



1. BEING A BROCK TA

Who are Brock TAs?

Teaching assistants include ...

- undergraduates
- graduate students (both Masters level and PhD candidates)
- graduates (alumni, professionals, community experts)
- staff

Brock is fortunate to employ a wide variety of TAs who come to teaching from various departments, levels of study and degrees of experience. Brock TAs enjoy an excellent reputation for quality teaching as a result of an outstanding seminar system which allows Brock undergraduates the opportunity to experience opportunities for small group learning.

want more?

- Visit the CTLET (Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Educational Technologies) in TH 253 for resources on a wide-range of resources on being a Brock T.A.
- for CUPE 4207's Collective Agreement 2004-2007, please visit <http://www.4207.cupe.ca/CUPE-4207-Collective-Agreement-2004-07.pdf>

Roles, Responsibilities and Rights of TAs

This information was compiled from various workshops on TA roles and responsibilities, led by Brock faculty.

Roles

- TAs are front-line representatives of the university.
- TAs are role models and mentors.
- TAs are conveyers of knowledge.
- TAs are facilitators and peacekeepers.
- TAs are evaluators and assessors.
- TAs are motivators.
- TAs are administrators.
- TAs are occupational counselors.

Responsibilities: To the Students

- to set the tone of the lab or seminar
- to be on time.
- to maintain a positive environment by being friendly and non-threatening

General Rules to Teach By *(Brookfield, 1990)*

1. *Be friendly but not friends.*
2. *Praise your students in public but have serious chats in private.*

- to evaluate their work on time and fairly (i.e., have an objective marking mechanism, keep records as evidence and maintain distance so that we remain unbiased).
- to keep them safe.
- to be available (maintain office hours).
- to make expectations clear.
- to be approachable, as well as to guide.
- to be prepared (i.e., know our material: this may mean attending lectures and meetings and know about information before they ask it, especially about assignments and exams).
- to respect students
- to be open minded.
- to challenge our students to foster learning
- to set boundaries so that sexism, ageism, racism and sexual harassment do not become classroom issues.
- to learn their names.
- to be aware of our own biases.
- to not force our opinion on students.

To the Professor

- to be professional.
- to relay feedback from students.
- to meet deadlines.
- to be reliable.
- to take responsibility for our own actions and to admit our mistakes.
- to fulfill the duties outlined on our contracts.

To the University

- to be familiar with university resources and policies.
- to create a positive learning environment.
- to maintain university policies concerning harassment and academic integrity.

Rights

- to have respect from our students.
- to have support from the professor and the department.
- to have a clear description of duties.
- to know what is expected of us.
- to work in a non-threatening environment.
- to get paid.
- to get feedback from our students and our professor.
- to learn.
- to say no to work that was not agreed upon.
- to sign and stick to a contract.

want more?

- University of Guelph "The Many Roles of a TA"
<http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/id/ta/tahb/tah1title.html>
- Queen's University, "Roles of the Teaching Assistant"
<http://www.queensu.ca/idc/idcresources/handbook/handbook2002.pdf>



The International TA

Brock is fortunate to welcome Teaching Assistants from all over the world. In order to familiarize oneself with teaching in a North American context, International TAs may find the following information and resources useful.

The University of Saskatchewan offers several tips for International TAs:

Students expect and appreciate a variety of things from their teachers, some of which may be unlike the expectations of students in your country. For example:

- they expect teachers to explain everything to them very fully, particularly the details of what they are expected to do in the course and how grades are assigned;
- they value teachers who are friendly and open, communicating something about themselves as people;
- they may want teachers to interact with them in class, encouraging student participation and dealing gently with incorrect responses;
- they prefer teachers who make their classes interesting by using a lively presentation style, "relevant" and intriguing examples, and humour;
- they respect teachers who are knowledgeable, but who are also willing to admit that they do

want more?

International TAs are encouraged to consult with the department and/or the CTLET for teaching-related assistance. The following sources may also be of interest:

Improving Communication in the Classroom (The University of Washington)

- <http://www.id.ucsb.edu/ic/ta/ita/lang.improve.html>

Handbooks and Specific Information for International TAs

- http://www.mun.ca/elss/ita/ita_handbk_1.html

Brock Basics



In order to answer questions of incoming students, TAs should be able to offer students some general information about Brock.

Here are some fun facts:

- Opened in 1964, Brock was named for Maj.-General Sir Isaac Brock, who lost his life at Queenston Heights in the War of 1812. His last words are said to be, "Surgite! Push on!" which have become the University's motto
- Brock University graduates have one of the highest employment rates of all Ontario universities at 97.2 per cent
- There are currently over 15,500 Brock students
- There is no I block on the Mackenzie Chown building (but there is a J). Where did it go?
- Brock's final marks must end in 0, 2, 5 or 8.

want more?

- Visit Brock's website at <http://www.brocku.ca/alumni/communication/about.php>