To:          PDAD&C

From:       Sioban Nelson, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Date:       July 24, 2014


This is an update to PDAD&C #66, 2013-14 (dated May 27, 2014), which released the Report of the Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials. The working group’s findings have led to the development of new resources to enhance the quality of our students’ learning experience.

The Joint Working Group was a collaborative initiative undertaken by the University and CUPE Local 3902, Unit 1 and made recommendations designed to enhance the training provided to teaching assistants assigned to tutorials. The Provost accepted the recommendations contained in the Report and the University has committed to offer paid training the first time a teaching assistant’s appointment includes facilitating tutorials in any of the four categories of tutorials defined in the Report. The categories are discussion-based sessions, skill development sessions, Q&A and exam/test/assignment review sessions, and laboratories/practicals.

The Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI) has developed a number of resources to support this initiative, and to enhance tutorial teaching for instructors and teaching assistants. Attached is a Teaching Assistants & Course Instructors Training Information Package, with highlights on the cover page. Additional information is located on the CTSI website in the Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (TATP) Tutorial Training Information section.

A list of FAQs has been developed and is posted here.

Please review the attached documentation carefully. I ask that you ensure the information package is distributed to all instructors, as well as the appropriate offices in your divisions and departments. I also recommend that you designate a point person in your department/division who will be a first point of reference in case your instructors have questions or require assistance, and provide his/her contact information when distributing these materials.
As of September 1, 2014, first contract TAs who are being asked to lead tutorials or labs/practicals are required to receive specific training, dependant on the type of tutorial(s) they are being asked to teach. The Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (TATP) has prepared a comprehensive Training Information Package (available on the CTSI website) to assist Instructors in the process of determining training for their TAS. This document highlights important information included in the Training Information Package.

**NEW**

4 TUTORIAL CATEGORIES*

- **DISCUSSION-BASED SESSIONS**
- **REVIEW SESSIONS**
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS**
- **LABORATORIES AND PRACTICALS**

* For definitions and TA training support in each of these categories, please see p. 6-7 in the Training Information Package

ADAPTING TEACHING TECHNIQUES (ATT) - TAs are also entitled to training in how to scale their learning activities for different sizes of tutorials, according to the number of students.

HOW CTSI/TATP CAN ASSIST YOU IN MEETING TRAINING NEEDS

FOR TAS

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<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27, 2014</td>
<td>Tri-Campus TA Day held on St. George Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 28, 2014</td>
<td>UTM TA Day held on UTM campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>On-site departmental training for first-contract TAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>2-hour Tutorial Training workshops on 4 new categories held centrally at CTSI**</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>1-hour Adapting Teaching Techniques (ATT) sessions held centrally at CTSI**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2014/Winter 2015</td>
<td>TATP Workshop Series (additional in depth training)</td>
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<td>Online modules to support tutorial planning and teaching</td>
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**Workshops at UTM & UTSC TBD - see CTSI website for updates

FOR COURSE INSTRUCTORS

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<tr>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Online module for course and tutorial design ***</td>
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<td>August 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>October/November 2014</td>
<td>Large Class Teaching and Working with TAs workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2014/Winter 2015</td>
<td>Regular CTSI Workshop Series (with additional sessions)</td>
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***Additional modules to be developed Fall 2014
Teaching Assistants' Training Program

2014-15

Teaching Assistants & Course Instructors

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Dear Department Chairs and TA Coordinators,

This information package is to inform you of the services offered by the Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (TATP) in the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI), to all University of Toronto Teaching Assistants and Course Instructors in the CUPE 3902 Unit 1 bargaining unit. This package provides information that will help you plan the training for both your new Teaching Assistants and Course Instructors who will begin their first appointments in the 2014-15 academic year, and returning teaching assistants who may need additional training as per the new requirements related to tutorial teaching. Please share the enclosed information with anyone in your department responsible for the hiring of CUPE 3902 Unit 1 positions and the administration of contracts.

Enclosed are the following documents pertaining to mandatory training for members of CUPE 3902 Unit 1:

• Information on training options for first-contract Teaching Assistants and instructions on arranging for TATP support in TA training delivery.
• Information on NEW tutorial training for first-contract and returning TAs that aligns with the four new categories of tutorials recently defined by the University.
• Information on training options for first-time Course Instructors in CUPE 3902 Unit 1, a requirement included in the most recent collective agreement.
• Details on the TATP Liaison Program, in which experienced TAs work with the TATP to help design the training session for first appointment TAs in their departments. TA Liaisons are not paid by the TATP, but will receive special recognition for their work. Departments may choose to pay their TA Liaisons.
• A resource tip sheet entitled “Working with TAs: Building Your Teaching Team” that provides guidance for instructors who may be working with TAs for the first time.

A number of resources will be available via the CTSI website to support instructors and TAs in preparing for course and tutorial teaching and TA duties. Please visit the TATP Job Training page (http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/training.htm) and the TATP Workshops page (http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/events.htm) for the most up-to-date information.

Please also post and distribute the enclosed flyer about this year’s Tri-Campus TA Day, which will be held on August 27, 2014 at the Bahen Centre, on the St. George Campus.

Sincerely,

Megan Burnett
Assistant Director, CTSI/TATP
416.946.0464; megan.burnett@utoronto.ca
2014-15 TRAINING OPTIONS FOR FIRST CONTRACT TEACHING ASSISTANTS

As per the 2011-2014 collective agreement between CUPE 3902 Unit 1 and the University, all TAs beginning their first appointment at the University of Toronto must receive 3 hours of mandatory training. They shall be paid for participation in such training by their hiring department. As of September 1, 2014, first-contract TAs who are being asked to lead tutorials or labs/practicals are required to receive training that focuses on the particular kind(s) of tutorial teaching they have been assigned: discussion-based teaching, skill development, review sessions, and laboratory teaching or teaching in practicals. This tutorial-specific training can be included in the 3 hours of mandatory training. First-contract TAs may also receive training in how to scale their learning activities appropriately to suit the number of students in a given tutorial (as defined by the department and in line with the training “thresholds” referenced in the report of the Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials, p. 32).

*PLEASE NOTE:* Due to logistical constraints, the TATP is only able to deliver training on-site in departments in 1-hour, 2-hour or 3-hour chunks. Due to similar time constraints, the TATP will no longer be visiting departments to deliver short talks (5-minute to 30-minute presentations). If a department wishes to arrange for on-site training that is longer than 3 hours, special arrangements will need to be made on a case-by-case basis, subject to the availability of TATP staff.

As a department/unit, you have several options for providing this training:

- **Training developed and delivered by the hiring department.**
  - Development of all training materials and the training session itself is handled by the department; TATP staff are available to consult on the development of training.

- **Training developed and delivered in collaboration with the TATP.**
  - TATP staff can work with your unit to design and deliver the 3-hour session or the TATP can deliver a portion of this training (e.g. 1 or 2 hours). We will consult with your unit to define training needs and the scope of the training session.

- **Training developed and delivered entirely by the TATP.**
  - Some departments prefer that the TATP deliver the full 3-hour mandatory training session. This will be done in consultation with the unit to define the training needs and the scope of the training session.

- **TATP discipline-specific workshops for first-contract TAs (e.g. ‘First Time TAs in the Humanities’) are offered in late September and January on all three campuses. These are considered “catch-all” sessions and are offered to capture those TAs who may have missed their own department’s training session, or who have...**
been offered a TA appointment after the start of term.

- These 3-hour “First-time TA” sessions address a range of teaching-related issues for new TAs within a broad disciplinary focus. Details about these sessions will be provided prior to each term on our website. Individual students must register in order to attend.

- **PLEASE NOTE**: if your department has fewer than five first-contract TAs, they may attend these sessions as a group. If you have more than five, we request that you arrange your own departmental training session.

Should a TA miss all other opportunities to receive training, the TATP will offer workshops on a range of teaching topics throughout the year on all three campuses that can count as training with a department’s prior approval. Workshops focusing specifically on tutorial teaching in the four tutorial categories will also be offered through CTSI on the St. George campus throughout September and January. (Tutorial-specific workshops on the UTM and UTSC campuses are TBD.) Please see the [TATP Tutorial Training Information page](http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta.htm) to view more information about tutorial-specific training. Visit the [TATP Workshops page](http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta.htm) to view a list of upcoming workshops.

If you are interested in engaging the TATP to assist with your training needs for first-contract TAs, please note that the bulk of the training sessions occur in the Fall Term and we will require a minimum of two weeks’ notice to make appropriate arrangements and accommodate your requests. We may not be able to accommodate requests made without at least two weeks’ notice.

The TATP also offers ongoing training and professional development throughout the year for both new and returning TAs and all graduate students interested in building their teaching skills. We encourage you to promote these opportunities to your students. Details on TATP’s fall programming will be available in the late summer at: [http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta.htm](http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta.htm).
As recommended by the report of the Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials (March 2014) and as accepted by the Provost (see PDAD&C Memo #66), the University of Toronto has adopted a definition of “tutorial” and an accompanying categorization scheme to help guide the design of tutorials and the preparation of teaching assistants for tutorial teaching. Beginning in September 2014, the tutorials for a course must be assigned a category from this scheme, and instructors must indicate the training their TAs should receive to best realize the objectives of their tutorials. TAs must receive appropriate training that aligns with the new tutorial categories and that matches the tutorial objectives as laid out by instructors. Below is information that outlines the training options and resources available to instructors and TAs through the Teaching Assistants’ Training Program and the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation to help support departments, instructors and TAs in meeting these new requirements.

INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS / DEPARTMENTS

As of September 1, 2014, all TAs who are being asked to lead tutorials are required to receive training that focuses on the particular kind(s) of tutorial(s) they have been assigned: discussion-based teaching, skills-based teaching, review sessions, and laboratory teaching or teaching in practicals. Where relevant, they are also entitled to training in how to scale their learning activities for different sizes of tutorials (as defined by the department and in line with the training “thresholds” referenced in the report of the Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials, p. 32). The purpose of this categorization is to better describe the learning that takes place in tutorials at the University of Toronto, and to create direct links between TA training and the expectations of the kinds of learning activities for which TAs will be responsible.

The TATP will build tutorials-focused training that aligns with these 4 categories into the mandatory training session for first-contract TAs that is normally delivered on-site in a department at the start of a term. This training will also provide strategies for adapting learning activities in a tutorial to suit the number of students. If a department chooses to provide additional tutorial training to its new and/or returning TAs, the TATP will offer additional workshops at the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation on the St. George campus to meet this need. (Additional tutorial training workshops at UTM and UTSC are TBD.) Please see our TATP Workshops page to view a list of upcoming workshops.

Below is information on identifying your tutorial category as well as information about the different ways that the TATP can support the training process. In this first year of implementation of the tutorial categorization scheme, instructors should contact the appropriate designate in their division/department to determine the process for categorizing tutorials and identifying TA training. In most cases, this will either be an Associate Chair Undergraduate or Graduate, or a faculty or staff member charged with overseeing TA contracts in the division/department.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TUTORIAL CATEGORY

The term ‘tutorial’ at the University of Toronto is used to identify interactive and participatory sessions primarily led by TAs. During these interactive and participatory tutorial sessions, TAs are responsible for gauging student understanding and providing formative feedback, in line with assessment structures and guidelines set by the instructor. The four categories of tutorials as defined by the report of the Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials (p.5 and pp. 29 – 30) are:
NOTE: All TATP facilitated training in the four tutorial categories below will also offer strategies for scaling learning activities appropriately for the number of students in a given tutorial.

### Discussion-Based Sessions

These sessions provide opportunities for additional, or more in-depth, discussion of course content and may involve small-group activities. TAs would lead these sessions and facilitate discussion and learning activities.

### Skill Development Sessions

Activities in these sessions might include opportunities to practice various skills such as language acquisition, use of computer programs, problem sets, etc. TAs would help to facilitate the activities during these sessions and would provide formative feedback to students on progress.

### Laboratories/Practicals

Laboratories are typically identified as “Practicals” in ROSI (not as Tutorials), and they provide opportunities to run experiments or tests in a lab setting. Problem-solving/Practice sets are common to engineering, math, and science tutorials and they provide opportunities for students and TAs to practice and review.

### Review Sessions

These sessions allow students to ask questions about course content and assignments. They are typically offered several times during the year prior to major course deadlines and are normally optional. TAs would respond to student questions, clarify course content, and provide information on course assignments in these sessions. As relevant, these sessions also provide opportunities for review of key course content in preparation for exams, tests, or quizzes. Students may also be provided with information about the format of tests/exams/quizzes and the expectations with regard to performance. TAs would lead the review and respond to student questions in these sessions. This type of tutorial might also include film screenings where films discussed in a course may be screened in a separate session. In these sessions, TAs may be assigned to respond to questions from students.

These activities are **not mutually-exclusive** and we acknowledge that any one tutorial may involve a range of them based on the established learning objectives. The categories are intended to denote the primary activity (or activities) of a given tutorial session.

If you are experiencing difficulty with classifying your tutorial, please consult with your department/unit Chair, Associate Chair, TA Coordinator or other designate in your department.
Once you have determined which category of tutorial your course tutorial falls into, you need to determine:

What specific TA training will support your TAs in this role?

If you selected **Discussion-Based Sessions**, your TA(s) could benefit from training in these areas:

1. Effective facilitation of small, large and/or online group discussions;
2. Development of relevant examples/scenarios/questions for discussion activities;
3. Selection and use of materials appropriate to discipline/course content;
4. Providing effective in-class or online feedback;
5. Planning lessons (including how to scale learning activities appropriately for the number of students);
6. Presentation skills;
7. Classroom management (including strategies for different sizes of tutorials).

If you selected **Skill Development Sessions**, your TA(s) could benefit from training in:

1. Facilitating hands-on activities (including how to scale learning activities appropriately for the number of students);
2. Presentation skills;
3. Planning lessons/activities (including how to scale learning activities appropriately for the number of students);
4. How to integrate and apply active and collaborative learning strategies;
5. Classroom management (including strategies for different sizes of tutorials).

If you selected **Review Sessions**, your TA(s) could benefit from training in:

1. How to surface students’ questions in a way that brings forward the common blocks or areas of concern (including how to effectively structure Q&A sessions);
2. How to respond to students’ questions effectively;
3. How to deliver effective presentations that summarize/consolidate/clarify students’ areas of concern;
4. How to model effective review strategies for students;
5. Tutorial planning (including how to scale learning activities appropriately for the number of students);
6. Classroom management (including strategies for different sizes of tutorials).

If you selected **Laboratories/Practicals**, your TA(s) could benefit from training in:

1. How to deliver effective pre-lab talks;
2. How to deliver demonstrations and presentations;
3. How to effectively monitor students’ work;
4. General lab safety and protocols;
5. Tutorial planning (including how to scale learning activities appropriately for the number of students);
6. Classroom management strategies (including strategies for different sizes of tutorials);
7. How to provide effective feedback.
# How will CTSI/TATP Help Meet These Training Needs

**In the Academic Year 2014-15?**

## FOR TAS...

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| **early September**                 | • **TA Day** for TAs at UTSG and UTM campuses—these events are open to new and returning TAs; certain concurrent sessions will be able to count as tutorial training.  
  • On-site training for first-contract TAs in departments across all three campuses – this training will include general pedagogical training as in previous years, combined with a selected focus on tutorial-specific training (as determined by the department).  
  • On-site training for returning TAs only by special arrangement with TATP and subject to the availability of TATP staff. Please note that departments could choose to invite returning TAs to the portion of the first-contract training that focuses on tutorial teaching. |
| **mid-late September**               | • Tutorial training based on the new tutorial definitions from the report of the [Joint Working Group on Undergraduate Tutorials](#) (p.5 and pp. 29 – 30):  
  • Discussion-Based Teaching  
  • Skill Development Sessions  
  • Review Sessions  
  • Labs/Practicals  
  • 1 and 2-hour workshops in each category held centrally at CTSI – multiple sessions that can accommodate up to 50 students each. See the [TATP Workshops](#) page for a list of sessions. (Additional workshops at UTM & UTSC TBD.)  
  • 1-hour Adapting Teaching Techniques (ATT) sessions held centrally at CTSI. See the TATP Workshops page for a list of sessions. (Workshops at UTM & UTSC TBD) |
| **Fall 2014/Winter 2015**            | • Regular TATP Workshop Series at CTSI- more in-depth training related to the different tutorial categories will be identified and offered.  
  • Online learning modules focusing on a range of topics to support TAs in their tutorial planning and teaching. |

## FOR INSTRUCTORS...

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| **July/August 2014**                | • CTSI to develop online modules for course design (including Developing Learning Outcomes). These modules should become available in early Fall 2014.  
  • August 14 - CTSI “Summer School”: sessions to focus on course and tutorial planning and development of learning outcomes for both courses and tutorials. |
| **October/November**                | Workshops to support tutorial planning and course delivery:  
  • Course Planning and Tutorial Design  
  • Lesson Design  
  • Working With Your Teaching Team |
| **Fall 2014/Winter 2015**           | • Regular [CTSI Workshop Series](#) at UTSG – additional sessions on developing learning outcomes, lesson design, collaborative learning and TA management will be offered. |
2014-15 TRAINING OPTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME CUPE 3902 COURSE INSTRUCTORS

As per the 2011-2014 collective agreement between CUPE 3902 and the University, Course Instructors who are members of Unit 1 and who will be teaching a course at the University for the first time are entitled to six hours of job training. Course Instructors shall be paid for their participation in such training at the SGS II rate by the hiring department in addition to their regular contract stipend. Departments have several options for making this training available to first-time Course Instructors.

✶ Training can be developed and delivered entirely by the hiring department.
  • Development of all training materials and delivery of the training is handled by the hiring department.
  • TATP & CTSI are available to consult on the content and method of delivery of such training.

✶ Training delivered partly by the department and partly through TATP.
  • Departments can prepare an introductory 2-hour training session for their first time Course Instructors that is delivered in the department.
  • Course Instructors can then subsequently attend 2 additional 2-hour workshops (offered regularly by TATP & CTSI) to complete the remaining 4 hours of paid training. These workshops will be designated on our website as approved for Course Instructor Training.
  Regular workshop offerings address a range of issues related to course development and delivery as well as the use of classroom educational technologies.

✶ Training offered entirely through the TATP.
  • First time Course Instructors may attend the TATP offering ‘Course Instructor Training Camp’ to receive all six hours of paid training in one day. The training camp is offered three times a year prior to the beginning of each term. Course Instructors are eligible to attend training as soon as they have a contract to teach from their hiring department, even prior to the beginning of the term in which they are teaching.
  • First time Course Instructors may choose three 2-hour workshops from the approved offerings by CTSI or TATP. Past workshop offerings have included subjects such as: lesson design, assignment design, syllabus design, supporting students in crisis, academic integrity, active & collaborative learning, working with the portal, and teaching large classes.

Please note: Course Instructor Training Camp for the fall session will be held on Thursday, August 21st, 9:30am-5pm on the St. George campus at Robarts Library. Registration will open in early August. Please inform your new Course Instructors of the option to attend.

Also note: The TATP & CTSI will not develop or deliver customized department workshops for first time Unit 1 Course Instructors.

If you have questions about developing first-time Course Instructor training or about using the TATP to help fulfill this training requirement, please contact Megan Burnett, Assistant Director, CTSI/TATP, 416-946-0464 or megan.burnett@utoronto.ca.

For the most current information on first-time Course Instructor training with TATP, please visit the CTSI web page http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/training/cupe3902-1-ci/ci-1-options.htm
TRAINING FOR FIRST-CONTRACT TAS:
How Departments Arrange For TATP Support

Typically, a TATP training workshop delivered on site in a department (1 – 3 hours) will include a presentation on essential teaching strategies and important policies that all TAs at the University of Toronto should know and a training activity that will model effective teaching skills. Training activities can focus on a grading exercise, or a couple of case studies, or another activity of your choosing. The entire session will be highly interactive. If you require more information about the peer-to-peer TA training the TATP provides, please contact Alli Diskin, the CTSI/TATP Program Assistant, at 416.946.3799 or services.ta@utoronto.ca or consult this webpage: http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/training/depart-admin/training-request-form.htm.

When making arrangements for a TATP-facilitated training session, please keep the following points in mind:

• We require a minimum of two weeks' notice, preferably one month's notice, to book a training workshop.
• TATP staff need to know if the session is restricted to first-contract teaching assistants, or if returning TAs will be allowed to attend.
• We need to know the desired focus of the training session (discussion-based teaching, skill development in students, review/test preparation, lab demonstration, grading, communicating effectively, etc.).
• Please inform TATP staff of the nature of your teaching assistants’ duties (are they primarily grading-only TAs? Do they lead tutorials? Are they working with small or large groups of students? Do they prepare students for major tests or exams? Do they lead field work?).
• Encourage a senior TA to act as a TATP Liaison (please consult the section entitled “TATP Liaison Program” on page 12 for more information).
• Please indicate:
  » Date, location and time of training workshop (TATP staff are not responsible for contacting your TAs, or for booking space or determining a time for training sessions)
  » Number of TAs expected to attend
  » Is audio-visual equipment available? If yes, what kind?

CUPE 3902 UNION STEWARD: The TATP will be coordinating the CUPE 3902 talks within TATP-facilitated training sessions. As a requirement of the collective agreement, TATP will be contacting CUPE 3902 on your behalf to invite a union representative to any department’s TA training session that we are involved in. The CUPE 3902 representative will speak for 15 minutes of the allotted training time, at the end of the training workshop. TATP trainers know to allow for this when planning and delivering their training workshops.

Training can be arranged on all three campuses. All training requests can be made via the ONLINE LINK at the top of the page. If you prefer to speak to a local representative, please see below for the appropriate campus contact.

St. George campus: Alli Diskin, CTSI/TATP Program Assistant, 416.946.3799, services.ta@utoronto.ca
UTM campus: Andrew Petersen, Director, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, 905.828.3858, andrew.petersen@utoronto.ca.
UTSC campus: Janice Patterson, Assistant Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning, 416.287.7504, janicecp@utsc.utoronto.ca.

For UTM and UTSC departments, the TATP will have a graduate student staff member working on the UTM and UTSC campuses as of August 1, 2014; you will be put in touch with the TATP Trainer on your campus at your request.
TATP LIAISON PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?
This program seeks to link TATP staff—all experienced graduate student TAs and accomplished teachers—with senior TAs from individual departments whose sole responsibility will be to help make the mandatory training workshop for first-contract TAs as department-specific as possible. TATP Liaisons can also help guide the planning of tutorial-specific training for returning TAs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?
Make the mandatory training session for your first-contract TAs and tutorial-specific training for all your TAs as meaningful as possible by involving a senior TA in developing content for the workshop! Provide an opportunity for valuable professional development to one of your senior TAs!

HOW DOES IT WORK?
We ask that you promote the opportunity to work as a TATP Liaison to senior TAs in your department; any interested senior TA should contact the TATP via the email address below. The TA will be put in touch with the appropriate TATP training team. The training team will work with your TATP Liaison to plan a training activity or activities for your department’s workshop.

TATP staff will provide all necessary resources, materials and handouts for the training session, using the department-specific information from the TATP Liaison to design the training activities. In the past, some TATP Liaisons have attended the training workshop to help facilitate questions from TAs during the session. This is at the department’s discretion. TATP staff will deliver the full training session. A TATP Liaison’s chief role is to provide guidance and feedback to TATP staff when preparing department-specific content for the training workshop.

In recognition of their efforts, TATP Liaisons receive an official letter of appreciation from TATP that can be included in their graduate dossiers, and are publicly acknowledged on the TATP website.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A VOLUNTEER POSITION. TATP IS UNABLE TO COMPENSATE TATP LIAISONS. ALTERNATIVE COMPENSATION IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE HIRING DEPARTMENT.

For more information or to recommend one of your department’s senior TAs, please contact:

SERVICES.TA@UTORONTO.CA
August 27th, 2014
9:00am - 5:00pm

Bahen Centre
40 St. George St. Main Floor
(College and St. George)

An all day event for new and returning teaching assistants at the University of Toronto

Online Registration opens August 5th
http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/events/ta-day.htm
WORKING WITH TAS:
Building Your Teaching Team

1. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
   a. Review with your course TAs the Big Picture: what are the key learning objectives of the course?
   b. What are your goals and the student learning outcomes for any tutorials/labs associated with the course?
   c. What kinds of teaching approaches will your TAs be using in the tutorials/labs? What kinds of learning activities will they be expected to lead with students? (NOTE: this will help you decide what training your TAs should receive—see point 3.a.ii. below.)
   d. How do TAs fit into the course as a whole? How does their work help build towards course objectives?
   e. For which portion(s) of the course are TAs directly responsible?
   f. For what elements of student support or student skills development are TAs responsible? (i.e. writing skills? research skills? should they refer students who are in difficulty or crisis, and if so, how and where?)
   g. What are the students responsible for doing?
   h. What are your obligations towards the TAs?

2. BOUNDARIES
   a. Discuss limitations of TA role.
   b. TAs cannot go “rogue” and change due dates or design tests or assignments on their own without consulting you (explain there are clear procedures for diverging from a syllabus and they must avoid doing so).
   c. TAs are not allowed to handle cases of suspected plagiarism, so let them know what the process is if they encounter it.
   d. Provide guidance on how to establish and maintain boundaries with students.
   e. Advise that they should inform you immediately if there is a possible conflict of interest between them and a student (e.g., personal relationship with someone in the course).
   f. Discuss their working relationship with you and the Course Coordinator (if applicable).

3. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES – Questions to Consider When Drawing Up the List of Duties for Your TAs
   a. TRAINING
      i. 3-hour employment training is mandatory in first TA appointment at U of T; first-time Course Instructors are to receive 6 hours of training.
      ii. TAs who lead tutorials or labs must now receive training that is directly relevant for the instructional focus of the tutorial or lab. This means that you should identify which of the University’s 4 tutorial categories your TAs should be trained in: discussion teaching, skill development, review, lab/practical. You must also identify whether your TAs require training in scaling their learning activities to different sizes of tutorials.
      iii. Course-specific information should be provided in a pre-course meeting (this meeting should be indicated in their contract, as should all course-specific meetings).
iv. Will there be any additional training required? (depends on contract).

v. Relevant, key departmental, divisional and institutional policies and procedures must be communicated
to TAs – when the TAs receive this information either at the mandatory training session or the pre-course
meeting, have them sign for receipt of any hard copy information.

vi. Consider getting a senior TA involved in training and pre-course meeting, if possible.

b. PREPARATION

i. Clarify what TAs are expected to already know.

ii. Prep time covers preparation of instructional materials, not learning of subject content.

iii. How much time should it take to prepare a typical lab/tutorial section/class?

iv. How much time should it take to prepare a quiz/test/essay question/exam?

v. Provide strategies for time management (both in terms of preparing a realistic amount of material for a set
amount of time, and managing time while teaching within a section or lab).

vi. If possible, provide a sample lesson plan or a sample assignment to use as a model.

c. CONTACT – describe what counts as “contact time” with students

i. How and when are office hours to be conducted, if applicable? What should happen during office hours?

ii. Consider out-of-the-classroom contact (can TAs meet with students in cafes or in the library to review class
material)?

iii. Virtual contact: how much email is too much email? Can TAs grade assignments that are submitted via email
attachments? Are TAs even expected to correspond with students via email? A specific time limit on e-mail
use would be helpful.

iv. Will TAs be required to attend lectures? If so, this must be included in the DDAH (Description of Duties and
Allocation of Hours form).

d. GRADING

i. Provide explicit instructions and guidelines for evaluation of assignments.

ii. If applicable, provide a rubric.

iii. If possible, provide a sample graded assignment (either use an anonymized copy from a former student in
the course, or invent your own with comments).

iv. If possible, run a group grading session before TAs must mark the 1st assignment or exam; get TAs to mark
the assignment first individually and then come together to discuss the comments and grades given—TAs
should explain and justify their feedback and marks.

e. OTHER DUTIES

i. Exam invigilation/proctoring.

ii. Designing the mid-term or final exam.

iii. Assignment or test design.

iv. Management of discussion or student questions on the portal (Blackboard).

v. Working as a “Lead TA”.

vi. Preparation of study guides or manuals for students.

vii. Uploading information into the portal (e.g. grades) or management of course materials in the portal.

viii. Photocopying.
4. EXPECTATIONS
   a. Your expectations regarding TAs: preparedness, content competence, overall professionalism (punctuality, etc.), conduct with other TAs in the team, conduct in class, conduct outside of class, quality of feedback given to students, availability/responsiveness.
   b. Your expectations for students: in-class conduct, how students should progress through the course (what are potential blocks that you might anticipate?), your definition of “student success”.
   c. What TAs should expect from students: let the TAs know what kinds of students they’ll be working with in this course.
   d. What the TAs can expect from you.

5. COMMUNICATION
   a. How will you stay in touch with your TAs?
      i. Mass emails?
      ii. Portal community set up for course TAs?
      iii. Online newsletter?
      iv. How often should you check in with them and they with you?
      v. How should TAs communicate with students? (What constitutes acceptable or unacceptable discourse?)
      vi. TAs should acknowledge all course information and official documents received—if possible, in writing.

6. EMAIL ETIQUETTE (Does your department have a specific email policy?)
   a. Recommend TAs adopt office email etiquette - assume that messages are public and could be read by anyone; all messages should have a professional tone; messages should be brief.
   b. TAs should acknowledge ALL emails from you and from their students; they don’t need to answer every message, but a brief acknowledgement should be sent.
   c. Recommend to TAs that they:
      • be concise, polite
      • avoid teaching complex or well-lectured material via email
      • never argue via email
      • never give out grades via email (or discuss grades at all)

7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT - Some Options
   a. If at all possible, share your lesson plans, representative teaching materials, and best strategies
   b. Encourage TAs to also share their materials—perhaps build a course repository for instructors
   c. Provide a list of useful websites and resources, as well as a list of contacts.
   d. For international TAs, provide a list of “gambits,” sentence fragments (teaching phrases) they can use in specific situations when speaking with students.
   e. Also for international TAs, provide a list of vocabulary or terms useful for teaching in your discipline.
   f. Perform in-class observations for your TAs and invite them to observe you teaching.
   g. Organize informal gatherings (brown-bag or pizza lunches, coffee breaks) for TAs to vent frustrations and raise issues, concerns, questions.
   h. Invite senior TAs to pair up with junior TAs (the “buddy” system).
   i. Identify a mentor in the department for you (a senior colleague with experience managing a TA)!

Questions regarding the CUPE 3902 Unit 1 collective agreement should be directed to the Designated Authority in your department or to Labour Relations.
For all inquiries, please contact,

ctsi.teaching@utoronto.ca
services.ta@utoronto.ca