



Teaching Assistants' Training Program

2021-22

*Teaching
Assistants
& Course
Instructors*

TRAINING INFORMATION PACKAGE

2021-22 TRAINING FOR FIRST APPOINTMENT TEACHING

STEP 1: Understand the Training Process

At the University of Toronto, students working as teaching assistants, teaching laboratory assistants, graders, and instructors are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 3902, Unit 1. As per the 2021-2023 collective agreement between CUPE 3902, Unit 1 and the University of Toronto, first-time teaching assistants shall receive 4 hours of paid job training. Teaching assistants can request additional training, up to 4 hours, for each subsequent appointment.

It is the responsibility of the hiring department to provide the job training. However, the Teaching Assistants' Training Program (TATP) offers a number of services to support departments in meeting this mandate.

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.

Below is information on identifying your tutorial category as well as information about the different ways that the TATP can support the training process. 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.

STEP 2: Identify 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. All TATP training sessions are highly interactive and are intended to model techniques and approaches TAs can then use in their own tutorials. TATP offers tutorial training in the following categories:



DISCUSSION-BASED TUTORIALS



TATP training in this category will include...

- guiding principles for leading effective discussions in both classroom and lab settings
- how to prepare yourself to lead an engaging discussion
- how to create an environment conducive to effective discussion
- strategies to encourage students to come to tutorials prepared for meaningful discussion, and what to do when students do not arrive prepared
- techniques to initiate, facilitate and sustain effective discussion
- how to provide formative feedback to students during and following discussion
- how to effectively debrief a discussion

SKILL DEVELOPMENT TUTORIALS



A Skill Development tutorial involves a TA leading students through practice-based learning in order to hone a specific skill linked to the course learning objectives. As a central training program, the TATP does not offer discipline-specific skills-based training. Rather, TATP training in this category focuses on four key areas essential to supporting undergraduate learning across a wide range of disciplines. TATP training sessions in this category are divided into four different sub-categories: Critical Reading and Reflection; Supporting Student Writing; and Problem Sets. NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: Although these sub-categories may reflect several of the skills that you would like students to learn through their tutorial experience, you should only select one of these skill development sessions if it is the primary activity in your course tutorial.

In each of these sub-categories, TATP training will include...

Critical Reading and Reflection

- an examination of the underlying barriers to successful reading in the undergraduate classroom
- how to motivate students to engage in critical reading
- how to support critical reading inside and outside the classroom
- an exploration of different methods for integrating reading strategies throughout a tutorial to promote deep learning
- strategies and activities to foster habits of critical reading and reflection in students

Supporting Student Writing

- the benefits of using writing to deepen students' comprehension of key course concepts
- how to use both in-class writing and assigned writing outside the classroom to expand students' understanding
- how to use written feedback to develop writing skills in students
- short writing exercises that will promote the development of writing skills
- a review of tools to support student writing

Problem Sets (for TAs in math-based, science and engineering disciplines)

- how to plan an effective problem set tutorial
- strategies for highlighting the process of solving problems
- how to effectively model a problem for students
- how to engage students in the problem-solving process (incorporating small group work and active learning approaches to reinforce key concepts and problem-solving approaches)

REVIEW AND Q&A TUTORIALS



Although most tutorials involve some sort of review that supports the consolidation of core course concepts, Review/Q&A training sessions are directed specifically towards TAs assigned to Review tutorials as identified in the student information system. Typically, Review/Q&A tutorials are held periodically throughout the term and vary in length from one hour to several hours in one sitting. These Review/Q&A sessions are either mandatory or elective and can involve a set number of students or an unspecified number of students. This training is therefore not intended for TAs who happen to do some review as part of their normal discussion-based or lab-based tutorial teaching.

TATP training in this category will include...

- how to prepare to lead a review tutorial
- tools, resources and strategies for helping students prepare for assignments, tests and exams
- strategies to check for student understanding during the tutorial
- practical tips to offer students to help them develop effective course review and study skills
- activities to assist students in remembering and articulating course content, expressing key course concepts, and making connections between different components of course content

LABORATORIES/PRACTICALS



TATP training in this category will include...

- how to plan for a lab/practical tutorial
- how to deliver an effective pre-lab talk
- how to effectively and efficiently demonstrate procedures and processes for students
- time management – strategies for keeping everyone on track
- how to effectively monitor student progress (including strategies for helping students make connections between an experimental process and theory or real-world application)
- how to provide formative feedback to students

*** PLEASE NOTE***

These activities are not mutually-exclusive and we acknowledge that any one tutorial may involve a range of them based on the established learning outcomes. These 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.

STEP 3: Select Appropriate Training Option

Once you have determined the appropriate category for your course tutorial, you next need to identify the appropriate training your TAs will require. The TATP offers 2 options for TA Training:

OPTION 1: Departments can develop and deliver the entire 4-hour training session.

OPTION 2: Departments can refer TAs to the TATP for some or all of their first appointment training. The TATP will be offering 2-hour online sessions and several asynchronous online training modules.

Please note: All TATP training for the Fall 2021 semester will take place online.

1-Hour Asynchronous Online Modules: All online modules are available for self-enrolment in Quercus.

All first time TAs should complete the [Policies & Procedures for Teaching Assistants at the University of Toronto](#) module.

Departments should then direct TAs to complete one of the following online modules, based on the tutorial category selected:

[Discussion Based Tutorials](#)

[Skill Development: Critical Reading and Reflection](#)

[Skill Development: Supporting Student Writing](#)

[Skill Development: Problem Sets](#)

[Laboratories/Practicals](#)

[Review and Q&A](#)

If TAs are grading only, they can complete the [Grading](#) module.

If TAs require further training on Quercus, they can complete the [Introduction to Quercus](#) module.

Please consult the [FAQ for Administrators](#) for details (and direct TAs to the [FAQ for Teaching Assistants](#) to enrol).

2-Hour Synchronous Training Sessions: topics covered include key instructional techniques, time management, communicating with students, effective student support, working with your Course Supervisor, etc. TAs must register prior to the session. The TATP will run separate synchronous training sessions for online teaching **or** for in-person & hybrid teaching strategies. Please review the [COVID 19 In Class \(In-Person\) Instructional and Teaching Lab Guideline](#) document prepared by Environmental Health and Safety.

Registration coming soon. Check the [Job Training Page](#) for updates.

OPTION 3: Departments can book a 2-hour synchronous training session for their department if they have more than 30 TAs that require first-appointment training. Unlike previous years, these sessions will not be customizable. Departments can choose between online, or in-person & hybrid teaching strategies for this 2-hour session. In order to complete the remaining 2 hours of mandatory paid training, the TATP recommends the 1-hour asynchronous sessions as outlined above. If your department has more than 30 TAs, you can book a departmental training session using the [Departmental Training Request Form](#).

For all TATP sessions and modules, TAs will receive a record of attendance that can be remitted to departments as proof of completion of a training session/module.

Online TA Week

Monday, August 30 - Thursday, September 2

This week of synchronous online sessions is open to all new and returning TAs at the University of Toronto. All sessions during online TA week can be used as paid training. More information and registration can be found on the [Online TA Week Webpage](#).

Day	Time	Teaching Foundations (sessions appropriate for first-appointment TAs)	Teaching Expertise (sessions for returning TAs)	
Monday, Aug 30	9:00 - 10:00	Welcome and What I Wish TAs Knew About Our Students		
	10:15 - 11:15	Preparing for Your First Tutorial in the Sciences & Engineering	Preparing for Your First Tutorial in the Humanities & Social Sciences	Designing Effective Online Learning Experiences
	11:30 - 12:30	Labs and Practicals	Discussion-Based Tutorials	Fostering Equity and Inclusion in Teaching & Learning
	1:00 - 2:00	TAing at UTSC / TAing at UTM		
Tuesday, Aug 31	1:00 - 2:00	Teaching Tips from the TATP Teaching Excellence Award Winners		
	2:15 - 3:15	An Introduction to Grading in the Sciences & Engineering	An Introduction to Grading in the Humanities & Social Sciences	Creating a Teaching Presence in the Online Environment
	3:30 - 4:30	Critical Reading and Reflection	Problem Sets	Identifying and Addressing Microaggressions in the University Classroom
Wednesday, Sep 1	9:00 - 10:00	Answering the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action		
	10:15 - 11:15	Supporting Student Writing	Review and Q&A Tutorials	Writing & Workshopping Your Land Acknowledgement
	11:30 - 12:30	Your Teaching Persona as an International TA	An Introduction to UDL for Online/Remote Teaching	Feedback On the Fly
Thursday, Sep 2	1:00 - 2:00	Supporting Your Students & Supporting Yourself, CUPE 3092 Unit 1 Presentation		
	2:15 - 3:15	Library, Accessibility Services, Student Life (Academic Success), Mental Health		
	3:30 - 4:30	Educational Technology at the University of Toronto		

2021-22 TRAINING OPTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME CUPE 3902 COURSE INSTRUCTORS

As per the 2021-2023 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.

OPTION #1: 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.

OPTION #2: 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) to complete the remaining 4 hours of paid training.

OPTION #3: First-time Course Instructors may attend the TATP offering “**Course Instructor Training Camp**” to receive all six hours of paid training (the training will be a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous content). 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 distress, academic integrity, active & collaborative learning, and working with Quercus. For registration, please visit the [Course Instructor Training Page](#).

COURSE INSTRUCTOR TRAINING CAMP - FALL 2021

Thursday, August 19th, 2021

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 in-department workshops for first-time Unit 1 Course Instructors.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

For the most current information on first-time Course Instructor training with TATP, please visit the [TATP web page](#)



New for 2021: Additional Paid Training for TAs and CIs

As per the 2021-23 collective agreement, in addition to the first appointment training for Teaching Assistants and Course Instructors, the University shall provide two hours of work-related paid training per academic year in which they hold at least one appointment.

Training in the following subject areas will be considered work-related training for all appointments: pedagogy and inclusive pedagogy; anti-opression and anti-racism; cultural competency; accommodations and crisis referrals. In addition, the following training will be considered work-related for work required to be performed remotely: online technology; online course design and management.

The TATP is working with partners across the University to provide training options in the areas above. These offerings will be 2-hour synchronous sessions running throughout the academic year. These sessions can be taken both as job training and counted towards the TATP's professional development certificate programs.

As directed by labour relations, departments should communicate to their TAs and CIs about this training entitlement. TAs and CIs are not required to participate in these additional two hours of training.