

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – REVISION OF TEACHING ASSISTANT TASKS

1. Can I revise the tasks of the Teaching Assistant currently assigned to my course?

Yes, the work of Teaching Assistants can be re-organized to meet the needs of online course delivery. In order to do so, the parameters in the collective agreement must be respected (see question 2).

2. What is the process for revising the tasks of a Teaching Assistant:

The Workload Form (Appendix II of the AGSEM TA collective agreement) must be revised to reflect any changes in tasks. Revision to existing workload forms need to be discussed first between Course Supervisor and Teaching Assistant, as per article 11.04 of the collective agreement. A copy of the revised workload form should be retained by the Course Supervisor, a copy to the Teaching Assistant, a copy for the Employee's file at the department level and a copy sent to Labour & Employee Relations.

Course Supervisors must ensure that Teaching Assistants are provided the necessary training for any tasks they have not been trained for (i.e. online course management). This training (including self-training) should be included in the hours of the current appointment.

[Link to Workload Form:](#)

[..\8- Forms & Procedure\Workload forms\2020\Workload Form Teaching Assistants - AGSEM Collective Agreement.pdf](#)

3. Can I reduce the hours of my Teaching Assistant if I do not have enough work to distribute?

A Teaching Assistant must be paid for the hours specified in the letter of offer. As per article 11.03 of the collective agreement, a Teaching Assistant will not be required to reimburse or carry forward to another term any hours not worked in the appointment.

4. Can a Teaching Assistant work more hours than the hours specified in the offer letter of employment?

Yes, a Teaching Assistant can work more hours than the hours specified in the offer letter. The additional hours need to be documented on the revised workload form. The Course Supervisor must specify how the work should be completed. For example, grading will be done online and the manner in which the assessment should be done. The Teaching Assistant has the first right to choose whether to work the necessary additional hours. These additional hours shall be paid at the regular hourly Teaching Assistant salary rate.

5. I do not have the budget to pay for additional hours but I need my Teaching Assistant to work. Can I pay them in the form of a stipend or time off?

No, a Teaching Assistant should be compensated in the form of wages for work performed as a Teaching Assistant. A Course Supervisor should not request that a Teaching Assistant perform work without pay.

6. What happens if an instructor was planning to hold a traditional sit-down multiple-choice final exam, which will now be set as written take-home exam? How can instructors get help with marking these exams (previously that support would not be needed because the multiple-choice exam grading would have been done via computer).

a) If you currently have a Teaching Assistant assigned to your course:

The task of grading take-home exams can be allocated to the Teaching Assistant. The revised workload form needs to reflect these changes.

If the grading of these exams results in additional hours and the Teaching Assistant is unable to perform the additional hours to complete the work (the Teaching Assistant has first choice to complete the additional hours as per 11.04 of the collective agreement), refer to point b).

b) If you do not have Teaching Assistant assigned to your course or the Teaching Assistant has declined the additional hours:

You may hire a Grader. A Grader does not normally communicate with students. If the requirement for your course is only grading, a Grader may be hired. Graders are academic casuals. They must be given an offer letter of employment; they must submit time sheets for hours worked and are paid via POPs. Your local HR Advisor can provide further assistance with this process.

7. Where does it refer to online tasks in the Workload Form?

The workload form includes a section that says:

Email communications, online course management, and other contact hours: Indicate all other contact hours that the TA is expected to fulfill (including email communications, in-person contact, telephone conversations, contributing to content management systems, and other electronic communications).

Considering the above, a Teaching Assistant's tasks can be revised to perform the following within their current appointed hours or as additional paid hours:

- Online office hours
- Online discussion forums with students
- Preparation for online assignments
- Supporting Course Supervisor to reframe assessment of assignments i.e. creating take-home assignments

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- Training students on how to use Zoom or other online platforms
- Supporting Course Supervisor in the creation of online course materials
- Grading assessments

The revised workload form must reflect any change in tasks.

8. Can we substitute 25hrs of lab work with 25 hrs of marking?

Yes. The revised workload form needs to reflect this change.

9. Can a Teaching Assistant hold online discussion forums with students as part of the online course delivery?

Yes. The revised workload form should reflect this.

10. Can a Teaching Assistant perform online grading?

Yes. The revised workload form should reflect this.

11. Do I need to provide training for online course delivery to my Teaching Assistant?

If the revised tasks require training for course content or online tools, the Course Supervisor must ensure that the Teaching Assistant is adequately trained and compensated accordingly. The training (including self-training) must be reflected in the revised Workload Form and included in the hours of work.

12. Do Teaching Assistants have access to Zoom Pro?

- Zoom Basic accounts are free and the 40-minute limit on videoconferencing for these accounts appears to have been lifted by Zoom. If such a limit is imposed, then a TA can create multiple 40-minute sessions
- Any TA that is an official instructor of a course section has a pro account (ie, those teaching a section of a course)
- A Course Supervisor can also create Zoom sessions, make the TA a co-host in the meeting setup, and this will allow the Teaching Assistant to have all the same rights (note, however, that the Course Supervisor would not be able to set 2 meetings at a time).

Any Instructor (Course Supervisor) with questions may contact Sharon Sharma in Labour & Employee Relations to discuss (sharon.sharma@mcgill.ca).