

## Conflict of Interest and Conduct

Be friendly, but reserved, respectful and professional when dealing with your students. Most teaching assistants are only a few years older than the students in their class. So many of the students and the teaching assistant are members of the same generation. This helps you relate to the students on a personal basis and helps you provide the "personal touch" to their university education. However, remember that you have some degree of authority and power over them, since you are going to be grading them. You are not their friend. It is not a good idea to go to dinner or movies with them or form other social or personal relationships with them while they are in your class. **If you find that you develop a personal relationship with a student or you are a relative or personal friend of someone who registers in your course section, arrange to have the student transfer to another section.** If that is not possible, tell the course supervisor about the situation and he/she may be able to arrange to have the student's assignments and tests marked by someone else.

Similarly, should it ever be the case that students enrolled in the course you are TAing inform you that they need some additional out-of-class private tutoring and would be happy to *pay you for such services*, please refer them to the Statistical Sciences Department. **It is not appropriate for you to be paid privately (as a private tutor or for an external tutoring service) for a course for which you are teaching/assisting (even if it is for students in another section of the course). Do not do it.** (It may be possible to do so once you are no longer responsible for the course, but not prior. Indicate to the departmental office your availability for private tutoring for this course after your TA position with the course finishes).

As TA, you are part of the course teaching team. You will have access to course materials and information that must be held in the strictest confidence (e.g., quizzes, assignments, tests, exams, solutions, exams student grades). **No course materials or "insider" information should be shared with students or people outside the course under any circumstances.** Sharing these without the course instructor's consent is an

academic offence which can result in serious consequences to your status as a student at the University of Toronto. If you are unsure about what's permitted, please check with your course supervisor.

You may also find that some students consult with you when they are having difficulties in their academic work or in personal areas. There will be areas in which you do not have the skills needed to help students, even though you will want to lend a "sympathetic ear" to them. You should refer them to one of the many experienced counselors at the University. In order to do this, you need to know where to find trained individuals available to help students. For example, college registrars know all the rules about dropping and adding courses; there are counselors available to help with psychological issues. The university provides a study skills counselor, an international student advisor, an ombudsperson, counselors specialized in helping students who have physical or learning disabilities, etc. (please see the list of phone numbers at the beginning of this handbook for a quick reference guide). ). If you are concerned about a student or are not sure how to handle a situation, contact your course supervisor as soon as possible.