

The Teaching Assistant Checklist:

Questions to Ask

The *Teaching Assistant Checklist: Questions to Ask* was compiled by the [University of Waterloo](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/) and is a great resource that includes an extensive list of questions you might ask your course instructor to ensure that you are aware of your responsibilities and that you have sufficient resources and support to complete your TA role successfully.

Remember that you can check-in with the course instructor throughout the term, and that you can revisit these questions as you go. If you have any questions about your TA contract, we encourage you to connect with the TA, TF, RA and Post-Doc Union PSAC 901.

Questions may include:

- What is my role? Will I be lecturing in tutorials, leading discussions, conducting labs, and/or grading? Will I be monitoring online forums and/or online discussions?
- How often will I be performing any of the above roles? How will the course instructor define my role? (e.g: What is involved in running a tutorial? Will I be asked to create my own lesson plans or will they be provided by the professor?) How many hours should be allocated for tutorial prep?
- Do I have to be present at lectures?
- If I am to give individual assistance, how much help is too much?
 - What kind of assistance should I not give?
 - Should I organize group help/review sessions?
- If I will be leading discussions, how should I run the sessions? In face-to-face instruction?
Online?
 - Should I stay close to the text or the lectures?
 - Should I encourage all students to talk or should I do most of the talking?
 - Should I only deal with students' problems in discussions?
- If I will be conducting labs, what is the scope of my responsibilities?
 - Do I keep track of supplies and materials?
 - Do I obtain supplies and materials?
 - Do I design or revise experiments?
 - Do I give demonstrations?
 - What do I do in case of emergency or accident?
- If I am to evaluate/grade papers, projects, reports, quizzes, exams, and/or student participation, are the criteria for assigning grades discussed ahead of time? Are TAs provided with rubrics or creating their own?
- Is the process/formula for determining a final grade clear?
 - Who reviews disputed grades?
 - How much time will I have for grading?
 - Should I make two copies of all grades? Should I back-up grades from OnQ?
- How much autonomy will I have to present new ideas, use different teaching methods, or present perspectives different from the instructor's?

- How many office hours should I hold and when?
- What should I do, whom should I contact, if I am unable to attend a class/lab/tutorial?
- How should special accommodations be handled?
- What other responsibilities will I have?

Teaching Assistant Checklist: Questions to Ask, University of Waterloo