

Policies and Guidelines

for Graduate and Teaching Assistant
Appointments
(GAs and TAs)

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Orientation Workshop for new GAs and TAs,
September 8, 2021



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 contains requirements and provisions for GA and TA employment
 - ✓ know your collective agreement - full text available from the HR website:
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements>



What is the difference between a GA and a TA?

- GA (Graduate Assistant)= fulltime graduate student
- TA (Teaching Assistant)= undergraduate student

➤ 3 sub-categories:

TA I : 1st and 2nd year in program

TA II : 3rd and 4th year in program

if no qualified TA I and II applicants then TA III:

TA III (i): GAs who are not appointed for that term

TA III (ii): undergrad. students already holding another undergrad. degree

TA III (iii): non-students

(Article 1)



What are the GA eligibility requirements?

Graduate Assistants (GAs):

- ✓ must be **registered full-time grad. student** for the term of work **before** GA contract can be submitted
- ✓ must remain registered full-time throughout the term
- ✓ must be in good standing (not on academic probation)
- ✓ must be **eligible for funding:**

Funding Eligibility =

first **12 terms** full-time of PhD program

first **6 terms** full-time of Master's program



What are the TA eligibility requirements?

Teaching Assistants (TAs):

- ✓ must be registered for the term of work
before TA contract can be submitted:
 - domestic TAs can be **full-time or part-time**
 - international TAs must be **full-time** students and be legally eligible to work in Canada (have a valid Social Insurance Number and valid study permit).
- ✓ must remain registered throughout the term
- ✓ must be in good standing (not on acad. probation)



GA & TA = employment

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

- ✓ *Student*: registration requirements, must be in good standing in academic program, etc.
- ✓ *Employee*: must meet all legal requirements for employment, e.g. must have SIN, valid study permit (if international student), etc.; must complete mandatory Employee training; limit on total hours of work, etc.



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

- Read and sign contract (“Notice of Appointment to Assistantship”) and return to your Department.
- Follow your department’s instructions about next steps and visit uwindsor.ca/hr and click “Links for Student Employees” to obtain the forms to submit your 'New hire package' immediately following signing your contract.
- The university will review contract to ensure that all legal requirements for employment are met
 - ! GAs and TAs must not begin duties until email confirmation of the approval of contract is received from Human Resources.



What is my work schedule?

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

- no vacation time (vac. pay included in each pay cheque)
- your unique position: both *student* and *employee*
- identify peak times (e.g. around exam time, marking, etc.) & ensure no conflict with your own classes/exams
 - ! you may be required to work when students are normally off (e.g. office hrs. during study week; marking after last day of exams; proctoring after your own exams as a student are done, etc.)
- Complete "Form 1" (see next slide) and discuss with instructor any scheduling concerns **before** beginning of appointment



“Form 1 - Description of Duties and Allocation of Hours”

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

- ✓ review together "*Form 1 – Description of duties and allocation of hours*” and discuss details of the 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
- ✓ **Mid-term review** of duties with supervisor– record any changes on Form 1



How many hours total will I work?

Your total hours of work are specified in your contract.

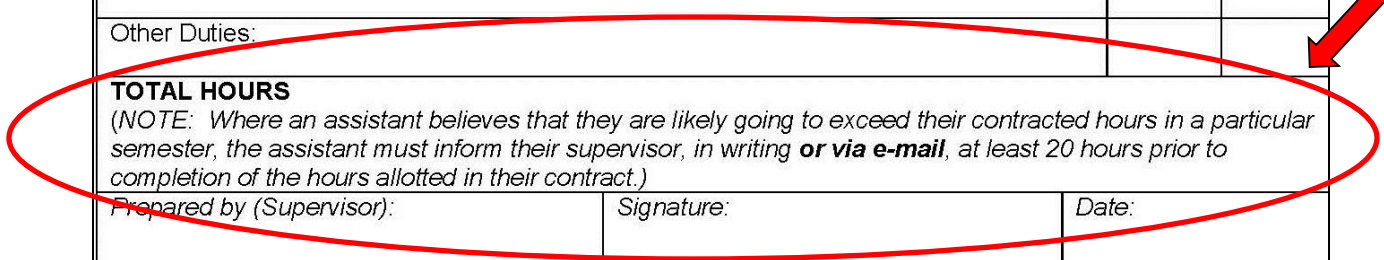
! the course instructor **cannot authorize work over the total hours in your contract**

- if you believe that you may go over your contract hours **you must notify instructor/supervisor in writing** or via email at least 20 hours prior to completion of all hours in your contract
- discuss if any adjustments are needed to ensure you do not exceed your total contract hours and record any modifications on Form 1 (mid-term review)



Form 1

Description of Duties and Allocation of Hours		
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:	



How many hours *can* I work each term?

TAs:

- no minimum, up to 100 hrs./ term for TA I and TA II, up to 110 hrs./term for TA III.
- 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:

- from 70 hrs up to 140 hrs./ term
- GA employment hours count towards the total hours per term allowed for University-related employment (see next slide)



GA employment considerations:

Maximum hrs. of paid employment for full-time graduate students =

240 hrs per term

(Fall, Winter, Summer)

total for **all** University employment, including:

- GA appointment
- RA (if paid as salary)
- sessional instructor appointment

! graduate students cannot hold a sessional appointment and a GA in the same term



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

TAs:

- no restrictions – can apply every term

GAs:

Funding commitment: if a grad. student is offered a GA, Dept. will offer GAs in future terms to a total of:

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

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

Eligible to apply for one additional term.



What are the conditions?

both TAs and GAs:

- must remain registered throughout appointment
- must be in “good standing” in the degree program
- must perform satisfactorily the required TA duties

GAs:

- Once offered a GA appointment, must apply **each term** by the application deadline until receiving the minimum required terms of support: 7 for PhD, 3 for Master’s
 - ✓ check your Dept. website before each term for the posted notice of available GA/TA positions
 - ✓ Deadline for applications is no later than 4 weeks before term begins



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

- “Assistantship exemption” – must request before the first day of the term & in writing:
 - PhD: **max. of 3 terms** (2 if also takes sessional app.)
 - Master’s: **max. of 1 term**
- The department will offer the GA in a future term provided the student is still eligible for funding (i.e. registered FT within first 6 terms in the Master’s program/ first 12 terms for PhD)

(Article 13)



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

In addition to exemptions, a GA may decline an appointment without penalty (i.e. department will offer the appointment in a future term) in semesters while on:

1. approved leave of absence per Employee Standards Act:
 - maternity/paternity, parental, & medical leave for entire term
 - other leaves throughout appointment per ESA (e.g. bereavement, personal emergency, etc.)
2. co-op terms
3. sessional appointments (max. of 2)

The department will offer the GA in a future term, **provided the student is still eligible for funding.** *(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.

("Letter of understanding re: request for consideration of reduced hours")



Will I receive feedback about my work?

GA & TA employee evaluations:

- not mandatory
- can be done by course instructor/supervisor as needed at any time throughout appointment or at the end
- assistant is given opportunity to review evaluation and add comments
- useful for improving skills, providing feedback and 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 contract?

- **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 of HR

- ✓ Contact a 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

- talk to your GA/TA supervisor or your department
- contact your union: cupe4580@uwindsor.ca
- refer to the CUPE 4580 Collective Agreement:
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements>
- Graduate Studies: gradst@uwindsor.ca
- Human Resources: hr@uwindsor.ca



Good luck!

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!

