


'23

# School of Industrial Design TA Information

Carleton University | 2023 - 2024





What do TAs in SID do?

01 Preparation

02 Professional Relationship

03 Challenges of Studio Classes

04 Performance

**DO NOT BRING ANY SCHOOL MATERIALS  
OUTSIDE CAMPUS!**



# What do TAs in SID do?

1. Prepare course materials (e.g. slides, videos, films).
2. Make sure AV equipment is reserved, picked up, set up & returned if needed.
3. Prepare, photocopy and distribute course material.
4. Book, pick up, and provide video equipment, cameras, or other equipment as needed.
5. Ensure the facilities are kept clean and tidied up
6. by the students.
7. Manage the CU Learn site for the course.
8. Explain and enforce policies pertaining to the smooth
9. functioning of the studio, lab, or activity.
10. Oversee group activities.
11. Lead a class when the instructor must be absent.
12. Participate in supervising field trips.
13. Host guest speakers.
14. Collect assignments, organize and/or supervise the hanging of work in preparation for reviews.
15. Record comments made in reviews to assist with grading.
16. Do a preliminary sorting of student deliverables to
17. prepare for grading.
18. Assist with grading.
19. Advise students about specific skills.
20. Help students organize their work and their time.
21. Facilitate classroom activities - discussion groups, small workshops, etc.
22. Monitor that students are working correctly & safely.
23. Conduct review sessions to help students prepare for tests.
24. Provide constructive feedback at pre-review rehearsals to help students improve their presentations.

**Meet with the instructor ahead of time to clarify your tasks & time commitments.**

**Make sure you have enough time in your schedule to complete your TA duties.**

**Submit your contract quickly (after it is signed) so you will get paid!**

For TAs who have never been paid by Carleton, you will need to set up an account with Payroll Services. Please submit the following documents, available under “New Casual Employee Forms” on the Human Resources website, along with a void cheque or direct deposit advice in your name.

1. Personal Information form
2. Federal tax form
3. Provincial tax form
4. Confidentiality agreement
5. Mandatory Training agreement

Temporary residents must also submit:

1. Letter of Confirmation of Social Insurance Number (SIN)
2. Photocopy of valid immigration document indicating eligibility to work (Work Permit or Study Permit)

Once you have completed the forms, you may send a secure PDF or zip file to [humanresources@carleton.ca](mailto:humanresources@carleton.ca). Alternatively, you can password-protect and scan your forms.



# 01 Preparation

1. Request a schedule of regular meetings with the instructor to discuss: your work (please use TA record for future reference), students' progress and issues, etc.
2. Find out if you should attend the lectures or not (this is time you get paid for).
3. Clarify what you should do if problems arise.
4. Discuss how the instructor would like you to relate to the students (how much information to give them, what kind of information, also how friendly or how professional, etc).
5. If you are sick and cannot attend class arrange, call the Graduate Administrator and they will pass this news on to the instructor and/or class as appropriate.
6. Make sure that you understand the course or Lab objectives and other overall requirements for the students involved: attendance, deadlines, methods of evaluation, submission and presentation of work, as well as studio & Lab protocols: the instructor's policies on missed classes, lateness, and work breaks.
7. You may be entrusted with explaining and enforcing policies pertaining to the smooth functioning of the studio.
8. If it is expected of you, you will want to explain these policies to the students at the start of the year and, as the semester goes on, revise and recall them to the students' attention.
9. Remember always to be friendly but firm; make sure they understand that these are non-negotiable issues.
10. Before the session begins, become familiar with the studio or Lab space.
11. Take some time before class to walk around the studio or Lab so that you know where everything is: exits, ventilation, emergency equipment, telephones and emergency numbers, supplies, work stations.
12. Because part of your TA responsibilities may have to do with maintaining the space, you will want to know where and how equipment should be stored.
13. If there is time and if the studio is unoccupied, make sure that the room is tidy.

## **Discuss your technical responsibilities with the instructor:**

- Are you expected to give class demonstrations?
- Are you expected to be available to provide technical assistance?
- Is it your responsibility to prepare materials for technical demonstrations, slide presentations?
- Are you expected to prepare other materials, such as handouts, transparencies, etc.?
- Are you expected to find articles or catalogues relevant to assignments or research?



# 02 Professional Relationship

1. Many students will not distinguish between you and the instructor because they had no experience with TAs in high school.
2. Trying too hard to be a peer at the beginning will make it harder when/if you have to be the heavy later on.
3. NEVER discuss faculty, staff, other TA's or other students in any fashion.
4. Try to give constructive feedback first.
5. Students will ask you what to do: YOUR JOB is to facilitate how to help them figure out how to solve the problem.
6. Work closely with your instructor.
7. They may want to re-argue with you positions that they were unable to defend before the class. In doing so, they are practicing the critical skills they need to function in the design community.
8. These are excellent opportunities to draw on your experience to help students situate their work in a broader context.
9. Avoid socializing with students outside of class unless it is an activity involving everyone.
10. Report potential issues with student(s) to your instructor as soon as they become apparent.
11. Regardless of the specific tasks, the role of a TA is almost always to act as a negotiator between students' anxieties and instructors' expectations.
12. Students who are uncertain or confused about course objectives, teaching styles, or evaluation criteria may come to you for guidance.
13. Students will sound you out about the instructor and their standards, as well as bounce ideas off you as a preliminary to their critiques.
14. Model the respectful, cooperative behavior that you expect from students.
15. Treat all students equitably.
16. Monitor your own behavior to ensure that you do not overlook any group or individual.
17. Professionalism requires that you ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.
18. Watch to see if there are shy students whose body language indicates a willingness to answer by, for example, leaning forward, tentatively raising a hand, trying to make eye contact with you.
19. Don't interrupt students or allow other students to interrupt each other.

**Avoid socializing with students outside of class unless it is an activity involving everyone.**





# 03 The Challenges of Studio Classes

\*The items written in italics only apply to TAs assisting on campus.

1. The studio & Lab atmosphere must be relaxed enough to allow productive sessions, but some sense of order must be maintained if the students are to participate in the session and progress in their work.
2. The sense of order necessary for the smooth running of the session depends upon clearly established studio procedures, well-defined objectives as well as an organized workspace. So, what is needed is a balance of freedom and control, something that is the result of ongoing negotiation between students and instructor.
3. How you, as a TA, will assist in this process will be very much determined by the teaching style of the instructor.
4. Some instructors may limit you to overseeing the operation and maintenance of the studio, while others may expect you to be involved in the teaching and evaluation process.
5. It is crucial that you establish with the instructor the particulars of your assignment as early as possible.
6. One of the more formidable challenges of being a studio TA is lending assistance, giving advice, and recalling regulations without being intrusive.
7. Many design students have trouble working productively for 4 hours period in a more-or-less public space; intrusions may compound the problem.
8. Don't hover over students. Knowing when to intervene and when not to takes careful observation. Figuring out how to intervene can also be tricky.
9. Sustaining momentum can be another obstacle. Students get frustrated, claim they can't produce on demand, start to take longer and longer coffee breaks, and in the end, nothing gets done. In situations like this, you need to be part counsellor, part enthusiast, and part (mild) disciplinarian. It's a tough balance to strike.
10. You might try urging the students to go back over the work they have partially completed. You will need to draw on your experience with problems of conceptualization and execution.
11. You might want to point out the benefits of a cooperative peer approach to learning.
12. In a community, students can discover and draw on the experience of others. One student may have a piece of helpful advice for another's conceptual or technical problem. You should, therefore, encourage students to draw on each other as resources, not because you're abdicating your role as counsellor and critic but because a plurality of views and opinions, consensual and conflicting, makes for vital work.
13. A studio session often concludes with "a crit" or "review", where the instructor and fellow-classmates offer feedback on a student's work.
14. Some instructors do not use reviews on a regular basis; they prefer giving personal feedback when appropriate. If there is a review, you may be called upon to participate.
15. You should confine your remarks to issues relevant to the student's work. Avoid being drawn into arguments.
16. This is not the appropriate arena to expound on your aesthetic politics or philosophy.

# In the studio setting, the key learning objectives are process and product oriented.

## Evaluating and giving feedback on students' work in studios and Labs:

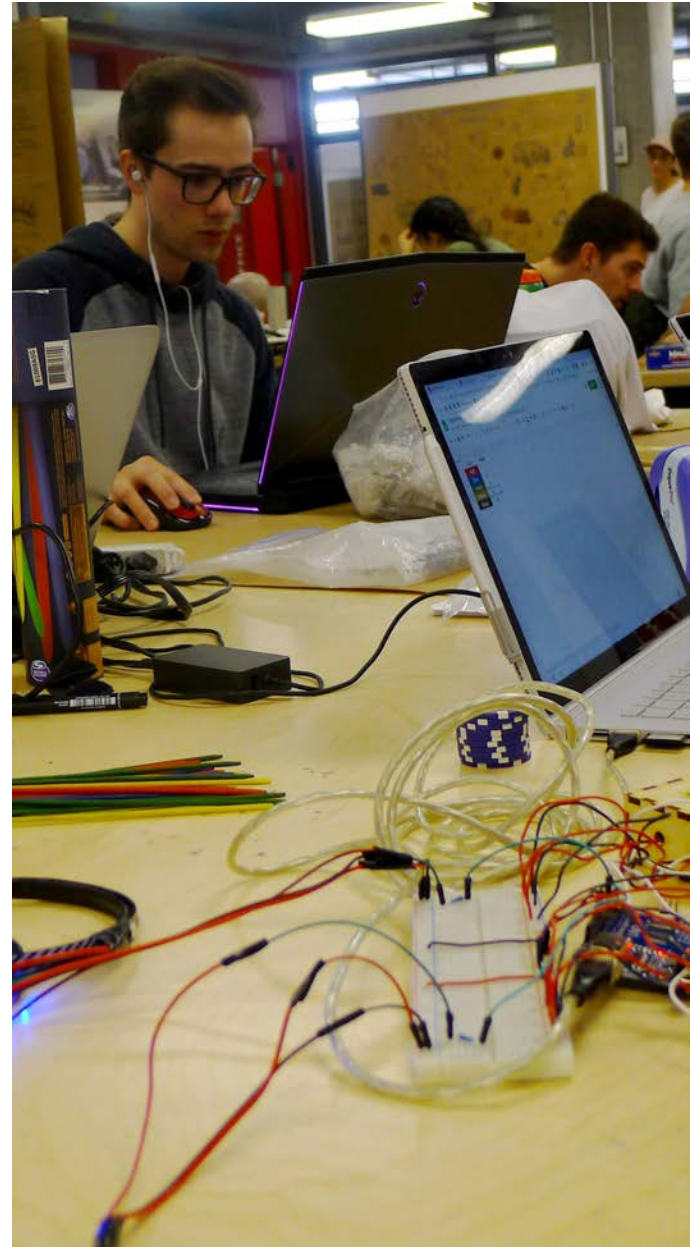
1. In studio, evaluation offers students insight into their progress and performance.
2. Insights gained through feedback, whether one-on-one or in group critique, illustrate the discrepancies between the student's intention, execution, and the result.
3. They are the means by which students acquire the necessary critical and technical skills.

## Often the feedback offered to students is not as effective as it could be. It may be ineffective for a number of reasons:

1. The project objectives may be unclear or insufficiently articulated. There may have been insufficient observation of student and/or little understanding of his or her intention.
2. Finally, the criteria of evaluation may not be clear.
3. Remember, feedback is always ineffective when it lacks purpose or an underlying message.
4. Offer feedback at critical moments in the student's work.
5. If you see problems cropping up in the work, open up a discussion with the student.
6. It is important to get students to verbalize intention.
7. Encourage them to look at the work critically.

## Useful guides for evaluating studio work include:

1. Observe students while they are working; This will give you a familiarity with the students' work and work styles, which can form the basis of your evaluation. Procedures, objectives, and criteria of evaluation must be clear for evaluation to be effective.
2. Avoid interpretation; use descriptive rather than interpretive terms in your discussion of the student's work.
3. Be precise in your evaluation; identify clearly those aspects of their work that need to be improved.
4. Respond within the context of the student's stated intention.
5. Be sure to focus on changeable behavior. Judgments about students' characters have no place in evaluations.



# 04 Your Performance

## Evaluating your teaching

1. The most obvious person from whom to obtain feedback is your instructor.
2. Explain to them what you hope to accomplish, to learn in these sessions.
3. If you are interested in teaching, let them know.
4. You can also get a sense of the effectiveness of your teaching from the students.
5. Pay attention to the questions that arise in each session.
6. If you find that certain questions recur, it may indicate that the concept or technique has not been clearly explained.

## Support

7. Experienced teaching assistants in your department can also be an invaluable source of information and support.
8. Clerical, technical and administrative staff at Carleton are invaluable in supporting instructional staff.
9. Many support staffs spend their careers in a department and know the most efficient way to get things done. Their jobs are complex and demanding. Treat them with respect; they deserve it.
10. You are a conduit between course instructor and students. Relaying comments, suggestions, feedback to instructor  
You can play a vital role in reaching out to these students and finding out their needs.

Below you will find information, dates, and resources pertaining to your online TA positions.

## Resources

TA support

<https://carleton.ca/tasupport/>

TA Central Hub Training & Resources

A cuLearn page just for TAs that offers pre-recorded training videos, resource materials, and a forum for TAs to share resources related to online teaching. Click here to self-enroll:

<https://culearn.carleton.ca/moodle/course/view.php?id=150661>

EDC website

<https://carleton.ca/edc/>

One-on-one consultations

If you would like more support, please fill out and submit a TA intake form

<https://carleton.ca/tasupport/ta-intake-form/>

Check EDC website regularly for more workshops as they become available

<https://carleton.ca/tasupport/>

