

Policies and Guidelines

for Graduate and Teaching Assistant
Appointments
(GAs and TAs)

Faculty of Graduate Studies
Orientation Workshop for new GAs and TAs
September 3rd, 2025



Collective Agreement for GA and TA appointments

- GAs and TAs are students employed to assist with “teaching or related duties” (Article 1)
 - ✓ sample list of duties in Article 14:03
- Unionized – CUPE 4580 collective agreement sets requirements and provisions for GA and TA employment
 - ✓ know your collective agreement - full text available from University’s website:

www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements



What is the difference between a GA and a TA?

- **GA** (Graduate Assistant)= fulltime graduate student (Master's or Doctoral) employed as assistant
- **TA** (Teaching Assistant)= undergraduate student employed as assistant

Three TA sub-categories:

TA I : 1st and 2nd year in program

TA II : 3rd and 4th year in program

TA III - if no qualified TA I or II applicants
(definitions in Article 1)



GA & TA = employment

Your unique position: both *student* and *employee*

- ✓ *Student:* must be registered student in good standing in academic program, etc.
- ✓ *Employee:* must meet all legal requirements for employment; must complete mandatory training required for Employees; limit on total hours of University employment, etc.



TA employees

Undergraduate students offered a teaching assistantship (TA) employment position:

- ✓ must be registered student in good standing (not on acad. probation) & **must remain registered throughout the term employed as TA:**

Domestic TAs may be full-time or part-time

International TAs must be full-time students (IRCC requirement)

- ✓ must meet all legal employment requirements – e.g. International TAs per IRCC regulations must be in Canada, have a valid study permit and Social Insurance Number, etc.



GA employees

Fulltime graduate students who have been offered a Graduate Assistantship (GA) employment position:

- ✓ must be registered **full-time** grad. student in good standing (not on acad. probation) & must remain registered full-time throughout the term employed as GAs
- ✓ must meet all legal employment requirements – e.g. International GAs per IRCC regulations must be in Canada, have a valid study permit and Social Insurance Number, etc.
- ✓ must be eligible for Graduate Funding (next slide)



Eligibility for Graduate Funding (GAs)

As defined in the graduate academic calendar:

- PhD: first 12 terms (4 years) full-time
- Master's: first 6 terms (2 years) full-time

from 1st term of registration in the PhD/Master's program.

To retain support once awarded, graduate students **must maintain continuous full-time registration** (except for certain LOAs e.g. medical, maternity, paternity)



I have been offered a GA/TA appointment – what do I do next?

- The hiring department will issue a 'job offer' in UWinsite People (the University's HR and payroll system)
- Follow your department's instructions e.g. must 'accept' the offer & submit required hiring documents via UWinsite People, etc. First-time University employees – hiring information posted on uwindsor.ca/hr - "*Resources for Student Employees*"
- The University will ensure that all legal requirements for employment are met

You will receive an 'authorization to work' email from Human Resources to notify you that your appointment has been approved by the University



GAs and TAs must not start working until receipt of HR's email entitled "Authorization to commence GA/TA duties"

- Your hiring department is responsible for ensuring your immediate GA/TA employment supervisor (e.g. course instructor) does not start assigning duties until receipt of HR's authorization email
- Contact your dept./program office if you have not received HR's authorization email before the start date on your contract
- Contact your program office for guidance or concerns
(Article 12:05)



What are my duties and work schedule?

You are expected to be available to work **throughout the duration of your GA or TA employment (from-to dates on GA/TA job offer)**

- no vacation time (vac. pay included in each pay cheque)
- must be available and report to work for **all** assigned duties - **both in-person/on campus or any remote duties**
- duties assigned by GA/TA supervisor (course instructor)



"Form 1 - Description of Duties and Allocation of Hours"

Meet with the course instructor (your GA/TA supervisor) within 10 days of appointment start date:

- ✓ review together "*Form 1 – Description of duties and allocation of hours*" and discuss in detail your duties throughout your appointment
- ✓ record all duties on Form 1 & proportion of the total hours assigned to each duty
- ✓ complete mandatory training for new University employees within deadline set by department

Article 14



Duties and work hours

- ✓ Your total hours of work for the entire contract period (e.g. from Sept. 3rd to Dec. 31st) are specified on your job offer.
- ✓ The breakdown of hours per duty is listed on your Form 1.

If you believe you are likely to go over your total contract hours, **you must notify the course instructor (your GA/TA supervisor) in writing** or via email at least 20 hours prior to completion of all hours in your contract (*Article 14:06*)

The course instructor **cannot** authorize work over the total hours in your contract. Discuss if/what adjustments to remaining duties may be needed to ensure you do not exceed your total contract hours, record any modifications on Form 1 (mid-term review).



Form 1

FORM 1 - DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES AND ALLOCATION FORM

(Description of Duties and Allocation of Hours)

The student will not commence work until they have received an email with the RE: line of "Authorization to commence GA/TA duties".

Student Name:

Student Number:

Department:

Course Number & Title:

Supervising Professor:

Duties

Hours per task

Initial Revised

Training:

Preparation:

Contact:

Marking/Grading Estimated Enrolment per GA/TA:

Other Duties:

TOTAL HOURS

(NOTE: Where an assistant believes that they are likely going to exceed their contracted hours in a particular semester, the assistant must inform their supervisor, in writing **or via e-mail**, at least 20 hours prior to completion of the hours allotted in their contract.)

Prepared by (Supervisor):

Signature:

Date:

Approved by (Chair/Designated Authority):

Signature:

Date:

Accepted by (Graduate/Teaching Assistant):

Signature:

Date:

MID COURSE REVIEW CHANGES (if no changes, record date of meeting and note no changes)

Date of Meeting:

Prepared by (Supervisor signature):

Approved by (Chair/Designated Authority Signature):

Graduate/Teaching Assistant Signature:



Duties and work hours

Your dual position: both *student* and *employee*

You may be required to work when students are normally off e.g. GAs and TAs often hold office hours during reading week; mark papers after last day of exams; proctor exams after your own class exams are done, etc.

- ✓ identify peak times (e.g. around exam time, marking, etc.) & ensure no conflict with your own classes/exams.
- ✓ Complete "Form 1" in detail and discuss expectations with instructor to resolve any scheduling concerns as soon as possible.



Duties and work hours

As a GA or TA, you hold an **employment** position at the University of Windsor.

! It is unacceptable to ask someone else to cover for your GA/TA work duties and/or to offer compensation to someone for completing any of your GA/TA work duties.

You cannot have another individual attend, complete tasks, or carry out any portion of your assigned duties on your behalf - this is considered a serious violation of your employment contract and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Article 11 of the CUPE 4580 collective agreement.

If unable to perform any of your required job duties - you must immediately inform your GA/TA supervisor.



Is there a limit on TA/GA work hours?

TAs – 100 TA hrs. per term max. for all TA appointments:

- ✓ If holding a TA contract in more than one dept., total combined hours for all TA appointments held in all departments cannot exceed 100 hrs./term

GAs – 140 hrs per term max. (“full” GA), may be prorated from 70 hrs. up to 140 hrs./term

- ✓ comes to approx. 10 GA hrs. per week on average for a full GA appointment
- ✓ GA (and TA) employment hours count towards the total max. hours per week allowed for University-related employment – see next slide

(Article 14)



Graduate students holding GAs:

Full-time graduate students are permitted to work up to 24 hours per week total income from all employment sources within the University e.g.:

- GA appointment
- RA-employment income (not including RA-scholarship)
- Sessional instructor appointment
- Work Study, Food Services, IT Services, Library, Residence Services, etc. and any other University-related employment.

Guidelines on Employment for FT graduate students posted at:
www.uwindsor.ca/graduate-studies/457/employment-graduate-students



How many terms can I receive a TA/GA appointment?

TA: as needed - no obligation for dept. to offer future TA appointments; TAs assigned based on criteria in article 12:04.

GA:

Funding commitment per Article 13:01 - if a PhD or Master's grad. student is offered a GA per Article 13:01, the Dept. will offer future GAs ("terms of support") to a total of:

Ph.D.: equivalent of 7 full GA terms@140hrs.
(total 980 hrs.)

Master's: equivalent of 3 full GA terms@140hrs.
(total 420 hrs.)

GA terms may also be offered when no future commitment can be made - under Article 13:05b&c (see slide #23)



Funding commitment and GA's responsibility to apply - Article 13:01

- Your department must post projected GA positions before each term - on the dept. website
- To receive remaining required GA appointments, you **must apply each term** by the posted application deadline until you have received the required number of terms of support per Article 13:01 (7 for PhD, 3 for Master's).
 - ✓ deadline for applications is at least 4 weeks before term start date and normally even earlier – check with your dept.



Funding commitment (cont.)

In addition to applying each term, to receive the remaining appointments:

- must maintain full-time registration in good standing in the PhD or Master's program
- must be satisfactorily performing GA job duties

(Article 13:02)



What if I am not available to work in a particular term? (GAs only)

- “Assistantship exemption” – must request in writing before signing the job offer
 - The department will offer the GA in a future term provided at that time the student will be still within the program limits for Graduate Funding eligibility i.e. within first 6 terms FT in the Master’s program/ first 12 terms FT for PhD (slide #7)
 - PhD: max. of 2 GA exemptions
 - Master’s: max. of 1 GA exemption
- After maximum exemptions reached - will forfeit the term declined.
- (Article 13:01)*



What if I am not available to work in a particular term? (GAs only) – cont.

In addition to exemptions, may decline a GA job offer without penalty in semesters while on:

1. co-op terms
 2. approved Leave of Absence per Employment Standards Act (ESA): maternity/paternity, parental, & medical leave for entire term
- Other employment leaves throughout appointment per ESA - e.g. bereavement, personal emergency, etc.

The department will offer the GA in a future term - **provided within program limits for Graduate Funding eligibility.**

(Article 13)



What if I want to work fewer hours in a particular term? (GAs only)

- a GA can request fewer hours than offered
- need approval by the Department
- if the Department agrees to reduce the hours then it counts as a term of support to the number of hours originally offered by the Department
- example: Department offers 140hrs. → GA requests 100 → Dept. agrees to reduce to 100 → counts as 140, i.e. the eliminated 40 hrs. will not be offered/made up in a future semester.

(Article 13:05a)



GA appointments without triggering future GA funding commitment

Articles 13:05 b) and c) provide opportunities for Departments to make GA offers when Dept. has available GA positions but is unable to make a commitment for the future GA terms of support that are required under Article 13:01 - examples:

- shorter/1-year coursework Master's programs with only Fall/Winter classes and no Summer GAs needed;
- when fewer than 3 terms remain until graduating/completing the program;
- if a grad. student was not successful in obtaining GA appointment initially and a position opens later;

etc.

Provided Department and student in agreement - GA offered without triggering future funding commitment under Article 13:01.



Will I receive feedback about my work?

GA & TA employee performance evaluation:

- not mandatory
- can be done by course instructor/supervisor as needed at any time throughout or at the end of appointment
- assistant is given opportunity to review evaluation and add comments
- useful for improving skills, providing feedback, suggestions for improvement
- useful for future GA/TA appointments (e.g. positive evaluation one of the hiring criteria for GAs and TAs)

(Article 10)



What if there are issues/ concerns with my GA/TA appointment?

- **Informal Complaint**

Notify the course instructor/ your GA/TA supervisor and address issue immediately

- **Formal Complaint**

3-step formal grievance process:

Department Head → Dean of Graduate Studies → Executive Director, Academic Labour Relations

- ✓ Contact your union representative for guidance (cupe4580@uwindSOR.ca)

(Article 7)



What kind of information can I find in the CUPE 4580 GA/TA Collective Agreement?

- criteria for assigning GA and TA appointments (Articles 12:03 and 12:04)
- maximum hours of work per term; description of duties (Article 14)
- GAs only: number of terms of support; exemptions; declining terms of support (Article 13)
- GAs only: health benefits (Article 25)
- leaves of absence (Article 16)



What kind of information can I find in the Collective Agreement? (cont.)

- discrimination and harassment issues – definition, protocol for reporting and filing a complaint, etc. (Article 5)
- procedures for informal complaint and formal grievance (Article 7)
- GA/TA evaluations (Article 10)
- procedures for disciplining, suspension, discharge and termination of employment (Articles 11 and 22)



Questions/Contacts

- contact your union: cupe4580@uwindsor.ca
- refer to the CUPE 4580 Collective Agreement:
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements>
- discuss with your GA/TA supervisor & your dept.

Graduate Studies: gata-fgs@uwindsor.ca

Human Resources: hrstudent@uwindsor.ca

Academic Labour Relations: acadlr@uwindsor.ca



Wishing you a successful start of the semester!

We hope you have a rewarding experience as an
Assistant at the University of Windsor!

*Thank you for the work that you do as our
ambassadors and role models!*

