

Welcome!

Working With Your TAs in the Online Environment

Before we get started



Open **Collaborate Panel** to view session options (bottom right of screen)



Click **Settings** to edit options (e.g., disable pop-up notifications)



Let us know if you can hear us when we do **Audio checks**

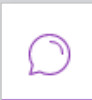


Download **Presentation Slides** at uoft.me/ctsi-videos

During the webinar



Your **microphone** will be muted until Q&A at end of session



Type questions and comments into the **Chat**



Close **Collaborate Panel** to stop viewing incoming chat posts

Following the webinar



View **Session Recording** at uoft.me/ctsi-videos in approx. 24 hours



Complete **Feedback Survey** (link sent via email)



Working with Your TAs in the Online Environment

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November 12th, 2020

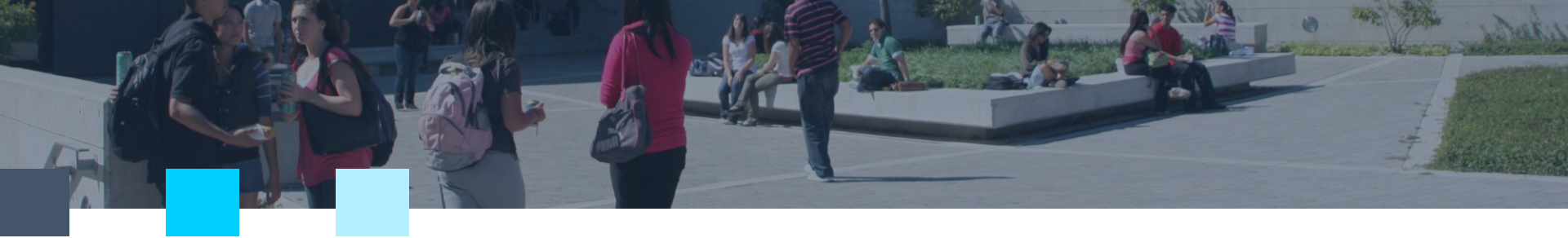


UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

CENTRE FOR TEACHING SUPPORT & INNOVATION



Teaching Assistants'
Training Program



Land Acknowledgment

We would like to acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for over 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island.

- Revised by the Elders Circle (Council of Aboriginal Initiatives)

Access Check

We understand access to be a shared responsibility between everyone in this space. We will strive to create an accessible space that reduces the need for you to disclose a disability or impairment for the purposes of gaining an accommodation. In doing this together, we strive to welcome disability, and the changes it brings, into our space.

Is there anything about the virtual space that we should address now?

Are there any other access needs that might affect your participation in the workshop that we could also address?

POLL

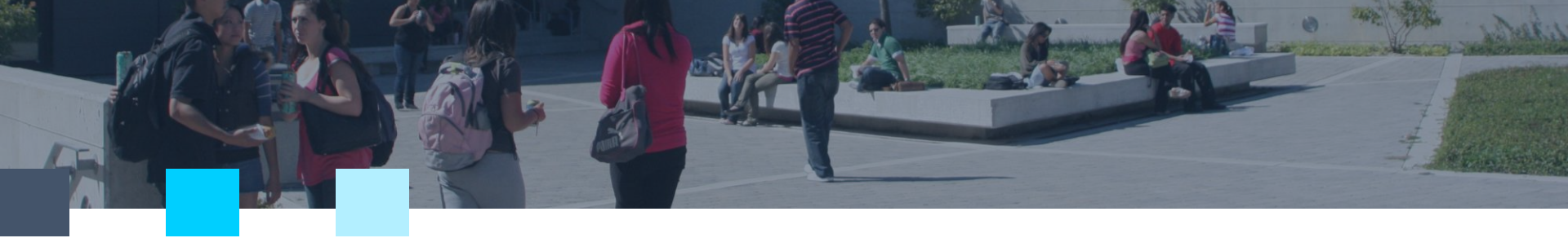
In what disciplinary area do you teach?

- A. Social Sciences
- B. Sciences & Engineering
- C. Humanities

POLL

How many TAs are in your course?

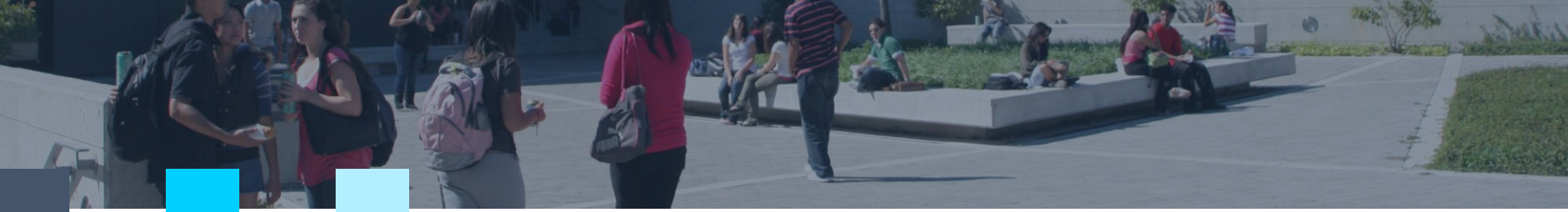
- A. One to two
- B. Three to four
- C. Five to ten
- D. Ten +



Learning outcomes

By the end of this webinar, you should be able to:

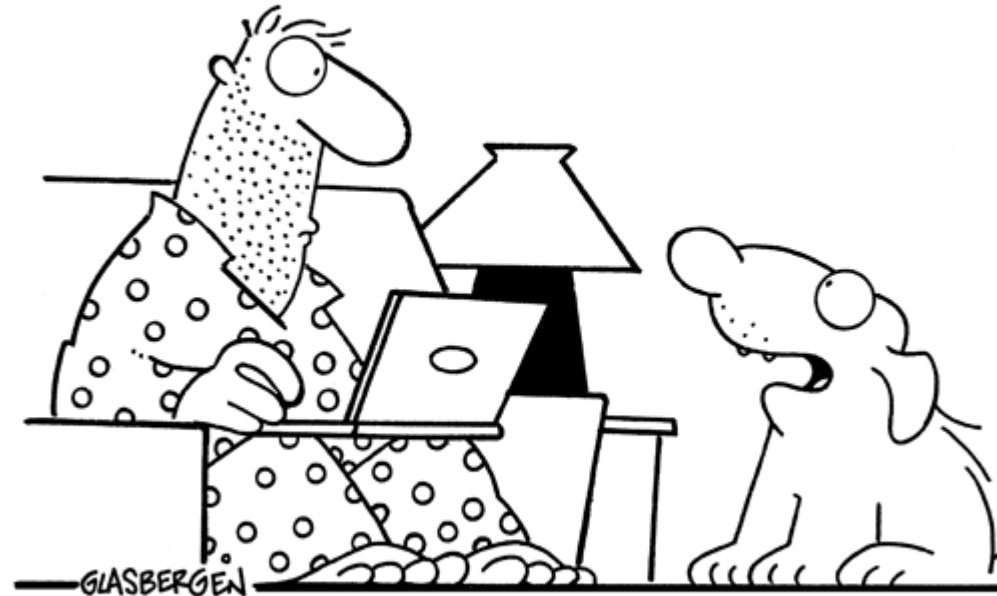
- Understand best practices for working with your TAs online;
- Learn strategies for building social presence in your course for your TAs and your students;
- Identify additional supports and resources for your TAs (ex. Quercus).



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Answer in the chat

What challenges have emerged for your TAs working in the online environment?



"I work at home too, but you don't see *me* sitting around in my pajamas all day!"

What TAs Are Saying

- 91% of TAs shared that it was their first time serving as TA for a distance or online course.
- Over 75% of TAs agreed that they had the necessary devices and internet access to fulfil the requirements of their distance/online courses.
- 34% of responding TAs indicated that students not knowing how to use technology was the most challenging experience.
- Significant decreases:
 - coached by course instructors – 65% to 45%
 - participating in TA orientation events – 50% to 7%
 - coached by fellow TAs – 38% to 21%

(University of Ottawa, Transition to Distance/Online Learning:
Teaching Assistant Survey, 2020)



1. Fostering Community in Your Teaching Team



Building Community & Cohesion

- Design makes a difference!
- Encourage TAs to personalize content and build their social presence in the course (contact information).
- Make your teaching team visible to students on your course home page or in a module.



Real Sample:

Katherine Shwetz, PhD Candidate English

ENG A02: Critical Writing About Literature



Hi!

Welcome to ENG A02.

I'm your instructor, Katherine Shwetz.

Call me Katherine; I use she/her pronouns.

I'm very excited to be teaching you this term!

You can find out more about me, including my research experience, teaching philosophy, and how to contact me, by [clicking here](#).

Looking for the syllabus?

There are two versions:

- For the full syllabus, complete with all course policies, [click here](#).
- If all you need is to review the due dates for assignments, you can find a "quick reference" version of the syllabus by [clicking here](#).

Have a question?

First, check out this list of frequently asked questions to see if you can find an answer by [clicking here](#).

You can find all the required reading for the course by [clicking here](#).

Meet Your Teaching Assistants (TAs) for CSC301: Introduction to Software Engineering



Hi! I'm Cristina Marie D'Amico, your TA for CSC301. Call me Cris: I use she/her pronouns.

I'm looking forward to teaching you this semester!

Need to get in touch? Contact me using the [Quercus Inbox](#). I respond to emails M-F, within 48 hours.

You can find our tutorial syllabus [here](#), and our course syllabus [here](#).

Want to learn more about my PhD research? Connect with me on [Academia.edu](#)!

Supporting TA Presence Online

- Keep the same platform for all tutorials (Bb Collaborate, Teams, etc.); continuity across the tutorial sections.
- TA management of discussions, grading of quizzes.
- Multiple feedback models: e.g., audio/video in SpeedGrader; announcement tool; etc.



Tips for Building Cohesion with your Team Online

- **More check-ins:** Schedule group meetings throughout the semester (initial and mid-course: maybe one or two more?)
- **Feedback reports:** encourage reflective practice and have your TAs submit brief monthly 'teaching reports.'
- **Create shared documents:** resources, teaching practices and tips, technical support, etc.
- **Observe** your TAs (in the online environment) and offer feedback.
- **Other strategies that you've used? Let us know in the chat.**



2. Online Teaching Considerations



Considerations for TA Contract Hours:

New online tasks to consider:

- Moderating synchronous lectures.
- Facilitating synchronous tutorials/labs.
- Building content in Quercus.
- Training on new platforms and software.
- Managing online learning: e.g., discussion forums.
- Other online administrative duties.



Logistical considerations:

- Equipment and resources for TAs – hardware, internet connection, software.
- Don't assume your TAs are all digital natives! Online/remote teaching might be new for them.
- When selecting edtech tools or platforms, determine key supports and additional resources for TAs and students.




POLL

How many edtech tools are you using in your course?

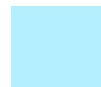
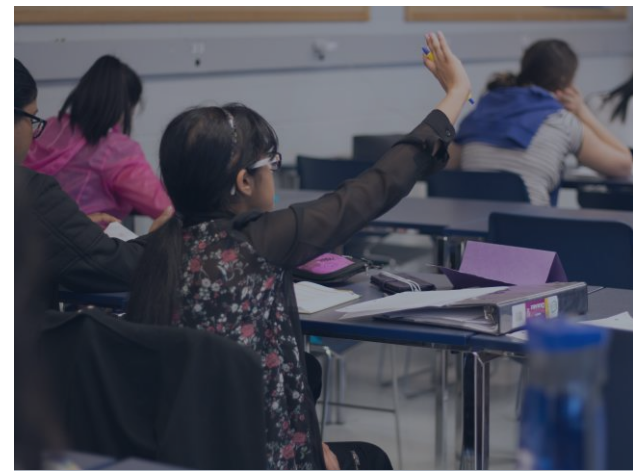
- A. 1-2 tools
- B. 3-4 tools
- C. 5-6 tools
- D. 6+ tools

Examples of tools: Quercus; Bb Collaborate; Zoom; Teams; Office 365; statistical software; polling software; etc.



Managing tutorial sections:

- Setting up course roles and [permissions](#) in Quercus.
- Creating [online “spaces”](#) for your TAs:
 - E.g., managing tutorial sections in separate shells vs. cross-listing your tutorial sections
- Office hours: [Bb collaborate](#) or [MS Teams Meetings](#) integrated in Quercus.
- Determine level of flexibility in individual tutorials to make student learning experience consistent.





Setting up engagements:

- Use variety of methods for interactions: learner-to-content, learner-to-instructor, and learner-to-learner (peer) interaction.
- Identify course engagements (synchronous versus asynchronous) and role of TAs
 - E.g., Is setting up asynchronous material a task for your TAs? What supports do they need to help you with teaching (e.g., breakout groups during webinar)?
- Ensure consistent student experience across sections/tutorials: tools, teaching presence, activities, interactions, office hour, etc.
- Develop netiquette or community agreement for online interactions: EDI, accessibility, mental health, etc.

Quercus Support Resources for your TAs. Consider adding contract hours to review this primary material.

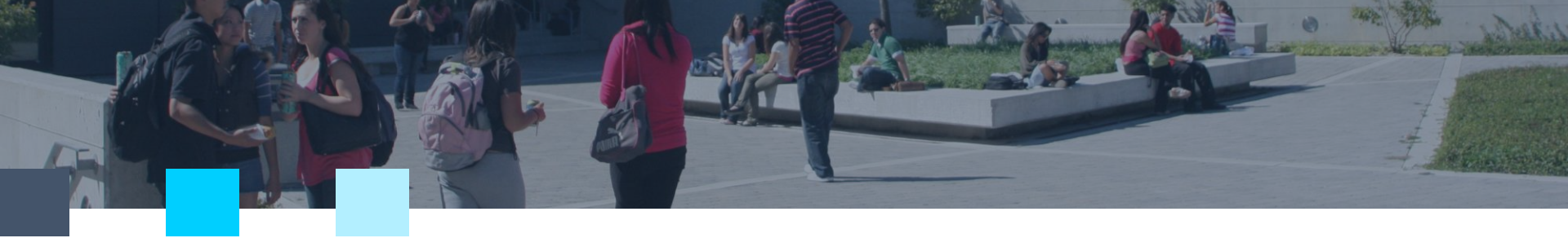
Considerations for assessment and feedback:

- Clarify assessment practices, including communication of deadlines and assessment requirements.
- Use effective rubrics in Quercus for various synchronous/asynchronous assessments, including discussion boards, breakout group work, presentations, etc.
- Promote use of SpeedGrader with embedded comments and audio/video feedback.



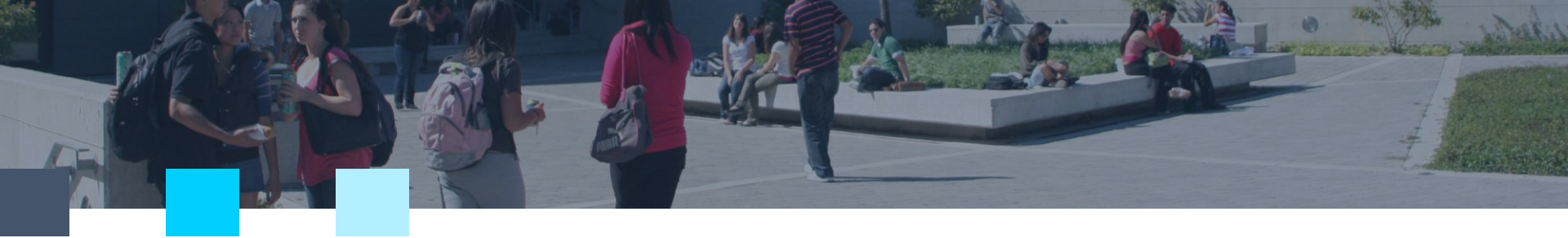
3. Training and Support





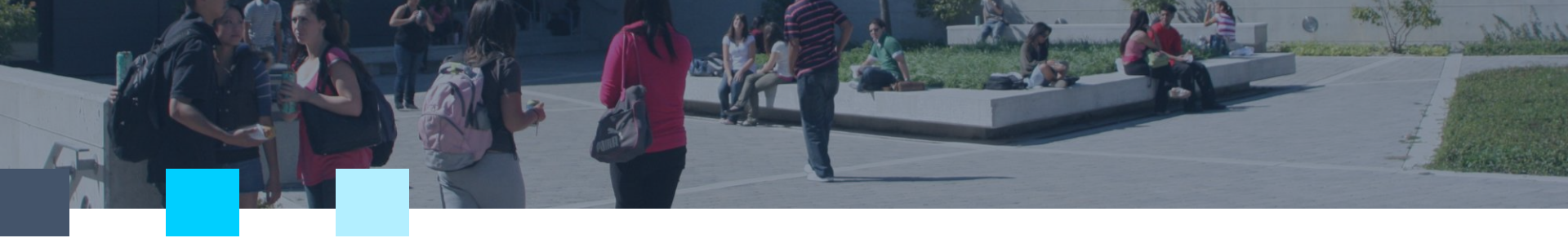
How to support TAs with technical issues

- Ensure TAs receive training on edtech tools, especially if there is a specialized tool/platform in the course.
 - e.g., Riipen, simulation software, etc.
- Provide a list of supports and in order of operations for managing tech troubles (for example):
 - First: in-course TA support (head or returning TA)
 - Second: Local IT support (departmental or divisional)
 - Third: g.help@utoronto.ca
- Help TAs develop strategies for online student readiness: [Getting Ready for Online](#).



How to help TAs respond to challenges in online learning:

- perceived isolation: building sense of community
- challenges balancing study: how to get to know your students
- work and family commitments: flexibility in learning
- confusion with content: reporting mechanisms on course content
- poor academic performance: identifying students at risk
- time management: frequent check-ins



Normalizing the use of online campus resources

- Support resources are not remedial – encourage your TAs to use them and to share them with students!
 - [Assignment calculator](#)
 - [Accessibility Services](#) and [Accommodations](#)
 - TATP's [Teaching Toolkit](#), especially those related to [Teaching with Technology & Teaching Online](#):
 - Supporting Students Success in Online Learning
 - Active Learning in the Online Environment
 - Quercus: Essential Info for TAs on U of T's Academic Toolbox
 - Video Captions and Audio Transcripts
 - PowerPoint Essentials

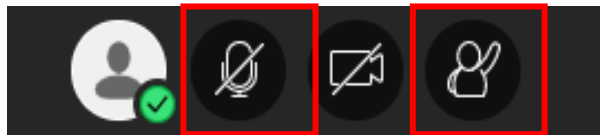
Review of Today's Tips

- ✓ Give consideration to TA work hours: make room for webinar facilitation, training on new technologies, and checking in.
- ✓ Give your TAs a presence in the course with images, home pages, and consistent course design in Quercus.
- ✓ Support online/remote teaching development for TAs: observe teaching and promote reflective practice.
- ✓ Share tips, strategies, and resources related to online learning.



Questions?

Use the “**raise hand**” function if you’d like to ask a question, or drop your question in the chat for our moderators.



THANK YOU

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