Introduction

This document is created based on the TSSU policy and the graduate student funding policy of the School of Engineering Science. By the TSSU policy, all applicants are partitioned into different priority categories, based on their programs, schools, and total number of received TA units. In addition, applicants with merit-based scholarships equal or greater than a 5.17 base unit appointment will have lower priority. On the other hand, from spring 2014, the School of Engineering Science will provide each new PhD and MASc student some guaranteed GF and TA support (Average of $6,000/year for four years for PhD and $4,000/year for two years for MASc. Please refer to the school’s funding policy for the details). The School will also try to apply this policy to existing students. Therefore the priority categories defined by the TSSU policy are further partitioned to accommodate this funding policy.

In order to receive the guaranteed GF and TA support, a graduate student should always apply for TAs. Sometimes the school does not receive enough qualified TA applications. Therefore students that have received their guaranteed GF and TA support can still get additional TAs, despite the fact that they will have lower priority.

Important Notes:

- If a student will be away for more than one week in the TA appointment term, the student must declare this in the TA Application Form.
1. Excerpted TSSU Agreement

The priority for appointment/re-appointment as a Teaching Assistant in the School of Engineering Science is in accordance with Section B.1, F.1 - F.9 and H.1 - H.2 of Article XIII of the Collective Agreement with the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU), especially the following sections:

Article XIII. Teaching Assistants

B. Qualifications
B.1. Many departments include a wide range of specializations and, in order to be appointed, a person must have sufficient knowledge in the discipline of the course to interpret the course material.

F. Appointment Priority
F.1 Teaching Assistants may be appointed to fill teaching support positions only when faculty members are unavailable. Faculty members and full time employees of the University are not Teaching Assistants. However, no appointment of a Sessional Lecturer I may be made if there is a qualified graduate student within the first priority group (specified in F.3.) available for appointment as a GTA (graduate teaching assistant).

F.3 a. In hiring Teaching Assistants, departments shall give priority to the applicants in the following order:
(i) Graduate students registered in the department
(ii) Graduate students registered in other departments
(iii) Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (UTA) or External Teaching Assistants (ETA)

b. Prior to appointing a Teaching Assistant from applicants in (ii) or (iii), the department must have provided at least a five (5) base unit appointment to those applicants in (i). Subsequently, the same will be applied to those applicants in (ii) prior to appointing a Teaching Assistant from applicants in (iii). If any graduate students request less than five (5) base units, then fulfilling that request will be sufficient to comply with this requirement.

F.4 a) If a graduate student indicates in writing a desire to TA in their department, s/he will be deemed to have applied for all available TA positions in the relevant semester. Such graduate students will not be required to apply for specific appointments, but may indicate their preferences for particular courses.
   b) Graduate students from outside the department must apply in writing and indicate the courses to which they are applying; they may indicate any preferences for particular courses.

F.5 If Teaching Assistant positions become available after the initially posted positions in the department have been assigned, the department will notify all graduate students registered in the department, via email. In addition, the position will be posted on the central posting system in accordance with the last paragraph of Article XVI.

Qualified graduate students who have been allocated less than five (5) base units in a given semester who apply specifically for these new positions, will have priority for additional base units up to five (5). These positions shall be assigned in accordance with Article XIII F.
F.8 Failure to give timely acceptance of an offer of appointment may result in loss of priority for that semester.

F.9 The appointing department shall make all reasonable efforts to apply candidates’ stated preferences, when appointments and assignments are made.

**H. Re-employment as a Teaching Assistant**

H.1 To be considered for re-employment, a graduate or undergraduate Teaching Assistant must maintain satisfactory performance as a Teaching Assistant.

H.2 The re-employment of Teaching Assistants will also depend on the needs and budget resources of the university.

---

**2. Detailed Priority System for TA Selection in Engineering Science**

According to Article XIII F.3.2 of the Collective Agreement with the TSSU, when selecting TAs for a course among applicants within the same priority group as outlined in Article XIII F (denoted as P0), the School of Engineering Science will give priority in the following order. In this document, the Graduate Fellowship (GF) includes the GF from the Dean of Graduate Studies and the GF from the Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS-GF), and the latter is counted as 0.5 GF. Also, ENSC Master students include both MASc and MEng students.

P1. According to B.1, high priority is given to applicants that have sufficient knowledge in the discipline of the course as judged by the course instructors based on the information provided in the application forms and the qualifications listed in the posting.

P2. ENSC graduate students that have been promised certain GF and TA support in their offer letters and have not received their full allocation have higher priority.

P3. ENSC PhD Students that have received less than $24,000 GF and TA support ($30,000 for PhD students transferred from MASc program) and ENSC MASc students that have received less than $8,000 GF and TA support at the time of application have higher priority.

P4. ENSC PhD students that have received less than $6,000 GF and TA support and ENSC MASc students that have received less than $4,000 GF and TA support in the academic year that the semester of TA appointment belongs to have higher priority.

P5. If an assignment within a priority group requires a selection between applicants, the graduate student without financial support from merit-based scholarships or merit based fellowships (such as GF, FAS GF, President Scholarship, Tri Council awards, foreign government merit-based scholarships and entrance scholarships) during the semester of appointment with a value equal to at least a 5.17 appointment will have priority for the appointment.

P6. Instructor’s ranking, based on course qualifications, background, communications skill, TA rating on course evaluation forms and instructor evaluation (for existing TAs), as well as past TA experience of each student. Generally, for courses with one TA it is preferred to assign an experienced TA, and for courses with more than one TA, it is preferred to assign at least one
experienced TA. Although the department will use each instructor’ rankings as a primary guide, the department reserves the right to select alternative candidates based on their experience, performance, expertise, and when there are no enough candidates for a course. In addition, normally, no individual should be assigned TA for more than one ENSC course in a semester – unless there are some special circumstances, such as when two courses are co-offered (e.g., the W courses), or when there is no required expertise or lack of number of candidates in the pool for a course.

3. Engineering Science TA Selection Procedure

Based on F.3.a and the priority list above, the TA application form will ask students some questions to classify them into different priority categories. Together with instructor’s judgment of whether the student has the required qualifications or not, as well as the ranking of those applicants that have the qualifications, each applicant for a course will be assigned a seven-digit index: [P0 P1 P2 P3 P4 P5 P6], defined as follows:

- **P0**: P0 is defined according to Article XIII F.3.a.
  - P0=1 for ENSC MASc, PhD, and PhD students transferred from MASc program (including incoming new PhD and MASc students).
  - P0=2 for ENSC MEng students (including incoming new MEng students).
  - P0=3 for graduate students in other departments
  - P0=4 for other applicants such as undergraduate students and external applicants.

- **P1**: P1=0 for students that are judged by the instructor to have the specific qualifications for the course, P1=1 otherwise.

- **P2**: P2=0 for ENSC graduate students that have been promised certain TA and GF support in their offer letters but have not received their full allocation for the academic year, P2=1 otherwise.

- **P3**: For ENSC graduate students with P0=1: P3=0 if the students’ total GF and TA support is below the thresholds listed in priority P2 in Sec. 2 above (i.e., $8,000, $24,000 and $30,000 for MASc, PhD, and PhD students transferred from MASc program, respectively). P3=1 otherwise. P3 = 2 for students with P0 > 1.

- **P4**: For ENSC PhD and MASc students, P4=0 for PhD students that have received less than $6,000 GF and TA support and ENSC MASc students that have received less than $4,000 GF and TA support in the academic year the applied TA appointment belongs to, P4=1 otherwise. P4=2 for other students. The support includes GFs that have been approved for the students but will be received in a future semester.

- **P5**: P5=0 for students without merit-based scholarships or fellowships (such as GF, FASGF, PS, NSERC and SFU major entrance scholarship, but RA is not counted) equal to at least a five (5) base unit TA appointments during the semester of the applied TA appointment, P5=1 otherwise.
• P6: P6 is the instructor’s ranking of the students with P1=0, i.e., having the specific expertise for the course: \textbf{P6}=1-9, \textit{and A to Z} if there are more than nine applicants.

By this definition, \textbf{smaller indices have higher priorities}. If a student applies for multiple courses, the student will get multiple indices, one for each course, and they only differ in P1 and P6. Instructors only need to rank all applicants based on their technical qualifications, and does not need to consider which category the student belongs to.

The TA selection for each course is thus largely reduced to the lexicographical ordering of the indices of the applicants for that course. That is, we assign TA in the order of 1000001, 1000002, \ldots, 1000011, \ldots, 2000001, \ldots, 511111Z, unless a student has already been allocated to another course.