

Department Policies for Teaching Assistants

These policies are intended to provide Tutors and Markers with information about departmental practices and procedures regarding their duties.

These policies are to be strictly followed; failure to do so may result in the termination of the contract and loss of departmental financial support, and/or jeopardize the chance of any further employment within the Department.

COURSE TUTORS

The Function of a Course Tutor

Tutors meet with students from a single section one hour per week to guide them in solving problems of the kinds they will encounter on midterms and final examinations.

Tutor-Instructor Interaction

Tutors should meet with the course instructor as soon as they are informed of their duties. They should also attend orientation meetings called by the Coordinator of Teaching Assistants and Tutors, in order to find out any special objectives for the tutorials in the course to which they have been assigned. During the semester,

- they should make contact with the course instructor at least once a week, preferably in person, but if necessary by e-mail, to find out any special circumstances relating to their section.
- They should be aware of all notices posted on Moodle relating to their course.
- They should meet with the Coordinator at mutually agreed-upon times to discuss the functioning of the course.
- They are urged to contact the Coordinator for advice on any matter relating to the course.

Private Tutoring

It is *strictly forbidden* for course tutors to offer private tutoring to students in any section of the course in which they are tutoring. University premises cannot be used for private tutoring.

Tutor Duties

- Tutors should arrive in their classrooms 10 to 15 minutes in advance of the scheduled class time, so as to be able to answer individual student questions before the start of class.
- They should begin the tutorial session promptly at the scheduled time.
- They should arrive prepared to discuss exercises of the kinds in the textbook relating to material recently covered by the course instructor, but they should also entertain questions raised by students as time permits.
- Tutors should give special emphasis to exercises involving the basic ideas of the course and applications of the methods taught in the course, as opposed to exercises involving only routine calculation.
- Course examiners will prepare problem sets (approx. 5 per semester) on which quizzes will be based. Tutors should prepare quizzes (approx. 10-15 minutes) based on these problem sets, to be worked out in class by the students, grade the papers submitted by the students,

and record the marks as specified in the course outline. Students who do not write a quiz in the specified class time will not be allowed to make up the quiz at some other time.

- Duties continue until the last tutorial session is given, all quizzes are marked, and marks are submitted as specified.

MATH HELP CENTRE TUTORS

The Function of the Math Help Centre

The Math Help Centre is a free service offered to undergraduate students in MATH 200-209 and MAST 214 ONLY*. It is a drop in centre where students can get help if they are having trouble understanding their weekly assignments/readings. A tutor is expected to guide students through the problems by giving them further explanation and examples to work on.

- * Occasionally the tutor may have a student come in wanting help for a course which is not covered by the Math Help Centre. The tutor should politely explain that the centre does not offer tutoring for that course (it is mentioned on the posted schedule), and suggest that they see their professor for help and/or hire a private tutor (there is a list available in the lobby).

Tutor-Student Interactions

Tutoring is a very important activity as the help given to our undergraduate students will hopefully allow them to successfully pass the course and proceed to higher-level courses, and/or give them the chance to enter programs for which these courses are prerequisites. Tutors must treat students with respect and give them their full attention.

Maximum Time per Student

As stated on several course outlines, the Centre is available to help students in solving problems related to their coursework so that they have a better understanding of the material and NOT a private tutoring service. Therefore, if a student misses a class, it is not reasonable to expect either the professor or the teaching assistant (TA) in the Math Help Centre to cover the missed material. It is also unreasonable for a student to take up a large amount of a TA's time when there are other students waiting in line.

Effective immediately, each student will be allowed a maximum of 15 minutes of Math Help Centre time in any session if there is a line up. When no other students are waiting, it is up to the discretion of the TA, keeping in mind that it is not a private tutoring service.

Dates

The Math Help Centre opens each term on the second or third full week of classes, and closes two or three weeks after classes end. The Graduate Program Assistant will notify the tutor of the exact dates via e-mail. No travel plans are to be made until the end of the assigned duty, unless there is a mid-term break in the schedule at which time the Centre will be closed.

Assignment of Duty

- Tutors are assigned time shifts by the Department. The days and times depend on the amount of support a student receives and on the departmental needs. It is the tutor's responsibility to show up promptly during their shifts. Failure to do so may result in a deduction of pay for the amount of time missed.
- If a tutor is unable to work during the time assigned due to a course conflict, he/she must contact the Graduate Program Assistant who will arrange for a shift change.
- Tutors must not schedule personal appointments (i.e. Doctor, Dentist, etc.) close to or during the times they are scheduled to work.

No absences are permitted during a term unless there is a valid reason. The tutor must make his/her request to the Graduate Program Assistant in advance, and must arrange for a suitable shift change with another MHC tutor which has to be approved by the Graduate Program Assistant. The replacement must be another TA in the Department who is working as a MHC tutor during the same semester and during a different day or time, and must agree to the shift change for the period required.

Signing In

The tutors are required to sign-in at the main office (LB 901) prior to each shift. The sign-in sheets are located on the wall to the right of the main office counter. Failure to sign in will signify that the tutor was absent and, depending on the circumstance, may result in loss of pay for the time missed. Repeated absences without prior approval will result in the termination of the contract and loss of departmental financial support for that semester.

Badges

Prior to the first shift each semester, tutors must pick up a badge (in LB 901) which will identify them as Math Help Centre Tutors when working. The badge is kept throughout the semester and tutors are to return them to the Graduate Program Assistant at the end of their contract. The badge must be worn in a visible location during every shift.

Conduct

- Tutors must sit at a table visible to students walking in for help (i.e. not at a corner table) and be ready to help students at all times.
- No personal work is to be done while on duty.
- No computers, listening devices such as an MP3 player, IPOD, etc. are to be used.
- The tutor must not leave the Math Help Centre at any time during their shift.

Opening

The room is open only during the Math Help Centre hours of operation. If the door is locked prior to the beginning of a shift, please see the Department Assistant in LB 901.

Closing

The tutors who work during the last shift of the day are responsible to make sure the following are done:

- Make sure that all students vacate the room.
- Turn off the lights.
- Close the door securely & ensure that it is locked (if there is a problem with closing the door, see the Department Assistant in LB 901 or call Security @ 3717 after office hours).

MARKERS

Function of a Marker

Markers provide appropriate feedback to the student by way of correcting their course assignments, which helps students excel in their courses.

Marker-Instructor Interaction

Markers must meet with the course instructor as soon as they are given their duties to know exactly what is expected of them. The course instructor shall not give students the name of the

marker; if the students have questions about their assignments, they are to speak to the course instructor. It is the responsibility of the Marker to ensure that the marking is done appropriately and with adequate explanations for students to understand their errors.

Private Tutoring

It is *strictly forbidden* for markers of a course to offer private tutoring to students in their own sections. University premises cannot be used for private tutoring.

Assignment of Duties

- Duties are assigned to Markers during the first or second week of classes; the hours per week per course will be specified on the contract.
- The assignments are placed in a file folder inside the first drawer of the cabinet inside LB 901-12 (the drawer is organized by course number) for the marker to pick up, make the corrections, and return to the file folder for the instructor to pick up and return to the students.
- Duties continue until the last assignment is corrected.
- No absences or replacements are permitted during a term unless there is a valid reason.

**Your assistance in helping us provide the finest education to our students is greatly appreciated.
Any questions? Please contact the Graduate Program Assistant at 514-848-2424, Ext. 3250.**