

Are there any other EI benefits available?

Yes, if you become unemployed due to **pregnancy** or **childbirth** or **sickness**, you are eligible for “special benefits.” For special benefits, you only need 600 hours in the qualifying period and you do not have to be available or actively seeking employment. Maternity and sickness benefits last 15 weeks each and parental benefits (which can be taken by either partner) last 35 weeks. Maternity and parental benefits may be supplemented by employer-paid leave provided by your CUPE 3906 collective agreement. Please contact the union for details.

When do I have to apply?

As soon as possible. If you do not apply within 4 weeks of becoming unemployed you may lose your entitlement to benefits. *You do not need to formally request a Record of Employment* from McMaster, as they should electronically issue you a ROE to Service Canada, but you should open up your claim with EI as soon as possible, even if your ROE has yet to be sent. See above for the appropriate timelines. Remember, if you do not receive a ROE, please contact CUPE 3906 at staff@cupe3906.org and we can ensure that one is issued on your behalf.

Is there any help available?

Of course. Your Union can help you through the application procedure (either in person or on the phone) and will assist in filing any appeals if applicable. You can find some basic information here <http://cupe3906.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/CUPE-Unit-2-ROE.pdf> but more detailed information is available by calling the office at x24003. All help received from your Union is at no cost to the member. Give us a call! You can also find some detailed information provided by Service Canada at: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/regular.shtml>



Unit 2 (Sessional Faculty and Hourly-Rated Sessional Music Faculty) Employment Insurance Information

Kenneth Taylor Hall,
B111

McMaster University

staff@cupe3906.org

www.cupe3906.org

Employment Insurance Information for Sessional Faculty

Hourly-Rated Sessional Music Faculty (Unit 2)

As a Sessional Faculty or Hourly-Rated Sessional Music Faculty and a member of CUPE 3906, you may be eligible to receive Employment Insurance (EI) when you are not teaching. We have created this pamphlet to provide more information and help you through the process.

Who is eligible?

All legally employed workers who have accumulated enough hours AND who are out of work for reasons beyond their control (like sessional faculty members whose contracts end when the course they are teaching is over) are eligible to claim benefits.

How many hours do you need?

The number of hours you need to qualify depends on several factors, including residence. As of December 2014, you would need 700 hours worked in you live in Hamilton (or 630 hours if you live in Toronto), in the 52 weeks prior to becoming unemployed (this period is called the "qualifying period"). If you live outside of Hamilton, you can find the number of hours needed in your economic region at <http://srv129.services.gc.ca/rbin/eng/geocont.aspx>

However, you might need as many as 910 hours if you are considered a "new entrant" or "re-entrant" to the labour market.

In order to avoid being considered a new or re-entrant, you need to have worked at least 490 hours in the year prior to the qualifying period (or have had a week of maternity/ parental EI leave in the last 4 years). This period is called the "labour force attachment period." You will need a Record of Employment for *both* years if you have between 630 and 910 hours of insurable employment in the 12 months prior to applying for EI. You can add together (EI insurable) employment for all employers, such as other universities you may have worked at, in counting your hours.

How do hours work for hourly rated sessional music faculty?

Tracking hours is much easier for hourly rated sessional faculty, who can simply count up each hour they work. Please note that one hour is to consist of 50 minutes of teaching and 10 minutes of prep time.

How do hours work for sessional faculty?

At McMaster University, CUPE 3906 and the Employer have agreed that a **3.0 unit course counts as 238 hours** (please note that other universities have different rules), and 6.0 course counts as 476 hours. You can add any other TA positions or hourly positions, or any other work for any employer, in counting your hours. *If you feel that you have worked more than this, it is possible to have this reflected on your Record of Employment.* However, you would need to have kept track of your hours. Please contact CUPE3906 for assistance.

What is a Record of Employment?

A Record of Employment (an ROE) is a form used by Service Canada to determine whether an individual qualifies for Employment Insurance benefits, the benefit rate and the duration of the employee's claim. McMaster is legally obliged to issue you an ROE, which is sent directly to Service Canada within five (5) calendar days following the pay period end date inclusive of the last day for which the employee is paid. The employer will do this electronically. Once issued, your ROE can be found on-line at: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/online/mysca.shtml> (you will need to create an ID and sign in).

How much are Employment Insurance benefits?

EI benefits are paid at 55% of your average weekly earnings (based on your earnings over the last six months) to a weekly maximum benefit of \$524 for claims initiated in 2015.

There are no benefits paid for the first two weeks of unemployment (it is like an insurance deductible).

How long do benefits last?

The length of your benefits depends on the local unemployment rate and your total hours worked in the qualifying period. The minimum number of weeks for an eligible EI recipient is 14, though the maximum varies from region-to-region based on unemployment number. In Hamilton, the maximum number of weeks you would eligible for is 36, as of December 2014 (or 40 weeks if you live in Toronto).

When were my first and last pay dates?

EI is now based on when an employee was first paid and last paid, which is generally not the same as when you worked. Employees of McMaster are paid bi-weekly, and the first day for which you are paid is generally the Sunday at the beginning of the pay period for which you first received money, while the last day paid is the last Saturday of the final pay period for which you received wages, even if you did not specifically work on those day. For the 2014-15 academic year please see the following link, <http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/SessFac2014-2015PayDates1-1-42.pdf>

While on benefits, what do I do?

You look for work. *You are required to be available for employment and are required to be actively seeking employment.* "Available" means that if someone offered you a job tomorrow you would take it. For this reason you cannot claim benefits while outside the country. "Actively seeking employment" means that you are doing everything reasonable to find work in the general area in which you have found work before. Since 'part-time' academics have established a pattern of work as 'part-time' academics, you are allowed to restrict your search to 'part-time academic work', at least for the first few months on benefits. After the first few months, you should begin to broaden your search to related kinds of work that utilize your skills.