

Biology Program Graduate Student Teaching Assistants

General Information

Graduate students play an important role in the teaching of undergraduate students in the Biology Program at UBC. Not only do TAs participate in delivering quality undergraduate Biology education, they also gain valuable professional development.

The following is a general overview of TA application procedure and policies for TA assignment as determined by TA Union (CUPE2278; <https://www.cupe2278.ca/>) regulations, specific Departmental policies will vary. The graduate student TA positions available through each department for each academic year will be posted around March-April.

Please reach out to biology.taship@ubc.ca if there are any questions regarding Biology TAs.

Application Procedures

Graduate students need to apply for each academic year. Those who are currently TAing in this academic year must reapply for the next year.

Ensure that your research supervisor is aware of your application to TA and there are no conflicts with your research program.

For the courses that you apply for (see number of positions for 2023W here: [LINK](#)), check the course schedule ([LINK](#)) to see when the lectures and/or tutorials/labs would be, as well as the TA job description ([LINK](#)) for more specifics for each course. Ensure that there are no conflicts with your graduate courses and other research activities.

Complete the online application form where you'll indicate which courses you prefer and are qualified to teach in each term (Term 1 September to December, Term 2 January to April). If this is your first TA application, you will be asked about previous Biology courses you have taken and any previous teaching experience.

The summer application process is separate from the winter TA application process. Summer Term 1 runs from mid-May to end of June, and Term 2 runs from early July to mid-August.

The University of British Columbia hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. We encourage all qualified applicants to apply.

Priorities in TA Assignment

Graduate students will be assigned on the basis of the following criteria, as stipulated by the TA union and Departmental policy. "Internal graduate students" refer to graduate students from the UBC Zoology and Botany departments.

- 1) Internal graduate students (Graduate students in the Botany and Zoology graduate programs) who have TAed previously. Preference for reappointment is given for:
 - a. Masters students for two years commencing with the start date of their Masters' program;
 - b. PhD students for five years commencing with the start date of their doctoral program;

- c. Students who transfer from a Masters' to a doctoral program for five years commencing with the start date of the entry into the Masters program
- 2) Graduate students from other programs with supervisors in Botany and Zoology.
- 3) External graduate students with supervisors who are associates or adjuncts of Botany and Zoology.
- 4) Internal graduate students that have scholarships but want teaching experience.
- 5) Graduate students from external programs (e.g., Medical Genetics, Pharmacy, Forestry).
- 6) Undergraduate students.

Application Timeline

Our annual call for TAs for the winter term is typically open in April. The first round of offers will be sent to candidates late June/early July, and offers will continue to the start of Term 1 until all positions are filled. Another round of offers will be made in December to fill any remaining Term 2 vacancies. Once an applicant is offered a position, they have 2 business days to accept/decline the offer before an offer is made to another candidate. Responding quickly will help ensure that the TA appointment is set-up and not delay their first pay cheque, it will also help the TA Team assign TAships efficiently.

The annual call for TAs for the summer term typically opens in March, closing in early April. Candidates will be notified if they have been assigned to a course by mid-April.

Qualifications/Classifications

A Graduate Teaching Assistant I (GTA I) is a UBC graduate student who has completed two (2) years' service as a graduate student teaching assistant.

A Graduate Teaching Assistant II (GTA II) is a UBC graduate student who has less than two (2) years; service as a graduate student teaching assistant.

*Teaching experience as a graduate teaching assistant in another institution comparable to UBC also counts.

Salaries effective September 2021

The most up-to-date salaries and wages can be found here:

<https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/salaries/staff-salaries-job-evaluation/staff-salary-scales>

The salary for a full-time one-term position (e.g., September to December) as a GTA I is \$1686.05 (\$35.13/hr).

The salary for a full-time one-term position as a GTA II is \$1622.43 (\$33.80/hr).

Salaries for half-time positions are calculated on a pro rata basis.

Duties and Hours

Teaching responsibilities as part of the Biology Teaching Team will vary between courses and instructors. Responsibilities can include: teaching classes, grading papers, conducting tutorials, assisting in

laboratories, invigilating examinations. A full one-term TA position involves an average of twelve (12) hours per week for one term (i.e., September 1 to December 31 or January 1 to April 30) for a total of 192 hours.

Each course will have a schedule of teaching and TA preparation meeting days and times. For large multi-sectioned courses there may be flexibility in TA scheduling, other small courses have set schedules. Make sure your own course or research schedules do not conflict with the courses you indicate your preference in the application. For more information on the duties and course scheduling, contact the course coordinator or the instructor-in-charge.

CUPE2278 Your Rights At Work: <https://www.cupe2278.ca/about-3-1>

Professional Development

Biology TA Development and Advancement (TADA) workshops (<https://blogs.ubc.ca/tada/>)

The TADA workshops are supported by the UBC Provosts, Departments of Botany, Zoology, and Biology. TADA consists of sessions on evidence-based and inclusive pedagogical practices and provide opportunities for professional development, designed for graduate students teaching Biology courses at UBC. These workshops are held throughout the year and mainly facilitated by TA facilitators.

Graduate students completing 7 out of 8 workshops in the span of two years are eligible for Associate status from the Centre for Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL; www.cirtl.ubc.ca).

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT)
(<https://ctl.ubc.ca/resources/teaching/teaching-assistants/>)

CTLT provides workshops on instructional skills, presentation skills, leading discussions and others.

Biology Teaching Assistant Teaching Award

TAs are vital to the success of undergraduates in the Biology Program. They play a key role in effective instruction and the smooth delivery of all courses. To recognize the important role that they play in the Biology Program, the Departments of Botany and Zoology are proud to offer an annual award for Teaching Assistants for Excellence in Teaching. For more information, on the Biology website, click on the “teaching assistants” tab.