sounds during a class or tutorial, instruct students to leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion and to remain outside the building until instructed to return by the Building Evacuation Coordinator who is responsible for relaying information between the Fire Department and UW Police and occupants of the building. (Fire Wardens can be recognized by their **red hats**; the Building Evacuation Coordinator can be recognized by his/her **white hat**.)

Please be aware that it is the responsibility of Fire Wardens to record the names of persons who refuse to leave the building; refusal to leave the building during evacuation is an offense under the Fire Marshall's Act of the Province of Ontario and charges can be laid.

5 OFFICE HOURS

5.1 Effective Office Hours

Most TA positions involve spending an average of one to two hours a week in a consulting capacity for students in the course. It is a good idea to plan your office hours and post them. You may find it useful to begin and end on the hour; that way you are accessible to students who may have classes on the half-hour. In other instances it may better suit the students to have extended hours at specific times such as when an assignment is due or just prior to exams. It is beneficial for all TAs, both for Correspondence and on-campus courses, to inform staff in PAS 4030 of their posted Office Hours as well as any subsequent changes to Office Hours during the term, so that our staff can assist with student inquiries.

1. The first rule of office hours is BE THERE! Because the times of your Office Hours will not be convenient for all students, often they will want to see you outside these times. It is wise to get into the habit of making appointments with students to cover these "special" circumstances, rather than answering questions any time students come past your office. This also serves as a gentle reminder that TAs are not "on call" at all times.
2. Your function as a TA during office hours is not to be a quick source of answers, rather you should be prepared to provide direction in completing assignments, to provide tutorial/instructional support for exam preparation, and to provide feedback on marking.
3. It is not your responsibility to re-teach the course or teach topics that the student has missed in class, nor is it your responsibility to provide lecture notes for students who miss classes. However, this does not mean you should refuse to answer general questions that are related to the lecture or tutorial component of the course.

TAs whose offices are located on the second floor restricted access area should avoid attempting to hold Office Hours in their office for security reasons and because student traffic is often disruptive to researchers housed in the second floor. It is possible to schedule Office Hours by booking a small departmental meeting room or by contacting Sharon Adams who can arrange a suitable office for meeting with students.

5.2 How to Determine the Problem

1. Encourage the student to ask clear, specific questions. "I don't understand anything." or "I don't know where to start." do not qualify. Establish the reason for the visit. Encourage students to write down their questions. Often students come with poorly formulated questions; trying to understand the nature of the questions can be time-consuming. Apart from reducing the time spent, students may answer their own questions in the process of formulating the question. If time is short, you can write the answer to their questions (or the reference for finding the answer) and post it on your door.
2. Find out what the student has done on the assignment. If the student is on the right track, a key question from you can be enlightening and point out the right direction. If the approach is headed down a dead-end trail, again a few key questions can be quite useful. Some student may ask you to check over lecture notes or study notes. This is time-consuming, so encourage them to team up with another class member who can just as easily perform this function. Often students who approach you for reassurance do not know other people in the course; it may be worth your time to ask students at the end of a lecture or tutorial to volunteer as possible "study partners". This approach can be especially useful to Mature Students who may be hesitant to approach other (younger) students in the class.
3. If you do not know the answer to a question, be prepared to say you don't know, and use the opportunity to outline to the students the plan of attack you would use. Your method and style of thinking can be as useful as an answer. If you remain stumped, you may be able to suggest useful references to look up. Another approach is to suggest that the student come back after you have had time to obtain more background information.
4. Often students quite genuinely do not understand the marking scheme used in a test or assignment or essay. Be prepared to explain clearly the marking scheme.

5.3 Sharing the Load with Your TA Partner(s)

In most cases there will be more than one TA assigned to a course. For the most part, the overall workload is designed to be equal, but occasionally one TA may feel that (s) he is doing a disproportionate amount of work. In this situation, it is advisable to discuss the matter with the Instructor. Ideally the best way to avoid this problem is to discuss the workload in the course with the Instructor and your TA partner(s) at the beginning of the term, or at the moment you identify a problem.

6 TUTORIALS

On the first day your most important duty is to make yourself known to the students. In the first tutorial introduce yourself and have your name written on the chalkboard or overhead and explain to the students what your function is at the tutorial. When you begin the first tutorial, explain to the students what is expected of them and why the tutorial is important (how does it supplement the lectures, etc.) If there are special requirements regarding the tutorial, announce these. Outline what will be taught and how the grades will be assigned.

Preparation is the most necessary requirement for successful tutorials. Make sure equipment is available in the room and is in working order. Know what has been included in the lectures - this may mean that you attend lectures, or speak regularly with the Instructor or review his/her lecture notes. For each tutorial, make an outline of the material you intend to cover; a detailed outline can also serve as a handout for students. An overhead can be useful because you can write on the overhead and still maintain eye contact with your students. Encourage questions. For questions you are not able to answer immediately, ask the student to jot down the question for you and get back to the student later. If one particular student is taking up an inordinate amount of time, suggest (s) he make an appointment with you. Ask a friend (or the Instructor) to attend a tutorial to give you feedback about your presentation. You may also want to ask to review the notes of a student in the tutorial to evaluate whether you were successful in conveying the information you wanted to get across.

7 MARKING

Assignments are the major source of feedback for both the Instructor and the students. The TA who marks assignments is a vital link between the two. The student is provided with information about how well s/he has assimilated course material and used the correct terminology to express certain concepts. To the Instructor, the assignments indicate how well the course material has been communicated to the students. Being more intimately acquainted with the work of the students, the marker is the one to communicate any progress, problems, or difficulties to both the Instructor and the students.

7.1 Contact with the Instructor

Your responsibilities as a TA are determined by many factors including the subject of the course, its size, its level and the approach of the Instructor. The Instructor is responsible for deciding what to teach and for choosing the methods of evaluation, as well as for determining your duties. Most Instructors will have already decided on the role of the TA. However, it is important that you and the Instructor discuss this role to ensure that you have a mutual understanding of your responsibilities and the time they require at the start of the term.

Your first meeting with the Instructor is a step in the development of a cooperative relationship. Open and honest communication will benefit both you and the Instructor, and students will likely benefit from your ability to represent and articulate their needs to the Instructor. In your first meeting, you and the Instructor should discuss the following issues:

- Course structure. Review the course outline. Try to get a sense of the approach to the subject.
- Determine with the Instructor, your specific responsibilities. Find out exactly what tasks you will be performing.
- Determine how you will receive feedback from the Instructor on your performance and progress.
- Determine if the amount of time you have been assigned to perform duties is reasonable. Discuss matters such as preparation time, the length and type of assignments you will have to mark, and the type of feedback you are expected to provide. If you foresee problems, this is the time to discuss them.

During your initial meeting with your Instructor, you should work out the details about how absences (e.g. illness or emergencies) should be handled/reported. Please remember that it is essential for TAs to be present at assigned tutorials and during posted office hours, so whenever possible inform appropriate people promptly of your absences - remember, students depend on you! (You should also note that the University Graduate Calendar stipulates that

periods of absence exceeding four weeks in any one term, must be approved - refer to <http://gradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/?pageID=95189> for more details.)

7.2 Establishing Marking Guidelines with the Instructor

Most interactions with the Instructor will concern procedures for evaluating student's work. Go over the assignments or exams with the Instructor to ensure that you both have a similar understanding of what is expected of the students. Discuss the following issues:

- Who is responsible for maintaining detailed, accurate and secure records of marks?
- Ask the Instructor for detailed guidelines or an answer key before you begin marking assignments or exams.
- Does the Instructor have preferences regarding the relative weight of questions, or the total value of the assignment?
- When must you complete your marking?
- Another philosophical matter to consider: are you subtracting marks for mistakes, or adding marks earned for material presented? A subtle difference, perhaps, but it may be that the Instructor has a preference - be sure to check.
- Determine whether extensions are acceptable and under what circumstances.
- Are there penalties for late submission of term work, and, if so, how are these determined and applied?
- Will the Instructor spot check your work or review it in some fashion?
- Who arranges for alternate exams if a student misses an exam?
- How do you deal with cases in which you are uncertain about assessing a piece of work?
- You may mark reports or other assignments whose contents can range from the suspicious to the flagrant. If you believe that you have enough evidence to support an allegation of plagiarism, how should you handle the situation? Use UW Policy 71 as a guide.

If you are a novice TA, acquaint yourself with the marking conventions at UW, which may be quite different from what you are used to. Effective Fall 2001, numeric grades on a scale from 0-100 are used by all faculties. Averages are reported in all faculties as percentages. Average calculation values are used for calculating overall averages for students with letter grades on their records. The following conversion scale applies for courses taken prior to Fall 2001:

<i>Assigned Letter Grades</i>	<i>Average Calculation Values</i>
A+	95
A	89
A-	83
B+	78
B	75
B-	72
C+	68
C	65
C-	62
D+	58
D	55
D-	52
F+	46
F	38
F-	32

7.3 Marking Hints/Assigning Grades

Once you have obtained the answers to the above questions:

1. Mark clearly and ensure that your remarks stand out, for example, by using a different color pen than that used by the student. If a pen is used, choose your words with care, as mistakes are difficult to erase. If any part of an exam is left blank, draw a line across the page - this ensures that students do not come back later and tell you that "you forgot to mark a question".

2. Mark positively. If something is clearly wrong, give explicit feedback, and suggest alternative approaches, so the student knows where (s) he went wrong.
3. Check your answer key. Instructors have been known to make mistakes or give ambiguous answers. (For short answer questions, you may want to write your own "model answers" to refer to since this practice may enable you to see just how difficult (or easy) the questions were to answer.) Check with the Instructor (or a former TA) to ensure that your expectations are realistic.
4. Whenever possible, give feedback in writing on the assignment as a whole and make suggestions for improvement, but be sure that your feedback is clear and not open to misinterpretation. Avoid ambiguous or cryptic comments or symbols, e.g. "???" or "No!" and qualitative comments that can easily be misunderstood.
5. When you return the marked assignments or reports to the Instructor, give the Instructor a general impression of the progress of the class. If a mistake is common to many assignments, mention this to the Instructor who can comment on it to the class as a whole. (It may also mean that you have misunderstood the requirements of the questions, so checking with the Instructor will eliminate this possibility.)

Now consider yourself. You wish to optimize the use of your time, while providing fair evaluation of the students' work. With few exceptions TAs participate in evaluating students through the marking of quizzes, essays, assignments, and mid-term and final examinations. TAs with more autonomy may also be involved in assigning final marks. It is therefore important to develop and apply fair and consistent standards of evaluation. It takes considerable experience to achieve a proper balance between being "too tough" and being "too lenient." (Anecdotal evidence suggests that, if anything, TAs tend to be more stringent than professors in marking.) Regardless of the approach taken, it is important to provide students with a means of reaching your expectations.

The essential question is how to best evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the teaching goals, e.g., mastery of basic terminology, breadth of understanding, and conceptual insight. Several steps can be taken to make this easier.

1. Common types of questions are: multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blanks, short-answer, and essay. For multiple choice, look at assignments from previous years, or ask the Instructor for an example of one; these tests are generally easily marked with computer scoring. For other types of tests, it should be possible to use an answer key provided in consultation with the Instructor with whom details of scoring should be discussed.
2. For short-answer and essay questions, it is best to establish the range of the grades in consultation with the Instructor. A written answer key is useful, together with examples of good and bad answers. Some TAs find it useful to select range finder papers - middle-range A, B, C, and D papers to which they can refer for comparisons. An "A" answer presumably contains all the information required, presented in a clear and concise fashion.
3. Mark reports and assignments moving through the same sections or questions in each paper rather than reading straight through each individual student's exam. This will ensure consistency in marking, as well as decrease the marking time. It also keeps your mind from being cluttered with details from other questions. If possible, finish marking the whole set of one section at one sitting. This way you do not forget the marking scheme. As well, when time permits, and especially with important essays, it may be a good idea to read through borderline cases to confirm your judgment that the work as a whole deserved the numeric grade assigned.

Reading fifty papers or two hundred essay tests presents special problems, namely, the possibility of inconsistency in marking. You are likely to be more thorough in your reading and more careful and detailed with the comments you provide with the first few papers you examine than with the rest when you

are getting tired, irritable or bored. (Take frequent breaks so that you don't penalize students because you are tired.) To minimize such variation, read five or six papers before beginning to assign marks in order to get an idea of the range of quality you can expect. You may also find it useful to rank order the papers in groups before assigning marks. When energy flags, stop marking. When resuming, read over the last few papers you marked to make sure you were fair and consistent.

In assigning marks to essay questions you may want to use one of methods described below. These are suggestions only, and there are pros and cons in using either approach. As well, variations can be used with each method.

Analytic Method: the ideal or model answer is broken down into several distinct points, and a specific subtotal of the marks is assigned to each. When reading the exam question, you need to decide how much of each maximum subtotal you judge the student's answer to have earned.

Global (Gestalt) Method: the marker reads the entire essay and makes an overall judgment about how successfully the student has covered everything that was expected and assigns the paper to a category mark. Ideally, all essays should be read quickly and sorted into roughly five to nine piles, then each pile should be reread to confirm that every essay has been fairly assigned to a given pile, in which all essays will receive a specific score or letter mark. Subdivide into groups those papers in which similar errors were made. Then mark the papers, starting with the best. This leaves difficult decisions until the end, when you are thoroughly familiar with the assignment.

4. If several TAs are marking the same assignments or reports, discuss how to divide the work. For example, one TA may mark one half of the reports each time, or one TA may mark all the reports one week and the other TA will do all the reports the next week. Or you might try to organize the work so that each TA marks ALL of a particular section of an exam. No matter how extensive the answer key, people often mark the same questions differently, creating a source of frustration in students.
5. Once you have recorded the grades, return the papers to the Instructor promptly or directly to the students. **DO NOT** leave them lying outside your door.
6. If you are posting the marks publicly, identify the students by ID # only; **DO NOT** post names. When modifying marks, change only those due to addition errors or those related to material which you graded; otherwise send the student to the Instructor responsible for the course or the TA who marked the work. Initial any change you approve on the student's paper.

7.4 Requests for Special Consideration

You will likely be faced with students seeking extensions or exemptions from stated deadlines for papers. You and the Instructor should have already settled on explicit policies regarding penalties and make up tests of which the students should also have been informed. Typically, reasonable requests are granted on the basis of validated medical or domestic grounds; however, it is important to have established the "ground rules" with the Instructor at the beginning of term.

7.5 Dealing with Complaints about Marking

It is likely that you will have to reply to at least some questions and complaints about your marking. Students' questions about marking typically fall into two categories:

- (1) questions about why the substance of their answer was incorrect or inadequate, and
- (2) questions about the particular mark assigned to that answer.

Post the answer key, if available, so that students can check their answers before coming to see you. It is a good idea to ask students to drop off the piece of work that you have marked, with a brief note about their concerns, and to make an appointment to discuss the exam. This provides you with time to check over your marking to ensure you have not made any errors. As well, this approach allows you to check that you, and not some other TA, did the

marking. It is never a good idea to defend someone else's marking, especially if it is subjective marking, so always refer the student to the TA who marked the work.

Don't be bullied or cajoled into changing the grade, but try not to be, or appear to be, defensive. Although some students at times lack tact, those who approach you with complaints about their marks are not criticizing you personally. Sometimes they do not understand the material, or just what they have done wrong. Sometimes they do not understand how you assigned marks, or how they might have written a better answer. Sometimes they realize that the mark you assigned was fair, but hope that you might give them an extra mark anyway. Maintain a calm professional manner and make it clear that you are prepared to discuss the question reasonably, that you will listen to what the student has to say, and that you are taking the student's concerns seriously.

Address the substantive issues. Many questions seemingly about marks actually arise from misunderstandings of what was required for a correct answer. Clearly state what was required in the question and the student will often see where his/her answer was deficient. Having dealt with the substance of the answer required, questions may still remain about the mark you assigned. TAs who regularly give extra marks find, that they get a lot of students coming to ask for more marks - this is not much fun and is a waste of your time. Be fair in your original marking and "stick to your guns" if you feel the mark was accurate. However, be prepared to accept that no one is infallible and if your mark was not correct be prepared to revise it and acknowledge that you had overlooked something in your original assessment and identify what was missed. This involves no "loss of face" and can even enhance your relationship with the student.

In some cases, even when the student seems to understand both the material and how the mark was assigned, a disagreement may persist. At such times, there are two avenues worth pursuing: one is to describe clearly to the student what a complete answer to the question entailed (possibly with an example) and to point out as specifically as possible how the answer the student gave, fell short; the other is to point out that even if your marking of the question was somewhat hard, the same standard was used for all students and that any change would require remarking this question for the entire class.

Sometimes students will insist they really knew what the right answer was, but just "couldn't put it in words properly". Your response should be that marks are assigned on what students demonstrate they have learned. Expressing ideas clearly is an important part of university education and it is not unreasonable for you to respond to the presence or absence of the demonstration of such skills.

If a student does extremely poorly on a TA-graded assignment, this situation should be brought to the Instructor's attention, especially if the grading involved subjective marking, such as, an essay. It is helpful to be in a position to inform the student that the Instructor is in agreement with the grade assigned.

Most discussions about marking can be dealt with amicably. To summarize:

- first discuss the substance of the answer
- make sure the student now understands the material
- discuss the marking of the student's answer, contrasting it with a complete or model answer
- point out to the student that marks are relative and that consistency with the rest of the class is important

If, at the end of this, you still have a disagreement, agree to disagree politely. Refer the student to the Instructor, who can act as a third party to settle the matter.

7.6 Other Complaints

Sometimes students will complain to you about other TAs, about the course, or about the Instructor. It can be difficult to respond to such complaints - especially if you believe the complaints are justified. However, it is unprofessional to engage in or encourage such criticism in your role as a TA. A noncommittal comment will often suffice, and you should suggest that the student would be better served by discussing the complaint directly with the person involved, or with the Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies. If the complaint is justified, you might pass on the thrust of the complaint to the Instructor, without, of course, identifying the student in question. Instructors

want to know whether the course is going smoothly or whether there are problems, and TAs can effectively serve as a mediator/communication link between the students and the Instructor.

7.7 Keeping Records

Guidelines for maintaining records of marks will usually be given to you by the Instructor responsible for the course; however, as a general rule it is recommended that each TA maintain at least two sets of records, in two separate locations to ensure that marks are not lost or misplaced. For example, one set may be kept in your office and the other may be in the form of the computer listing of students, updated with marks to date. At the end of the term be sure to ask your instructor (or Sharon Adams) about where to store marked final exams for safe keeping. The University requires that marked final exams be kept by the department for a one year period. Don't leave "old" marked exams lying around your office.

8 PROCTORING EXAMINATIONS

Proctoring midterm tests, as well as final exams, during class time or the final exam period, is an essential duty. Check the course outline for the dates and times of midterm tests and final exams that are held during class time. Verify with the course Instructor that there have been no changes since the course outline was prepared. The final exam period is two to three weeks long and usually begins within one week following the last day of classes for the term. The date, time, and location of final exams scheduled during the formal final exam period are not known until the last month of classes. All proctors for final exams scheduled during this period are notified of their proctoring duties in advance of the exam date by the Instructor or Louise Porter. Most of these exams are held in the Physical Activities Complex (PAC). **If you are unable to proctor a midterm, or final exam, as requested, you should arrange for another graduate student to take your place and inform the Instructor and Louise Porter accordingly.** You will likely be required to proctor exam(s) for the course to which you are assigned. **However, you should note that you may be called upon to proctor an additional course (beyond the one to which you have been assigned) as part of your normal TA assignment.**

Usually, only the Instructor sees a copy of the examination before the time of the examination, but if the Instructor provides you with a copy, you should look over the test questions and their answers. This will enable you to answer any relevant question from the students with confidence. It is a good idea for you to take the test yourself beforehand; if you identify any errors or ambiguities in the test paper or perceive a problem with the length of the test, inform the Instructor of your findings. If you receive a copy of the question paper from the Instructor before the exam, please remember that security is critical.

If aids such as textbooks and calculators are allowed in the examination room, take along your own; these will certainly be useful for students who forget to bring theirs. For final exams held during the exam period, you are requested to appear one half hour before the exam begins to have the exam material distributed on time. In any case, you should have everything prepared so that the exam begins on time; latecomers can then be handled quietly, with a minimum of disruption to the other students. If there are sufficient seats, a staggered seating plan is a good precaution against cheating.

If there is a mistake or a typographical error in the exam questions, announce this at the beginning of the examination period and write the changes clearly on the blackboard. Also announce any examination procedures to be followed. Once the students have settled down, quietly take a head count as it is useful to know the number of examinees present (if a test paper gets lost, for example). A seating plan may be circulated to the students for them to indicate their position in the examination room. In this way you can take attendance and discourage collaboration between neighbors. During final exams in the PAC, students must present their student ID cards and fill out the colored identification cards supplied by the Registrar's Office, and follow formal exam procedures outlined by Registrar's office.

If there is no clock in the examination room, or if the one there is not giving the correct time, post the time on the board at fifteen-minute intervals (more often as the exam period nears the end). If a student asks to leave the room for a short period, make sure all the others are present before allowing him or her to leave. Glance up at the class frequently to make sure no one is trying to catch your attention. Walk past the desks occasionally; students will be encouraged to ask questions which they may otherwise hesitate to ask. When answering questions, you must be

careful not to give out too much or too little information. You should clarify the test question and perhaps hint at what is expected. Unlike tutorials and office hours, here you are not supposed to help the students solve problems; rather your job is to make sure they understand what the problems are.

If calculators are allowed as an aid, be aware that students have been known to use programmable calculators with answers stored in the memory of the calculator. This is obviously an unfair advantage and should be treated as cheating. If a student asks to borrow a calculator from another student, ask for it first, and ensure that all its memory registers are blank.

Make an announcement when there are only five minutes left in the exam period. Collect exams punctually; extend the exam period only on the Instructor's instructions. As papers are turned in, check each to make sure it has a name on it. Remind the students not to discuss the exam until all papers have been collected.

8.1 Cheating

A description of the official regulations and procedures (Student Academic Discipline Policy - <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm> and Examination Regulations and Procedures - <http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf>) relating to examinations are included with this handbook and can be obtained from Heather Smith, Academic Services Officer. The following paragraph, which is from that publication, deals with procedure to be followed in the case of suspected cheating on an examination:

"Faculty, staff or students who have reason to believe that an academic offence has been committed shall report the matter promptly, preferably in writing, together with any evidence relevant to the alleged offence, to the appropriate Associate Dean, Graduate or Undergraduate, of the Faculty sponsoring the academic activity. If the alleged offender is registered in another Faculty, the Associate Dean shall inform the Associate Dean of the student's Faculty of the allegations; together they shall decide which Associate Dean is responsible for proceeding and for keeping the other informed. In the absence of factors which would delay proceedings or otherwise limit fairness, proceedings should be conducted in the Faculty in which the student is registered."

9 EVALUATIONS

9.1 Evaluation of your TA Performance

Although it is expected that TAs will receive feedback from Instructors, as needed, throughout the term, your performance as a TA will be evaluated formally by the Instructor at the end of each term. Before returning the form to Rita Cherkewski, the Instructor may choose to discuss the evaluation with the TA; TA evaluations are confidential (although some graduate students have given permission to their supervisor or the department to use their TA evaluations in letters of reference) and are held in Administrative Co-ordinator's files. The primary function of the evaluation process is to provide TAs with constructive feedback about their performance and to flag potential problems. However, because continued financial support from the department depends on a number of factors, including satisfactory TA performance, evaluations also serve as a mechanism for monitoring eligibility for future support. You should also note that some Instructors include questions about TA performance as part of the Formal department course evaluation process (see section 9.3 Course Evaluations), and you may want to ask the Instructor to give you feedback from comments received through this evaluation as well.

The performance of TAs will be evaluated separately by the students in the class (where appropriate) via the Course Evaluation form and by the instructor via the TA Evaluation forms.

9.2 Course Evaluations

Undergrad students have an opportunity to evaluate the course, as well as the instructors and TAs performance during the last two weeks of classes. Neither the course instructor nor the course TA should be present when course evaluations are administered because students' responses on the evaluations could be positively or negatively influenced by the instructor the TA's presence. Thus, as part of their duties, TAs will be called upon to coordinate the course evaluation in one course other than the one for which they TA. The course evaluation packages contain

instructions for administering the evaluations. This task likely will not take more than a half hour of your time. (Note: Administering course evaluations in a course other than your own TA will not exempt you from assisting once during the term to assistant with proctoring duties described in paragraph 2 of 2.1.1.)

10 ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

10.1 Relevant University of Waterloo Policies

As a TA, you are an employee of the University and are subject to all its policies and procedures and you are expected to represent the department in a professional and ethical way. There are a number of relevant policies as follows:

- Policy 19 - Access to and release of student records
 - Policy 29 - Smoking on University Premises
 - Policy 33 - Ethical Behaviour
 - Policy 34 - Health and Safety
 - Policy 69 - Conflict of Interest
 - Policy 71 - Student Academic Discipline Policy
- UW Policies are available in the GASP Office, PAS 3288

10.2 Policy #33, Ethical Behaviour

Of particular interest is Policy #33, entitled Ethical Behaviour. There are five general elements which form the basis of Policy #33, Ethical Behaviour: Equality and Respect; Academic Freedom; Interference; Discrimination; Abuse of Supervisory Authority. Every person in the University community has a right to institute and participate in proceedings under Policy #33 without reprisal or threat of reprisal for doing so. Individual members of the Ethics Committee (including a graduate student) are available on an informal and confidential basis to advise students on the application of this policy or on appropriate alternative UW resources. Copies of a brochure entitled "Ethical Behaviour" including the names of Committee members is available from the Secretariat, located in Needles Hall.

Policy #33 is relevant to you as a TA in two ways. First, you may feel that you are a victim of sexual harassment/discrimination for example by the Instructor or a student. Although you may be hesitant to complain for fear that it could adversely affect your future in the Department, your academic references and your job prospects, the problem should not be ignored and a record should be kept of dates, times, locations and details of all incidents. Second, you yourself may be accused of sexual harassment/discrimination by a student. In either case, Policy #33 can protect your vulnerability, advise you on options and procedures, and help resolve the situation.

As a TA, you are in a position of some authority with students and should be vigilant about situations that could be construed by students as sexual harassment. Physical contact is particularly suggestive. Many of us, as part of our personal style, may occasionally touch people, or even hug them as a greeting or to offer support and reassurance. Although this action may not be viewed as inappropriate between individuals of equal and familiar status, such actions are generally inappropriate with students whose cultural backgrounds, personal styles and subordinate status may lead to a different interpretation of your behaviour.

Verbal conduct can also be inappropriately suggestive and compromise the professional relationship with students. Remarks which focus on sex or the sexual orientation of others could be construed as sexual harassment under the terms of our Policy. Comments or questions about such things as a student's appearance, sex life, or domestic arrangements should be avoided. You should realize that as a TA you have power over your students, and social or sexual invitations that you consider innocuous may carry an undertone of pressure or coercion because of that power.

TAs who become romantically or sexually involved with their students are in a dangerously compromising situation, clearly leaving themselves open in the future, if not the present, to allegations of sexual harassment. If you are personally involved with a student whose work you supervise or evaluate, then at the very least you are expected to inform the Instructor of this "conflict of interest" so as to arrange for someone else to mark that student's work. "Conflict of interest" should also be declared when supervising or evaluating the work of close friends and family members.

Any further questions or concerns should be discussed with Sharon Adams. All discussions are held in confidentiality.

10.3 Ethical Considerations & Procedures for Obtaining Participants

Every project using human or animal subjects must undergo ethical review before it can be undertaken. This is a requirement of both the discipline of Psychology and the University. Details concerning animal research can be obtained from Nancy Gibson or your supervisor. The Office for Research Ethics (ORE) publishes a booklet called "Guidelines for Research with Human Participants" which contains a detailed statement of ethical considerations involved in human research and a statement of procedures.

11 RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO TAs

11.1 The Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

Each September CTE provides a number of workshops for TAs involved with on-campus courses. More information on this event is available from the CTE Office and announcements will be received via email. CTE also provides other services to TAs such as individual consultations and the CTE library which is concerned with university teaching and learning issues. The CTE Office is located in the Mathematics & Computer Building (MC) Room 4055, ext. 33132.

11.2 Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association presents and promotes the common interests of graduate students, represents student interests on a variety of University committees and boards, and participates in conferences. The GSA is governed by a Board of Directors, including a representative from Psychology, and has committees which cover a range of interests (e.g. International Students, Women's Issues, Day Care). In addition the GSA publishes a newsletter, hosts many social events, operates Association offices and a (licensed) living room at the Graduate House. Call ext. 3634 for further information.

11.3 Libraries

Collections are housed as follows: Dana Porter Library (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences); Davis Centre Library (Engineering, Mathematics, Sciences); University Map and Design Library (maps, atlases, gazetteers, aerial photographs, architectural design materials); Optometry Learning Resource Centre (Optometry, Physiological Optics).

The Psychology collection could be in more than one location & orientation brochures are available in September and January in all UW Library locations.

Requests for orientation and information should be directed to Tim Ireland, Liaison Librarian for Psychology at extension 35061 or by e-mail at tireland@library.uwaterloo.ca. The Liaison Librarian is available to you by individual appointment to discuss library resources or any "library assignment" you may devise for your class; advise the librarian about any such assignments so he can alert the information desk to be prepared to assist your students

11.4 Photocopying and Supplies

Supplies required for TA assignments are available from our staff located in PAS 4030. When requesting supplies please identify yourself and the number of the course to which you have been assigned. Small TA-related photocopying jobs (under 15 pages) can be done on the copiers located in PAS 4028. Our staff will assign a PIN to you to access the department copiers and instruct you in the use of our keypad copying system. Large copying jobs should be sent to Graphic Services, using a Graphic Services Requisition form, which requires department authorization before processing - forms are available from our support staff. Please note supplies and photocopying are provided for TA assignments only; not for personal use.

11.5 Audio Visual Aids

A full range of classroom teaching aids are available: overhead projectors and projectors for film, television and data, VCRs, TV receivers, videodisk players, tape recorders, record players, wireless microphones, public address

systems, etc. Portable LCD (liquid crystal display) panels for data projection are an effective way of projecting data in the classroom. As well, experienced staff are available to assist and advise on the use of equipment if needed. AV also has an extensive media library and its technical staff is organized to respond immediately to any problems in the classroom. University classrooms house various types of equipment and many classrooms outside of the PAS building require special booking procedures. Be certain to consult AV in advance for direction and scheduling.

AV general office	ext. 33034 - located in E2 1309
Bookings: Equipment	ext. 33031
Production	ext. 84070
Films & Videos	ext. 84070
Emergency Assistance:	
Equipment	ext. 33257
Technicians	ext. 36197
Television	ext. 36784

After Hours: ext. 33257 or call Campus Police, ext. 22222 and ask to be put in touch with an AV technician.

If you are asked to book audio visual equipment, films, etc. on behalf of the Instructor or for tutorials, please contact the Support Services Office (Helen) to ensure that the appropriate paperwork and departmental billing accounts are used. Equipment and films costing over \$30.00 per booking must be approved by the course instructor and in some cases, department (Sharon Adams) prior to booking.

If you need to search for a film/video for a class you can obtain a computerized listing of film/video's available through the audio visual department which is located on the internet using the 'beehive' under [watmedia](#).

The department has two portable computer projections systems for classroom use and this highly specialized equipment is available for booking by Louise Porter (PAS 3023). This setup includes projector, laptop and cart. Email Louise (l2porter@watarts) with booking information, but schedule early!

PLEASE NOTE: Minimum notice of one working day is necessary for equipment delivery. Operator assignment for normal class periods requires two working days notice during term. Scheduling either permanent staff or student operators for weekends requires six working days notice. When you book your equipment be sure to indicate whether your booking is a "term booking" or "one time only" booking. NOTE: VIDEOS RENTED FROM COMMERCIAL RENTAL OUTLETS ARE REGULATED BY COPYRIGHT AND NORMALLY ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR CLASSROOM USE - ALL FILMS OR VIDEOS USED FOR CLASSROOM VIEWING MUST BE CLEARED THROUGH THE AUDIO VISUAL AIDS DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT COPYRIGHT IS CLEARED.

11.6 Text Books/Desk Copies

Check with the Instructor to determine if a copy of the textbook was ordered for you. If one has not been ordered, contact Louise Porter in PAS 3023 as she may have additional copies available.

11.7 Departmental Meeting Rooms

You may find it necessary to book rooms as part of your TA, for example, to make arrangements for previously unscheduled tutorials. A number of departmental meeting rooms, scheduled by Louise Porter (PAS 3023), are available for your use. All meeting rooms are equipped with overhead projectors and screens, as well as an extra bulb. Carousels can be booked through the AV. Department. All problems concerning equipment located in departmental meetings rooms should be immediately reported to Sharon Adams, ext. 32032.

<i>Available Departmental rooms:</i>	<i>Capacity</i>
PAS 3012	12-14 people
PAS 3026	30-40 people (Colloquium Room)
PAS 4032	10-15 people
PAS 4053	10-12 people
PAS 4288	20-22 people

11.8 Staff Support for TAs

Normally staff support is provided to courses through the Instructor. In some instances, however, TAs may be asked to prepare handouts or notes for distribution as part of their TA duties. In this case, contact staff in PAS 4030 for assistance. TAs assigned to courses using Research Experiences Group (REG) may need to obtain handouts/materials from the REG Coordinator in PAS 4007.

11.9 In-House Computing Support

Bill Eickmeier and Carlos Mendes are responsible for the shared management of two complex computer infrastructure systems and software administration for faculty, staff and students. They coordinate tasks such as group and user accounts, software updates, authentication and backup of all computers and advise on all computing purchases including offices and labs. In addition to their roles as computer systems managers, each has a specific responsibility: Bill is the department's resident research programmer and is available to advise on the development of customized research software applications; Carlos directs his attention to the design of central administrative data bases and provides advice and instruction for the staff team and a number of central teaching and admin systems. Carlos and Bill routinely provide workshops and email announcements to assist all members of the department with a wide variety of computing questions and electronic changes...we advise everyone to have a daily visit to Bill's "beehive" site for important updates.

The Arts Computing Office (ACO) consultants have regular office hours in PAS 1077 from 9:00 am-12:00 noon and 1:30 pm-4:30 pm Monday - Friday. They will be able to help you with questions or problems relating to the use of Watstar (DOS or Windows) and Watarts (UNIX) or any programs installed in those systems.

11.10 The Graduate Association of Students in Psychology (GASP)

GASP, an organization run entirely by graduate students, was established in 1988 as a formal structure through which students are able to express their concerns about any aspects of graduate life within Psychology, and beyond. GASP strives to enhance the quality of academic and social life in the department by encouraging inter-divisional communication and promoting a sense of community among students, faculty and staff. Reference materials are available in the GASP Office, PAS 3288. Further details concerning the activities of GASP are described in the "Survival Guide" that is distributed to all new Psychology Graduate Students during the Spring term.

11.11 Emergency Telephone Numbers

Ambulance, Fire or Police	dial 22222
Campus Police	ext. 22222 (24 hours) Off Campus 519-888-4911 Open 24 hours. Campus Police deal with issues such as personal and structural emergencies: aggression, threats, suicide attempts, theft, break-ins, accidents, etc. (Campus Police may assist you with transportation or to call a taxi.)
Health Services	ext. 33544 Physicians, nurses and counselors are available to students by contacting Health Services staff.
Waterloo Taxi	dial 6-519-886-1200

11.12 Other Help Resources available to students

Counseling Services	519-885-1211, ext. 33528 Contact: Lorraine Nesbitt Offer personal/social, career development, reading and study skills support.
Chaplain's Office	ext. 33633 or 519- 885-1460 (St. Paul's) Will deal with crises and short-term personal issues.
GLLOW	Gay and Lesbian Liberation of Waterloo 519- 884-4569 A student support group and help-line for people with concerns about sexual orientation.
Ombudsperson	ext. 32402 Offers support to students experiencing legal hassles, grade appeals, "red tape" difficulties, personal disputes and other problems.
PALS	Peer Assistance Links Program 519-888-4860 Runs Sunday-Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - 12 Midnight A peer support program for students experiencing frustration, worry or concern.
Plant Operations	ext. 33793 (24 hours) Provides building maintenance such as replacing burnt-out lights, electrical and plumbing emergencies.
The Help Line	519-745-1166 Confidential listening service that deals with worries, stress, loneliness, etc. 24 hour service
K-W Hospital Crisis Clinic	519-742-3611 Provides 24 hour help for emotional/behavioural crises
Director, Conflict Management & Human Rights Office	Matt Erickson, ext. 33765, MC Room 4048.
International Student Office	ext. 32814, NH 2080 Provides assistance with a variety of issues (immigration regulations, health insurance, housing, etc.) Web Site address http://www.adm.ca/infoiso/
Office for Persons With Disabilities	ext. 84635, NH 1132 The Office of Services for Persons with Disabilities provides a wide range of services to faculty, staff, campus users and disabled students to assure them equal access to programs and facilities at the University of Waterloo. Services Provided for Persons with disabilities: * Liaison with all campus and community resources

-
- * Advocacy
 - * Co-ordination of campus accessibility issues
 - * Alternate examination arrangements.
 - * Counseling for disability related issues.
 - * Learning skills evaluation and assistance.
 - * Library Accessibility Centers.
 - * Specialized technical equipment and loaner inventory.
 - * Campus transportation.
 - * Liaison with campus housing and attendant care services.
 - * Pre-admission assistance/orientation.
 - * Volunteer assistance program.
 - * Transcription service for Correspondence lecture tapes.
 - * Provision of tape and Braille materials.
 - * Health and Disability Resource Center.
 - * Manual and Electronic note-taking arrangements.
 - * Campus access maps.
 - * Photocopying service.

A Final Reminder:

Should you have any questions after thoroughly reading this Handbook, or at any time during your TA assignment, please contact Rita Cherkewski or Sharon Adams. Suggestions for additions to this guide are always welcome.
