Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

A. General Inquiries
B. I am an incoming graduate student / I haven’t yet held any TAship
C. I have an entitlement with the Department of English / I am holding my 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th TAship
D. I have held 6 TAships and I am now ‘post-entitlement’

A. General Inquiries

• Where can I find information about Teaching Assistantships in English?
  You can consult the Handbook for Teaching Assistant of the Department of English here: http://www.english.utoronto.ca/employ/TAinfo.htm
  You can consult the Teaching Assistantships List of Important Dates here: http://www.english.utoronto.ca/employ/TAinfo.htm
  You can contact the TA coordinator: Fabienne Michelet here: eng.ta@utoronto.ca.

• Whom do I contact if I have further questions regarding TAships?
  Fabienne Michelet, the TA coordinator here: eng.ta@utoronto.ca

• Whom do I contact if I have further questions regarding my funding package?
  Tanuja Persaud, the Graduate Administrator and Counsellor here: deptofenglish.graduate@utoronto.ca
  Fabienne Michelet, the TA coordinator here: eng.ta@utoronto.ca

• Whom do I contact if I have further questions regarding payroll and contracts?
  Katharine Bell, the Department Assistant, here: eng.assist@utoronto.ca
  Fabienne Michelet, the TA coordinator here: eng.ta@utoronto.ca

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of us.

• How do I apply to TAships in English?
  Notices announcing positions to be filled are available via the Department website (under ‘Employment’): https://taships.iit.artsci.utoronto.ca/eng/postings. There, you will find information about available TA positions (including the submission deadline) and a link to the department TAship system where you will be able to submit your application online. You will need to log in with your UTORid and password. Clicking on the ‘Applications’ link will allow you to complete the application form.

  If you do not yet have a UTORid (which is to be activated on campus at Robarts library), you can use the JOINId that you received approximately 3-5 days after you submitted your online application for admission in an acknowledgement email from U of T. Once you have activated your JOINid, you can
Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

use it to log onto the TAShip system and start applying to positions. Here are links to information on JOINids: http://sites.utoronto.ca/security/joinid-faq.htm and https://join.utoronto.ca/

TAship postings are also distributed on the Graduate English Listserv and on the Central HR & Equity Job postings website: https://unit1.hrandequity.utoronto.ca.

- When do I apply to TAships in English?
  Fall/Winter session: TA positions to be filled are announced by June 30th; TAship offers are made no later than August 7th.
  Summer session: TA positions to be filled are announced by March 15th; TAship offers are made no later than April 22nd.
  There are also emergency positions advertised throughout the year.

- What are the hiring criteria?
The Department of English considers and implements all the following criteria when making appointments: academic qualifications, demonstrable suitability for the position, the University's need to support excellent students in pursuing graduate studies with the hiring Department or a Graduate Centre or Institute, enrolment in a recognized graduate program of study in the hiring Department or a Graduate Centre or Institute, financial need, the need to acquire experience, previous experience, teaching ability and, for continuing students, previous satisfactory employment under the provisions of the Collective Agreement. As stipulated by the Collective Agreement, students who have lapsed are ineligible for a TAship appointment.

- When are TAships appointments held?
  Primary appointments are made for the Fall/Winter Session (September-April), for Full (Y) courses and/or Half (F or S) courses.
  There are also a few positions available for the Summer Session (May – August), for Full (Y) courses and/or Half (F or S) courses.

- Are TAships offered on all three campuses?
  Yes. TAs may be assigned to lead tutorials and help with marking and course administration in courses taught on all 3 campuses (St. George, Mississauga, and Scarborough).

Although graduate students’ preference as to the campus location of their TA appointment will be taken into account, both the initial TA appointment and the subsequent appointment obligation related to that appointment may be met through position(s) on any one of the three campuses (UTM, UTSC, or St George) in courses in the same discipline as the initial appointment. Over the course of a PhD program, TAs can anticipate working on more than one campus.
Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

- If I am assigned a TAship at a suburban campus, how often am I expected to travel to UTM or UTSC?
  Students should be ready to travel to the campus where the course in which they work as TAs is offered (for invigilation, office hours, lecture attendance, tutorials, etc.) as often as required.

Teaching Assistants must be available from the first day of classes through to the last day for completion of marking of final examinations.

B. I am an incoming graduate student / I haven’t yet held any TAship

- I receive funding from the University of Toronto as part of my acceptance package: do I still have to work as a Teaching Assistant (TA)?
  Yes, almost all PhD and MA Creative Writing students must work some hours as TAs as part of their funding package. The number of hours varies according to other sources of funding but is usually in the range of 170 – 190 hours.

Some students may decide not to take on any TA work. If you are thinking of not working as a TA in your first year, you must talk to Tanuja Persaud, the Graduate Administrator, to make sure that you are fully informed of how this decision may impact your funding package.

- I returned the “Request for Information” Form that I received with my acceptance documents. Is there anything else I need to do?
  Yes. The “Request for Information” Form (to be returned by May 1st) is for information only; it is not an application form.

Incoming students who wish to work as TA during the upcoming Fall-Winter session must complete and submit an application to the TA positions that will be advertised on June 30th.

Students will have about 3 weeks to submit an application, and the outcome of your application will be communicated to them via email by August 7th.

- When do I apply to TAships?
  Fall/Winter session: TA positions to be filled are announced by June 30th; TAship offers are made no later than August 7th. There are also emergency positions advertised throughout the year.
• **To what kind of TAships should I apply?**
Incoming students are strongly encouraged to apply to as many positions as possible. They are invited to use the ‘Comments’ section of the application form to indicate to which of these positions they would prefer to be assigned.

*Marking vs. tutorials:* incoming students, because of the heavy coursework that they have to complete, are encouraged to consider TAships that do not involve tutorials.

• **Will I be assigned a TAship in my main area of research?**
Where possible, students are assigned positions reflecting their preferences. When this is not possible, TAs will be assigned to courses in fields in which they are or should be qualified to assist.

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### C. I have an entitlement with the Department of English / I am holding my 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th TAship

• **How do I ensure that I am offered a TAship for the following Fall/Winter session?**
Teaching Assistants seeking renewal for their five subsequent appointments (i.e., Fall/Winter TAships #2 through 6) must confirm their intention to take up their next contractually obligated subsequent appointment and they must fill out a Course Preference form through the online TAship system to indicate their preferred subject areas, specific courses, and campus location.

For MA students entering the 2nd year of the Creative Writing program: they must return the “Course Preference Form” that will have been sent to them via email to indicate their preferred subject areas, specific courses, and campus location.

• **When do I have to indicate my intention to take up my next subsequent appointment and my TAship preferences?**
*End of March:* an email will remind students holding subsequent appointments to indicate their preferences. ‘Anticipated course offerings’ for the upcoming Fall/Winter session will be announced (here: [https://taships.ilt.artsci.utoronto.ca/eng/entitlement-postings](https://taships.ilt.artsci.utoronto.ca/eng/entitlement-postings)) to help TAs indicate their preferences.

*May 1st* is the annual deadline for indicating course preferences for students holding subsequent appointments for Fall/Winter-session courses.
Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

- **Will I be assigned a TAship in my main area of research?**
  Due consideration is given to the preferences of applicants as to the nature and location of their TAship appointments. Where possible, students are assigned positions reflecting their preferences. When this is not possible, TAs will be assigned to courses in fields in which they are or should be qualified to assist.

- **I would like to work more hours as a TA than what I have been offered as part of my subsequent appointment. What do I do?**
  Students who want additional TA hours are invited to submit an application to the TA positions advertised at the end of June; to the various emergency postings advertised throughout the year; and to Summer session TAships.

- **I wish to work fewer hours than the total hours of my subsequent appointment: is this possible?**
  Yes, students holding subsequent appointments may indicate their preference to work fewer hours than what they are entitled to. The hours that they choose not to work are forfeited and cannot be ‘carried forward’ to the following academic year.

- **I do not wish to take up my next subsequent appointment. What do I do?**
  TAs will indicate their wish to defer their next subsequent appointment when filling out their Course Preference Form. Once during the course of a TA’s employment, they have the right to defer a subsequent appointment (i.e., to delay an appointment to a non-consecutive academic session). Upon written request, additional variation in the consecutive nature of the academic sessions in which a TA is appointed to subsequent appointments may be granted at the sole discretion of the employing Department.

**D. I have held 6 TAships and I am now ‘post-entitlement’**

- **I wish to work as TA: what do I do?**
  TAs who no longer hold a subsequent appointment with the Department of English need to apply to the TA positions advertised in late June; to the emergency positions advertised throughout the year; and to Summer session TAships.

- **I am graduating: am I still eligible to submit an application for TA positions?**
  Students are eligible for TAships starting before their convocation date:
Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

- November graduation: F- and Y-term TAships (starting in September)
- March graduation: F- and Y-term TAships (starting in September) and S-term TAships (starting in January)
- June graduation: F- and Y-term Summer session TAships (starting in April)