Appendix E – TA Checklist

Teaching Assistant (TA) CHECKLIST
For Course Supervisors re. Teaching Assistant Appointments

1. Establish Duties and Responsibilities of Teaching Support Staff:
   At the outset of the course, outline the duties and responsibilities of the Teaching Assistants assigned to the course. During the first week of classes in each semester, complete Time Use Guidelines and consult with the Support Staff Employee on the assigned times for the various activities. Guidelines should indicate the approximate length expected to be devoted to each major activity.

   Where a TA is required to use course-specific software with which she/he has had no previous experience or training, you as Course Supervisor should allocate a reasonable amount of time, up to 7 hours, in the Time Use Guidelines for preparation related to learning to use the software. Additional hours may be allocated by the Course Supervisor, with Departmental approval.

   Time used for electronic communication makes up part of the “Office hours and Student Consultation” section of the Time Use Guideline form.

2. Professional Development and Teaching Orientation:
   In the Fall and Spring semesters, Teaching Assistants may claim up to six hours of preparation time for each semester in which they have an appointment, subject to verification, for mandatory or non-mandatory orientation and/or professional development.

   For TAs, time spent at the Fall and Spring Semester TA Orientations shall be considered part of the six hours of professional development.

3. Statutory Holiday Compensation:
   To compensate for all statutory holidays which may occur in a semester, the total workload will be reduced by one (1) hour for each base unit assigned, excluding the additional 0.17 base unit for preparation, e.g. four (4) hours reduction for a 4.17 base unit appointment.

4. Inform Teaching Support Staff of Evaluative Criteria:
   Upon commencement of duties, inform all of your teaching support employees of the teaching evaluative criteria you will be using. For TAs, review both your department’s evaluation form, and the basic evaluation form in Appendix E. An employee must be evaluated every semester that s/he is employed.

   Note: Section B of the Evaluation Form in Appendix E, contains five evaluative criteria.

5. Review Teaching Assistants’ Workloads:
   Prior to the end of week five, you are required to conduct a workload review if the size of a tutorial is over 24 students or where the student to TA ratio is greater than 26:1 in a scheduled lab.

   You will also be required to conduct a workload review prior to the end of week five if two (2) or more of the following factors affecting workload occur:

   a) the average size of tutorials, labs or workshops for the TA is over fifteen (15), or the enrollment in any tutorial, lab or workshop assigned exceeds eighteen (18) (some exceptions apply),

   b) the course is being offered for the first time,

   c) the course has been substantially modified (e.g. new text or new software),

   d) it is the TA's first appointment,

   e) you are supervising TAs for the first time,
f) the type of examinations and/or assignments have a significant impact on workload when considered in combination with enrollment (e.g. essays vs. multiple-choice exams).

If a workload review is required, you should conduct it as soon as reasonably possible after the week three (3) enrollment data is available, by contacting the TA and discussing the workload factors.

Where you conclude that the workload required will, by semester end, exceed the total workload hours of the appointment, then it will be necessary to either reduce the workload or provide additional compensation. Completed reviews must be forwarded to your Department Chair who will advise the TA of the results and reasons for the decision in writing.

Even if a workload review is not triggered by the above criteria, a TA may submit a written request for a workload review to the Department Chair if s/he has workload concerns.

6. Advise of Performance Problems:
Whenever reasonably possible, inform your teaching support staff of any serious or continuing performance problems and attempt to resolve the situation before citing such problems in evaluations, or using them in any proceedings against the employee.

Employees must be advised in writing of any written reports which express dissatisfaction with their work performance or work-related conduct.

7. Forward Evaluations:
By the end of the first week of classes of the following semester, a copy of the department's evaluation must be forwarded to the employee.

TIME USE GUIDELINES (TUG) FORMS

Time Use Guidelines form for Teaching Assistants and Tutor Markers* can be found here: http://www.tssu.ca/resources/forms/

*Note: Tutor Marker positions are only ever applicable for Distance Ed courses.

Contact Brad Mladenovic (bma16@sfu.ca, 778-782-7188) for help with completing TUG forms.