

# Policies and Guidelines

## for Graduate and Teaching Assistant Appointments

Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Orientation Workshop for new GAs and TAs  
September 9, 2026



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## Presentation goals:

Summarize policies related to employment  
of students as graduate and teaching assistants  
(GAs and TAs)

Overview of key provisions from the  
Collective Agreement between the University and  
CUPE local 4580

Additional resources for new assistants



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## Collective Agreement for GA and TA appointments

- CUPE 4580 Collective Agreement sets requirements for employment of students as GAs or TAs by various departments at the University
- covers various aspects of GA & TA employment such as eligibility; criteria for offering appointments; scope of duties; max. hours of work; health and safety; etc.
- available from University's HR website:  
[www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements](http://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements)



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## What is the difference between a GA and a TA?

GAs and TAs are University students employed to assist with "teaching or related duties" (Article 1 of the CA)

✓ list of duties in Article 15:03

**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**: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of undergrad. program

**TA II**: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of undergrad. program

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



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## GA & TA = employment

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

- ✓ *Student*: must be registered student in good standing (not on academic probation) & must remain registered in the academic program throughout the term employed as GA or TA.
- ✓ *University Employee*: must meet all legal employment requirements e.g. have UofW employee number and SIN; International GAs and TAs per IRCC regulations must be in Canada, have a valid study permit and SIN, etc. (verified by Human Resources)



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## 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. review and 'accept' the job offer, complete onboarding tasks & submit required hiring documents – instructions on [HR's website uwindor.ca/hr](http://uwindor.ca/hr) - "Resources for Student Employees"
  - ✓ First-time University employees must also complete mandatory employee training within a deadline - info posted on [HR's website](http://uwindor.ca/hr)
- HR will review and ensure all legal employment requirements have been met - on the Friday before the start date of the contract, you will receive an email titled "Authorization to commence GA/TA duties" from HR.



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

- As a GA/TA you will be reporting for work duties to a "Supervisor" - in most instances the instructor of the course you have been assigned to
- The hiring department is to ensure your GA/TA Supervisor does not start assigning duties until receipt of HR's authorization email.
- Notify your department if you have not received HR's authorization email on the Friday before the start date on your contract (GA/TA job offer)
- Contact your program office for any job offer concerns

*Article 13:05*



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

Meet with your GA/TA Supervisor/course instructor within 10 days of your start date to complete *"Form 1 – Description of duties and allocation of hours"*

- ✓ record all duties on Form 1 & proportion of the total hours assigned per duty
- ✓ discuss specific expectations regarding each duty - e.g. in-person on-campus attendance; turnaround time expected for marking after exams; etc.
- ✓ note deadlines - for completing any required training e.g. mandatory training for new University employees

*Article 15*



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## Note your work schedule & duties

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 e.g. Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>)

- ✓ must be available and report to work for all assigned duties- both in-person/on campus or any remote duties
- ✓ no vacation time (vac. pay included in each pay cheque)
- ✓ may be required to work & be present on campus when there are no classes & students are away - 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 exams, marking, etc.) & ensure no conflict with your own classes/exams



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## Your work schedule & duties (cont.)

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.

- ✓ Immediately inform your GA/TA Supervisor of any unforeseen or extenuating circumstances if unable to complete any of your agreed upon job duties.



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## Total work hours cannot be exceeded

- ✓ Your total hours of work for the entire contract period are specified on your job offer.
- ✓ The breakdown of hours per duty is listed on your Form 1.

The course instructor cannot authorize work over the total hours in your contract (job offer).

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 the total hours in your contract (*Article 15:06*)

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).



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## 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:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                        |       |
| <b>TOTAL HOURS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                        |       |
| (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: |
| <b>MID COURSE REVIEW CHANGES (if no changes, record date of meeting and note no changes)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                        |       |
| Date of Meeting:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Prepared by (Supervisor signature):    |       |
| Approved by (Chair/Designated Authority Signature):                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Graduate/Teaching Assistant Signature: |       |



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## GA/TA and other employment

University requirements/HR – maximum student work hrs  
**per week:**

- ✓ Up to 24 hours **per week** total for all types of student employment through the University incl. as a TA or GA.
- ✓ Students are permitted to have multiple appointments on campus as long as the aggregate hours worked each week do not exceed 24 hours. Refer to [HR's website](#)

**Collective Agreement - maximum GA/TA work hrs  
per term:**

- ✓ "term" defined in Article 1: Fall term - Sept. to Dec.; Winter – Jan. to Apr.; Summer - May to Aug.
- ✓ **Undergrad. TAs:** maximum of 100 TA hours **per term**; may hold more than 1 TA contract as long as max. 100 TA hours total per term for all TA contracts in all depts.

*Article 15:02*



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## Maximum allowable work hours

**Doctoral / Master's GAs:** a 'full' GA appointment is  
140 GA hours **per term** max.

(= approx. 10 hrs. **per week** on average)

& may hold other employment (same as TAs) up to no more than 24 work hours **per week** total from all employment sources within the University, such as:

- GA appointment
- sessional instructor appointment
- RA-employment income (not including RA-scholarship)
- work study, food services, IT services, library, residence services, etc. and any other University related employment.

Refer to [Guidelines on Employment of Fulltime Graduate Students](#).



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## Throughout your GA / TA employment

- ✓ Ensure you understand fully your GA/TA work commitment, schedule, work hours - clarify expectations if unsure
- ✓ Ensure you understand the Collective Agreement requirements e.g.
  - 'failure to report for a work assignment' after accepting your GA/TA appointment may be cause for termination (*Article 12:01*)
  - subsequent changes to your student status & registration may affect your GA/TA eligibility (e.g. LOAs, acad. probation)
- ✓ Ensure you stay within the expected hours-per-duty (Form 1) & that you don't exceed your total contract hours
- ✓ Promptly notify your Supervisor of any unforeseen circumstances or concerns that affect your ability to complete your work duties.



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## What if I am sick and can't come to work?

Immediately inform your GA/TA Supervisor/course instructor as soon as you know you cannot report to work in advance.

- up to 1 paid sick day for GA&TA appointments over 50 hrs/term
- up to 2 paid sick days for full 140-hr GA appointments per term
- ✓ Applies only to days with scheduled class/lab/office hours - other duties (e.g. marking) to be made up after sickness
- ✓ To qualify for sick leave (*Article 17:01*), you must notify your GA/TA Supervisor of the expected duration of illness/injury.
- ✓ Other employment leaves throughout appointment per ESA (paid or unpaid) e.g. bereavement, personal emergency, etc. - details in *Article 17*.



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## What if I have concerns / complaints about my GA/TA appointment?

- **Informal Complaint** (Article 7:02)

Discuss with your GA/TA supervisor / course instructor as soon as possible (no later than within 10 workdays)

- ✓ may also request assistance from your CUPE local 4580 union.

Supervisor provided an opportunity to resolve complaint within 10 workdays.

- **Formal Complaint** - 3-step formal grievance process:

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

- ✓ Contact your union representative for guidance:  
cupe4580@uwindsor.ca

(Article 7)



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## Will I receive feedback about my work?

Written performance evaluation (Article 10:01) as a tool that Supervisor may use as part of 'coach and counsel':

*"...to provide feedback to the employee and provide clarification on expectations, duties and responsibilities as identified in Form 1"*

- ✓ Not mandatory - can be done at any time throughout appointment at the Supervisor's discretion.
- ✓ Assistant is given opportunity to review evaluation & comment.
- ✓ Suggestions for improvement must be provided by Supervisor if performance judged as unsatisfactory.

'Coach and counsel' definition in Article 1:

Coach and Counsel

An informal, non-disciplinary step that may precede the progressive discipline process. It involves a discussion to address minor concerns, clarify expectations, provide guidance, and support improvement.



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

TA: as needed - no obligation for dept. to offer future TA appointments; assigned based on criteria in Article 13:04.

GA:

The standard/default offer when a Master's or Doctoral student is offered a GA for the first time is with implied future obligation by the Department to offer a minimum # of GA appointments in subsequent / future semesters – details in Article 14:01.

“Graduate Assistantship Offer” definition in Article 1:

*“An offer of employment as a Graduate Assistant with a commitment of future terms of support under Article 14:01 (a) and (b). ”*



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## Future GA terms commitment per Article 14:01

Doctoral: min. 7 ‘full’ GAs x 140 hrs.

Master's: min. 3 ‘full’ GAs x 140 hrs.

A ‘full’ GA appointment is 140 hours per term.

Dept. may offer a ‘partial’ GA from 70 hrs. to 139 hrs./term - obligation is prorated to equivalent of ‘full’ term

e.g. 2 ‘partial’ 70-hr appointments = 1 ‘full’ 140-hr GA.

- ✓ the default/standard GA offer is with implied commitment for future GA terms of support per Article 14:01.
- ✓ if future GA terms cannot be guaranteed - the Dept. may offer GA appointment(s) without future commitment provided the Dept. and student are in agreement – conditions in Article 14:05(b) or 14:05(c)



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## Future GA terms per Article 14:01 will be offered within the limits of 'eligibility for graduate funding'

Defined in Grad. Calendar & included in Appendix "B" of the CA:

- Doctoral: eligible for funding within first 4 years (12 terms) from the 1st term of registration in PhD program
- Master's: eligible for funding within first 2 years (6 terms) from the 1st term of registration in Master's program
- ✓ **must maintain continuous / uninterrupted fulltime registration** every term (Fall/Summer/Winter) in the Doctoral or Master's program in order to continue receiving future GA terms
- ✓ rare exceptions - only for certain types of academic Leaves of absence (LOAs) without reducing funding eligibility period – next slide



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## Academic Leaves of Absence (LOAs) may affect Funding eligibility period for GAs

Only certain academic LOAs are with extension of the Funding eligibility period:

- ✓ medical leave
- ✓ maternity/paternity
- ✓ parental

If academic leave is granted for other reasons (e.g. financial/personal) – the Funding eligibility period is not extended i.e. the LOA will reduce the number of terms eligible for GA support.



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## "Appendix B – Graduate Calendar"

### AWARDS AND FINANCIAL AID

#### ELIGIBILITY FOR GRADUATE FUNDING

Full-time graduate students in research-based programs may receive funding from three main sources: scholarships (internal and external), Graduate Assistantships (GAs), and Research Assistantships (RAs). This latter category is Department or even supervisor specific. Eligibility for the first two, scholarships and GAs, are subject to constraints dictated by the funding sources and, in the case of GAs, by the Collective Agreement and the Department.

One of the constraints upon funding eligibility is temporal and depends upon continuous registration. Support from the University of Windsor at the Master's level may be offered within the first two years (six terms) from the first term of registration at the Master's level (M2). Support from the University of Windsor at the Doctoral level may be offered within the first four years (twelve terms) from the first term of registration at the Doctoral level (D2). While external awards are administered according to rules defined by the source agencies, and these can differ slightly from program to program, their rules regarding eligibility are similar to the above listed.

In order to retain support once it is awarded, students must maintain continuous full-time registration; rare exceptions can be made to accommodate a Leave of Absence for medical, maternity or paternity leave. Where leave is granted for other reasons, the term(s) on leave will diminish the number of terms that a student was eligible to receive support.

Failure to register by the posted late registration deadline for each semester will result in forfeiture of support for that semester. Students who are eligible to apply for external awards are obliged to do so, or they may forfeit their funding from the University of Windsor.

For up-to-date detailed information on the funding available to graduate students, please refer to the website of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at [www.uwindsor.ca/graduate](http://www.uwindsor.ca/graduate).

\* From the Winter 2026 calendar



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## Assistant must apply each term to receive the min. number of GA terms

To receive remaining GA appointments, you **must apply each term** until you have received the min. number of terms of support per Article 14:01 (projected GA positions and application deadline are posted before each term on dept. website ).

#### ARTICLE 14 - FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 14:01 Within the limits of eligibility as prescribed by governmental funding and as outlined in the Graduate Calendar, as well as in accordance with Article 14:02 (see Appendix 'B'), required registration, and satisfactory performance:
- those students offered Assistantships at the Ph.D. level shall receive no fewer than the equivalent of seven (7) full terms of support subject to Article 14:05(b), provided that the Assistant has applied to a position each term as per the instructions on the posting by the application deadline until they have received the minimum seven (7) terms of support.
  - those students offered Assistantships at the Master's level shall receive no fewer than the equivalent of three (3) full terms of support subject to Article 14:05(c), provided that the Assistant has applied to a position each term as per the instructions on the posting by the application deadline until they have received the minimum three (3) terms of support.



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Assistant must also be registered, in good standing, and perform duties satisfactorily

Re-iterated in Article 14:02 as a condition to receive the future GA terms that the Department has committed to offer per Article 14:01.

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14:02 | Financial support, as outlined in 14:01, shall continue, if the Graduate Assistant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) maintains full-time registration in good standing in the degree program; and</li><li>b) applies for posted positions; and</li><li>c) is satisfactorily performing the duties required.</li></ul> |
|       | Failure to meet these eligibility conditions will result in the forfeiture of the term(s) of support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



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

may request an "Assistantship exemption" without forfeiting the GA term (Article 14:01)

- ✓ must request in writing before signing the GA job offer
- ✓ limit of 1 exemption max. for Master's / 2 for Doctoral GAs
- ✓ department will offer the GA appointment in a future term provided at that time 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

After max. # of exemptions exceeded – every term declined is forfeited and the remaining obligation of the Department reduced.



## 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 14:05a)*



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## GA appointments without triggering future GA funding commitment

Articles 14:05 (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 14:01 - 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 14:01.



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## Quick reference to the CUPE 4580 Collective Agreement articles

- definitions ([Article 1](#)): GA, TA I/II/III, Supervisor, 'in good standing', academic term, coach and counsel, etc.
- sample list of duties, maximum hours of work per term ([Article 15](#))
- criteria for ranking TA applicants ([Article 13:04](#))
- GAs only:  
Graduate Assistantship Offer definition ([Article 1](#)), criteria for making Graduate Assistantship Offers ([Article 13:04](#)), min. number of terms of support ([Article 14:01](#)), conditions for receiving future terms of support ([Article 14:02](#)); eligibility for graduate funding ([Appendix B](#)).



## Quick reference to the the Collective Agreement (cont.)

- health benefits for GAs ([Article 25](#))
- hourly pay rates ([Schedule A](#))
- leaves of absence ([Article 16](#))
- discrimination and harassment issues – definition, protocol for reporting and filing a complaint, etc. ([Article 5](#))
- procedures for informal complaint and formal grievance ([Article 7](#))
- employee evaluations ([Article 10](#))
- procedures for counselling and progressive discipline, disciplining, suspension, discharge ([Articles 11 and 22](#))



## Questions/Contacts

- contact your union: [cupe4580@uwindsor.ca](mailto: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](mailto:gata-fgs@uwindsor.ca)

Human Resources: [hrstudent@uwindsor.ca](mailto:hrstudent@uwindsor.ca)

Academic Labour Relations: [acadlr@uwindsor.ca](mailto:acadlr@uwindsor.ca)



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## Additional resources

[Graduate Assistant and Teaching Assistant Handbook](#)  
*ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/uwindsorgata*

- various topics incl. getting started as a GA or TA; common GA/TA roles and responsibilities, grading and effective feedback, leading labs and tutorials, teaching tips and strategies, Gen AI FAQs, and other various resources.

[Resources for Graduate and Teaching Assistants | Faculty of Graduate Studies website](#)

- Links to various GA/TA employment related information, HR's student hiring info, current CA, etc.



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## 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!*



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