

Teaching Assistant Handbook

Department of Neuroscience
Carleton University

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Introduction

This manual has been developed as a resource for Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the Department of Neuroscience to help you navigate the tasks that will be assigned to you. You will have other resources at your disposal to help you through your time as a TA at Carleton, however, this handbook is designed to address department-specific procedures and resources, and to guide you to the appropriate person if you have any questions.

Administrative Contacts

The Administrative Offices are typically open from **8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday**, aside from the 12-1 lunch hour.

2301 Health Science Building
gradneurosci@carleton.ca
(613) 520-4020

Contact the main office when:

- You have questions about which course and instructor you are assigned to
- You need assistance with payroll
- You need to book a room (for an accommodation exam or review class, etc. Be sure to give at least 5 business days, as rooms book up quickly around exam time)
- You are concerned for a students' well-being (see section later in document)
- You have questions about exam printing, administration or deferrals
- You need exam booklets and/or scantrons for a midterm or accommodation exam, not a formally scheduled exam during the examination period
- You have general administrative questions
- You have a question or any issues but you don't know who to ask – we will do our best to either find the answer or send you in the right direction!

Contact the instructor when:

- You have questions about your assignment of duties
- You have questions about student assessment
- You have concerns about a student
- A student is treating you disrespectfully

****The department is here to support you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.****

Important Information

Compliance Training for TAs

All TAs at Carleton are required to complete a mandatory 5 hours of paid compliance training within the first 6 weeks of their assignment. More information is available here:

<http://carleton.ca/tasupport/training/compliance-training-tas/>

Printing Exams

Midterms: If one of your duties is to have midterms printed, you would do so through **The Print Shop**. E-mail the file to theprintshop@carleton.ca or bring it physically in person on USB to their office in 102 Robertson Hall. Tell them you would like it printed for the Department of Neuroscience. Request the exams to be delivered to our Main Office (2301 Health Sciences Building). We will e-mail you to let you know when we receive them.

Finals: If the instructor has submitted their examination question paper to the main office by the deadline, Scheduling and Examination Services will reproduce it in sufficient quantity and provide exam booklets and/or Scantrons at the exam site (if necessary). The deadline for final exams from Exam Services is typically fairly early, therefore some instructors choose to take responsibility for printing and delivering the final exams to the exam site. If the instructor assigns this task to you, you can follow the same procedure as the midterm to have your exams printed by **The Print Shop** and delivered to our Main Office (2301 Health Sciences Building). The instructor may assign you the task of bringing the question papers to the exam site and the McIntyre Exam Center (133 University Center). Instructors can now submit their examination question paper to the MEC via their online portal. Those who opt out can submit hard copies in sufficient quantities at least 3 days prior to the exam date. When you drop them off, you will need to provide a phone number for if the students have questions during the exam. You will also need to provide details on any authorized memoranda (for example, if the students are allowed calculators, what kind?).

Processing Scantrons

If you are responsible for Scantrons, you will need to bring them to the Educational Development Center (EDC) for marking. Comprehensive instructions on their submission guidelines are available [here](#).

Room Bookings

You may be asked to hold an exam review or study session for the students in your course, or to organize an accommodation exam. To do this, you will need to book a classroom.

While you have the option of booking rooms yourself at booking.carleton.ca, Scheduling and Examination Services typically responds more quickly and is more likely to approve booking requests from administrators. For that reason, we often recommend booking your room through our Main Office instead of doing it yourself, to ensure that you get the room and can tell your students about the session as soon as possible.

Room Bookings (continued)

Contact neuroscience@carleton.ca to book a room for you. Please do so at least five business days before the room is required, as rooms book up quickly around exam time. You will need to provide the following information:

- 1) Date and time the room is required
- 2) Length of time the room is required
- 3) What you will be using the room for
- 4) The maximum number of students expected to attend

Getting Started and Assignment of Duties

Once you have been assigned as a TA to a course, you will first have to accept your assignment in Carleton Central. Once you accept, you will be assigned TA duties by the instructor. For more information on this process, follow this link: <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/teaching-assistants/ta-management-system/>

Academic Misconduct

If you suspect a student of academic misconduct, it is important that you do not confront the student directly. Tell the instructor of the course immediately. Click here for the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), or here for the [Instructor's Guide on Academic Integrity](#) for more information on what is and isn't an offense.

Students in Distress

If you have a student who is repeatedly deferring their exams, frequently absent, missing assignments, or exhibiting disruptive or distressed behavior, you should bring this forward to the course instructor.

If there is an emergency situation on campus, dial 613-520-2600 ext. 4444, or from a Carleton phone you can just dial 4444, to connect to University Safety. University Safety will determine if 911 should be called.

If you have questions about student distress, do not hesitate to contact our Main Office (contact information listed above).

Resources Outside of the Department

The Print Shop

carleton.ca/theprintshop
theprintshop@carleton.ca
102 Robertson Hall

The Print Shop is Carleton University's one stop print shop.

McIntyre Exam Centre (MEC)

[carleton.ca/ses/mcintyre-exam-centre/
examroom@carleton.ca](http://carleton.ca/ses/mcintyre-exam-centre/examroom@carleton.ca)
613-520-2600 ext. 1571
133 University Centre

The McIntyre Exam Centre is designed to provide services to both students and instructors at Carleton University in order to meet a variety of accommodation needs during scheduled tests and exams. Scheduling and Examination Services (SES) operates the Centre in consultation with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC).

Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC)

[carleton.ca/pmc/
pmc@carleton.ca](http://carleton.ca/pmc/pmc@carleton.ca)
613-520-6608
501 University Centre

The Paul Menton Centre is responsible for the coordination of academic accommodations and support services for students with disabilities.

Educational Development Centre (EDC)

Support for TAs: [carleton.ca/culearnsupport/tas/
EDC@carleton.ca](http://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/tas/EDC@carleton.ca)
613-520-2600 ext. 4433

The Educational Development Centre is dedicated to the support of teaching excellence at Carleton University. They can provide support for TAs on how to use cuLearn (see link above).

Carleton University Online (CUOL)

carleton.ca/cuol/

cuol@carleton.ca

613-520-2600 ext. 4055

D299 Loeb Building

Carleton University Online is a flexible learning platform that offers a wide array of university credit courses. Both local and distance students can take advantage of online courses. (Only applicable to TAs assigned to online courses).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I handle exams?

A: When you are in possession of exams, it is your responsibility to ensure that they are kept in a secure place at all times, and that no one else has access to them. Written exams contain personal student information and must be protected in accordance to [FIPPA \(Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\)](#).

Q: How much time do I usually have to mark final exams?

A: Course instructors must upload final grades within 10 calendar days of a final exam, so marking should typically be submitted within one week of the exam date. Your course instructor may require a different timeframe, and that timeframe should be respected.

Q: I'm going home after the final exam. Can I take exams with me to mark on my vacation?

A: Absolutely not. Exams have to be stored securely at all times, so travelling with exams runs many risks, such as the papers being lost or unobtainable. In addition, course instructors may wish to review how the exams were marked before submitting final grades, so the papers should be available to them throughout the marking period. Marking should therefore be completed before you leave Ottawa, and vacations should be planned accordingly.

Q: I have been assigned to organize deferred midterms for students. How do I provide accommodations for PMC students?

A: Your course instructor will have a list of students with PMC accommodations. Cross-reference that list with the list of students requiring a deferred midterm. If any PMC accommodations are required, please contact the MEC to arrange the deferral, and communicate the arrangements with the student. Remember, communications with PMC students are confidential – group emails to multiple students that contain details about accommodations are not acceptable.

Q: The course I have been assigned to is a CUOL (online) course. Is it the same as any other course?

A: Exams for CUOL are handled differently than exams for other courses. CUOL midterms are scheduled on the weekends (anywhere from Friday evening to Sunday evening), so you will need to be available on the weekend to proctor. If you are not available on the weekend, let the instructor know as soon as possible. Also, you may need to pick up distance exams from the CUOL office.

Deferred midterms are also scheduled by the CUOL office and held there for local students. Ask your instructor about the process for deferred midterms - they may require that you coordinate with the CUOL office.

You may need to be more flexible with your availability to students, because there may be distance students registered in the course who need to contact you. If a student is not in Ottawa, you should be available to them by e-mail, phone, or possibly even Skype, to answer their questions about the course.

Q: I have been assigned to a CUOL course. How do I access the lectures?

A: E-mail cuol@carleton.ca and access to the lectures. This is particularly helpful if you aren't as familiar with the course material.

Q: I found a case of suspected plagiarism. What do I do?

A: Contact the course instructor, present evidence of plagiarism, and let them handle the situation. Do not communicate your suspicion to the student directly. If you are ever asked to communicate with students on this subject, ensure all correspondence is confidential (for example, never communicate with multiple students by email, as all email addresses may be visible to all recipients). See the **Academic Misconduct** section above for more details.

Q: I can't access my assigned course in cuLearn/I'm having issues with cuLearn. What should I do?

You must first be added to the course manually by the instructor in cuLearn. If your instructor is having trouble adding you, there are step-by-step instructions here:

<http://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/instructors/faq/#AddingTA>

For any other cuLearn issues or questions, the EDC has a cuLearn support page specifically for TAs:

<http://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/tas/>

Q: I think I'm spending too much time on my TA duties. What should I do?

A: Most TAs are for 130 hours per semester, which is a significant amount of time. We recommend accurately logging the time you spend on TA duties if you are concerned about workload. If you are genuinely likely to exceed the 130 hour time allocation, discuss this with the course instructor as early as possible, to determine how either the range of responsibilities could be reduced, or you could be completing the responsibilities with greater efficiency.

Q: How do I deal with a student who is continually (and somewhat aggressively) arguing for more grades on assignment?

A: If you feel that students are not treating you in a professional manner, make sure you discuss the situation with the course instructor.

Q: What happens to my TAship if I take a leave of absence?

A: If you take a leave of absence from your program, you must fill out a [Leave from Duties form](#) to ensure that you maintain your priority status. Your leave needs to be approved in advance by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. The [Leave from Duties form](#) can be found on [Carleton Central](#).

Q: Are there any opportunities to win TA awards?

A: Yes, Carleton recognizes excellence among TAs every year. Follow this link for more information: <https://carleton.ca/tasupport/taawards/edc-outstanding-ta-awards/>