

# Policies and Guidelines

for Graduate and Teaching Assistant  
Appointments  
(GAs and TAs)

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Orientation Workshop for new GAs and TAs,  
September 9, 2020



# 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 : 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year in program

TA II : 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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)*



# GA & TA = employment

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

✓ *Student:* registration requirements, must be in good standing in academic program, etc.

✓ *Employee:* must have UofW employee#

& complete mandatory Employee training; must be eligible to work; limit on total hours of work, etc.



# What are the GA eligibility requirements?

## Graduate Assistants (GAs):

- ✓ must be **registered full-time** for the term of work  
**before** GA contract can be approved
- ✓ 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 approved:
  - domestic TAs can be **full-time or part-time**
  - international TAs must be **full-time** students and must have a valid study/work permit to be able to work in Canada (TA is employment).
- ✓ must remain registered throughout the term
- ✓ must be in good standing (not on academic probation)



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

- Sign contract (“Notice of Appointment to Assistantship”) prepared by your Department
- 3 signatures on contract:  
*Assistant* → *Department* → *Dean of Grad. Studies*  
**! GAs and TAs must not begin work until contract is approved and signed *by Dean of Graduate Studies***
- Obtain your copy of the signed contract from your Department after Graduate Studies approval
- Obtain University of Windsor employee number 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:

- ✓ complete 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.

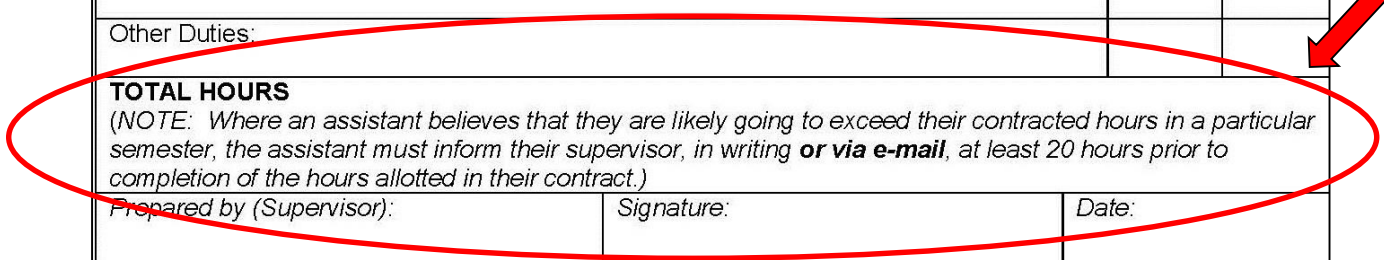
**! the course instructor **cannot** authorize work over the total hours in your contract**

- 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  |  |         |
|--|--|---------|
| <b>Student Name:</b>   |  |         |
| <b>Student number:</b>   |  |         |
| 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><br>(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 <b>or via e-mail</b> , 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</b> (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](mailto:cupe4580@uwindsor.ca)
- refer to the CUPE 4580 Collective Agreement:  
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/526/collective-agreements>
- Graduate Studies: [gradst@uwindsor.ca](mailto:gradst@uwindsor.ca)
- Human Resources: [hr@uwindsor.ca](mailto: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!*

