Teaching Opportunities for Graduate Assistants (TOGA) in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science

What is TOGA?

TOGA is a program of professional development designed to enhance the teaching knowledge and skills of graduate teaching assistants. In collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies and the Instructional Development Office, graduate students in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied science must participate in this program.

How does it work?

Graduate students apply to the Graduate Studies Office in Engineering each semester for teaching assistantships which are assigned by the Graduate Studies Office in Engineering. At the Pre-TOGA level, students are not given assistantships. Graduate students are assigned to one of four levels: pre-TOGA, TOGA 1, TOGA 2 and TOGA 3. The teaching assistant roles for each level are progressively more challenging with increasing teaching responsibilities. At each level, students participate in a program of professional development. In order to be assigned a teaching assistantship at a particular level, students must have completed the prior required professional development. For example, in order to be awarded a TOGA 2 level teaching assistantship, students must have completed the professional development required at the Pre and TOGA 1 levels.

Note: Completion of the TOGA 2 professional development requirement does not guarantee that the student will always be awarded a TOGA 2 teaching assistantship. Because of a possible limited availability of TOGA 2 positions, students may be awarded a TOGA 1 level teaching assistantship. However, unless a graduate student has completed the TOGA 2 level professional development program a graduate student cannot be awarded a TOGA 2 level teaching assistantship.

How does this benefit me?

In addition to being better prepared and supported in teaching assistant roles, students can receive an official letter of recognition that specifies the professional development they have completed. If a student is in a TOGA 2 teaching assistant position and completes the professional development at the TOGA 2 level, a fellowship of $250.00 for each 56 hour unit of work is provided by the School of Graduate Studies. If a student is assigned a TOGA 3 level teaching assistantship, he/she is eligible for a $500.00 fellowship from the School of Graduate Studies.
What are the TOGA classifications and professional development requirements?

Pre TOGA: An Orientation to Teaching Assistantships

Before you are assigned a teaching assistantship in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, you are required to participate in three different professional development sessions. These are designed to orient you to a teaching assistantship you may be assigned. The topics for these three sessions are: The Role of the TA, Marking and Evaluation, and Safety Training.

TOGA 1

At the TOGA 1 level, graduate teaching assistants may be assigned teaching assistantships that involve marking quizzes or lab reports, assisting in labs, or providing tutorials. Normally students would not mark final exams. At this level, students are required to participate in three professional development sessions: Responsibilities and Challenges in the TA Role, Marking and Evaluation: Part 2, and Effective Interaction and Questioning Strategies. Graduate teaching assistants assigned to a particular course work under the supervision and authority of the professor of the course to whom they have been assigned.

TOGA 2

Graduate students assigned a TOGA 2 level teaching assistantship have previous experience as a teaching assistant and have completed the professional development required at the Pre-TOGA and TOGA 1 levels. They have considerable content knowledge and are able to work without continuous supervision. At this level, the graduate teaching assistant provides regularly scheduled direct instruction to undergraduate groups and/or individuals under the guidance and authority of the course instructor. Examples of teaching assistantships at this level are: assisting and supervising undergraduate students in a lab, acting as a ‘lead’ TA responsible for monitoring the work of several teaching assistants while also assisting undergraduate students.

At this level, students must participate in 12 hours of professional development. This includes two foundational teaching and learning workshops as well as additional workshops on specific topics identified by the group of participating graduate students. In subsequent semesters, when a student is assigned another TOGA 2 position, the student must maintain TOGA 2 certification by participating in three hours of professional development during that semester.

To be eligible to be assigned a TOGA 2 level teaching assistantship, students must also meet general fellowship eligibility criteria. For details see Guidelines for the Awarding of School of Graduate Studies Fellowships and Graduate Student Support (http://www.mun.ca/sgs/support_guidelines.pdf).
TOGA 3

Graduate students assigned a TOGA 3 level teaching assistantship have a high level of content knowledge in their discipline. They also possess leadership qualities, considerable teaching assistant experience, and can work with a high degree of independence. To be eligible for a TOGA 3 position, graduate students are required to have completed, or to be concurrently registered in, the Graduate Program in Teaching. The Graduate Program in Teaching involves attendance at a 39 hour semester course that consists of three hour seminars every Friday morning. In addition, students are assigned to a professor in Engineering and teach for a maximum of three hours in the professor’s course. Details about the Graduate Program in Teaching may be found at http://www.mun.ca/sgs/current/gpt/

Examples of TOGA 3 positions include:

- **Professional Development Facilitator** – The graduate student acts as a liaison between the academic unit and the TOGA coordinator to design and deliver the professional development component to the pre-TOGA, TOGA 1 and TOGA 2 graduate students (must be doing or have completed GPT);

- **Course Development Assistant** – The graduate student assists a faculty member in developing or revising the curriculum for a course and/or organizing learning activities and resources (must be doing or have completed GPT);

- **Teaching Course Development Assistant**: In addition to assisting a faculty member with developing or revising the curriculum for a course, the graduate student may teach up to a maximum of three classes (must have completed GPT)

Graduate students are assigned a TOGA 3 position by the Graduate Studies Office in Engineering and receive remuneration at the basic GA rate. The Professional Development Facilitator position for TOGA 2 TAs is fully funded by the School of Graduate Studies.