

Frequently Asked Questions – Teaching Assistantships (Department of English)

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A. GENERAL INQUIRIES

- **Where can I find information about Teaching Assistantships in English?**

You can go to the Department of English website and its page dedicated to Teaching Assistants here:

<https://www.english.utoronto.ca/about-us/employment-opportunities/teaching-assistants> There, you will find the 'Handbook for Teaching Assistants', which answers some basic questions about TAships, and you can consult the 'Teaching Assistantships List of Important Dates'.

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: tanuja.persaud@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?**

Kelly Hayward, the Department Manager, here: kelly.hayward@utoronto.ca

Fabienne Michelet, the TA coordinator, here: eng.ta@utoronto.ca

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of us; we're happy to help!

- **How do I apply to TAships in English?**

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Notices announcing positions to be filled are available via the Department website (under ‘About Us’ – ‘Employment opportunities’): <https://www.english.utoronto.ca/about-us/employment-opportunities/teaching-assistants> 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 (<https://taships.iit.artsci.utoronto.ca/eng/postings>). You will need to log in with your UTORid and password. Clicking on the ‘Application’ 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 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 implements the following when making appointments: ‘In considering applicants who possess the minimum threshold qualifications required for a posted position, hiring criteria shall be: academic qualifications, the need to acquire experience, previous experience, 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.

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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 TAs 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 subsequent appointment obligations 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.

- **If I am assigned a TAship at UTM or UTSC, how often am I expected to travel to campus?**

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 IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND 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 160 – 180 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.

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- 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 apply to the TA positions that will be advertised on June 30th.

Students will have about 3 weeks to apply, and the outcome of their 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 and any time conflict with their coursework.

Marking vs. tutorials: incoming students, because of the heavy coursework that they have to complete, are strongly 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.

C. I HAVE A SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND I AM HOLDING MY 2ND, 3RD, 4TH, 5TH, OR 6TH TASHIP

- **What are ‘subsequent appointments’?**

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After they have held their first TA appointment (usually in the first year of their PhD), PhD students are entitled to 5 more subsequent appointments (that is, 6 appointments in total). These appointments are usually held during the Fall-Winter session.

Students holding a subsequent appointment are 'guaranteed' to be offered a certain number of hours. Based on their preferences, one (or more) TA position is earmarked for them. TAs are informed of these earmarks by early July.

- **How do I ensure that I am offered a TAship for the following Fall/Winter session?**

Teaching Assistants seeking renewal for their first five subsequent appointments (i.e., Fall/Winter appointments #2 through #6) must confirm their intention to take up their next subsequent appointment and must fill out a Course Preference form to indicate their preferred subject areas, courses, and campus location. This is done through the online TAship system.

- **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.iit.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.

- **Will I be assigned a TAship in my main area of research?**

Due consideration is given to TAs' preferences 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 are assigned to courses in fields in which they are or should be qualified to assist.

TAs starting either their 5th or their 6th subsequent appointment have a one-time-only right to continue as a TA in the course in which they were employed in the previous year.

- **I wish to work more hours as a TA than what I have been offered as part of my subsequent appointment. What do I do?**

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Students who want additional TA hours are invited to apply for the TA positions advertised at the end of June; for the various emergency postings advertised throughout the year; and for 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 may indicate their wish to defer their next subsequent appointment when filling out their Course Preference Form in April. They may also request a deferral of their subsequent appointment at any time until August 15th by contacting the TA coordinator and informing her of their decision.

Once during their employment, TAs have the right to defer a subsequent appointment (i.e., to delay an appointment to a non-consecutive academic session). Deadline: August 15th.

TAs thinking of declining their subsequent appointment and/or of working fewer hours than their entitlement must consult Tanuja Persaud (Graduate Administrator), to make sure that they are fully informed of how these decisions may impact their funding package.

D. I HAD A SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND I HAVE ALREADY HELD 6 TASHIPS OR MORE

After their 6th Fall/Winter appointment, PhD students who have an entitlement with the Department of English have the right to additional appointments of at least seventy (70) hours per academic year.

The process is the same as C above.

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E. I AM GRADUATING: AM I STILL ELIGIBLE TO WORK AS A TA?

Students are eligible to apply for TAships that have a starting date before their convocation date:

November graduation: students graduating in November are eligible for

- F- and Y-term TAships (starting in September)

March graduation: students graduating in March are eligible for

- F- and Y-term TAships (starting in September)
- S-term TAships (starting in January)

June graduation: students graduating in June are eligible for:

- F- and Y-term Summer-session TAships (starting in May)