

Meeting for teaching assistants 16/06/2015

Emely Lindblom opens the meeting.

Tanja Petrushevska volunteers to be secretary and Kess Marks will be the adjuster. Agenda is approved, the possibility to add more points to discuss is opened, but nobody does.

- 1) We discussed our teaching experience in groups of about 5. Next each group presented their main points. Group 1 was discussing the following experience:
 - i. How teaching material is passed from the old teaching assistant (TA) to the next new another. Especially this is applicable when it comes to lab assistants. Not much attention is dedicated to how materials and explanations are passed from the old to the new TA. Maybe this is a course responsible (CR) duty since the TAs don't have hours for this. Henning agreed that the TA can come and ask for hours for writing assistant instructions when it is his/her last year.
 - ii. Suggestion: there should be a central archive for all the courses. Some courses don't have a working website with all the materials of the course. Set up something in Mondo for this purpose?
 - a. Maybe it is better just to have a folder for each course in Box where the assistants/teachers can put all the useful stuff?
- b. Group 2: If you been allocated 350 hours but then you only have done 150 hours, is it fair to get paid for 150 or 350? Is it fair for those have done all the 350?
 - i. How do TAs count their hours? When someone gets 80 hours are they really spending all 80 hours? Theoretical courses take a lot of time no matter how many students there are. If it is a lab, correcting lab reports takes less time.
- c. Group 3: What happens when there is no clear direction from the CR what exercises should be included and how the tutorials should be structured. For example, Emma and Sémeli have made the exercise session from scratch. Henning pointed out that normally, it is considered part of the duties of the CR to define the contents of the exercises.
 - i. How much contact is there between the CR and TA? Not too much, mostly at the beginning and the end at the course. Is this a general problem? Not really, but some think that the communication with the CR could be improved.
 - ii. Henning says that if anyone wants to develop something new for a course they should approach Henning to request extra hours first, rather than do the work and then ask for hours retrospectively.
- d. Group 4: This group discussed how system works, nothing in particular to bring up.
- e. Group 5: Central archive where everyone can see how other TA's work, to find inspirations or new ways to teach and improve your own teaching. Regarding group work, what should a TA do if one student claims he/she has been doing all the work in one group? Report to CR? The same question stands for cheating. Henning: If you find a student cheating, it is not TA responsibility to react. TA should instead report it to the CR who should in turn report to Joakim who will take action. It would be

nice if new TAs would get instructions on who to report to in different occasions.
Joakim or CR?

- f. Tanja as course evaluation responsible asks if the TAs have seen their results. The TAs would like to have access to the reports. Tanja will send the results to all of them.

Henning ends the meeting with some comments on next year's teaching duties. Last year, there were 50 people with from 50 to 350 hours per year. Many have 20% and 10%. 10 of the 50 TAs are finishing, so they have to be replaced. The number of hours allocated will be roughly the same as last year. His problem is that the new 6-7 who haven't done teaching yet don't speak Swedish and most of the lower level courses are taught in Swedish. One example was mentioned of a TA who had to speak Swedish while the CR was teaching in English.

Emely commented on potential problem that has been previously raised in the PhD council; namely that the Swedish speaking TAs are by default assigned to the lower level courses while the English speaking TAs get the more advanced master courses, and that this might be unfair. Henning raised the point that it is harder for the English speaking TAs to get any teaching at all, as there are fewer courses available to them. Tor suggested that maybe one should consider assigning two TAs to the same course(s), then it is not as big of a problem if one doesn't speak Swedish while the teaching itself will probably be more fun. Generally, this seemed to be considered a good idea, since it will also help with passing on the knowledge of the course and the labs.

The meeting is closed.