

Work for Graduate Students Beyond 260 Hours (Article 12.09)

If there are extra teaching assistantship positions that come up during the year, you are eligible to apply for them and work beyond the 260 hours allotted in your guarantee. However, Graduate Studies does put restrictions on the number of hours worked, and you will need to fill out some paperwork with them to perform this additional work.

Post Contract Work (Article 12.06)

Once your contract ends (usually this is after marking final exams is completed or your total hours are reached), you are not required to do any additional marking, such as deferred term work or exams. If you are requested to attend an academic integrity hearing or academic appeal hearing, and you agree to attend, you will be compensated at your regular rate.

Academic Work and Marking (Article 12.08)

There will be times where you will have marking to do for your TAship at the same time that you have papers to write for your coursework. There are provisions under the Collective Agreement that allow you to ask for an extension on your TA work if you believe your academic work might suffer as a result of the demands of your TAship. You can find this language under article 12.08.

CUPE 3906 / Canadian Union
of Public Employees



Unit 1 (Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in lieu) Know Your Rights

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CUPE Unit 1: Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in Lieu

As a teaching assistant or research assistant in lieu and a member of CUPE 3906, you are covered by a Collective Agreement, which lays out the terms and conditions of your employment at McMaster. Your union negotiates a new Collective Bargaining Agreement every few years. Your current Collective Agreement expires on August 31, 2016. Although most people think of the Collective Agreement as ensuring scheduled increases to wages and providing a variety of benefits (Dental Plan, Health Care Spending Account, UHIP rebate for international students, Child Care Fund), your union also secures for you a variety of rights, including deferrals, parental leave, and protection from overwork.

This pamphlet summarizes quite a few of the rights that you have, what they mean, and how you can access them. In what follows, we have listed the relevant Article of the Collective Agreement in (parentheses) after the title, which you can access and read in the full Collective Agreement here: <http://cupe3906.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TA-Collective-Agreement-Final-for-printing.pdf>

We are here to support you in your employment. If at any time a situation arises in which you experience refusal of a right that you feel you should be entitled to under the Collective Agreement, please contact your Union

Paid Health and Safety Training

In every term that you are employed as a Teaching Assistant, you will receive an additional 3 hours for health and safety training. This is on top of your regular number of hours (ie/ a 130 hour contract will be for 130+3 hours). You are to receive these hours even if you have previously done your Health and Safety Training. These hours cannot be allocated towards other duties. Please note that there have been legislation changes to Health and Safety training frequency and you might have re-do some of the modules you previously completed.

Instructional Resources (Article 17)

You should not have to pay for resources to do your job. Such resources might include office space, printing, photocopying, and textbooks. Follow-up with your supervisor to find out how to access these resources. Printing and copying for Teaching Assistant related issues should not be deducted from your student allocation.

Accommodation

Under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and your Collective Agreement, if you have a reoccurring illness - one that may be mental, physical, or a chronic illness - you are able to request an accommodation for your employment duties. If you think this is something that might help you please come speak your union representative.

Please note that you will need to make a separate accommodation for your employment duties.

Deferrals/Declinations/Buy-outs (Article 13.02 a)

A full-time graduate student in a Doctoral program can defer up to 1 term of their TAship/RAship guarantee, subject to approval from their Department. Doctoral students who defer a TAship/RAship will have their guarantee extended by one term (ie/ you can defer a TAship for the fall term of year 2, and instead work as a TA in the fall term of year 5). This is an option that you may wish to pursue instead of declining a TAship, and is especially useful if you are unable to TA because of course work, field work, or research.

You also have the ability to decline a TAship, which means you are refusing the work assignment. Please note that if you decline a TAship, as opposed to deferring it, the department is under no obligation to offer you additional work at the end of your guarantee to make up for the work you decline.

In some departments, TAs are offered buyouts, which means that TAs are compensated but do not have to work. Please note that in order to be eligible for the CUPE dental plan, you need to work at least 130 hours.

When you defer, decline, or accept a buyout, please note that there is a form which needs to be signed to ensure you are aware of your rights and the implications associated with the deferral, declination, or buyout.



Hours of Work

Compressed TAships (Article 12.01 c)

Some departments will offer you a compressed TAship, meaning that your full TAship occurs in a shorter time period (ie/ a year-long TAship can be compressed into one semester only). Should you be offered a compressed teaching assistantship and you do wish to accept it, you will be instead be offered an alternative non-compressed teaching assistantship after informing your department.

Hours of Work (HOW) form (Article 12.03 c)

Before the start of your assignment you will meet with your supervisor to go over the Hours of Work form. This is a contract between you and your supervisor that sets out how your allotted number of hours will be divided up. The number of hours associated with your TAship varies, but should be consistent with the job posting you applied to. The minimum number of hours is 32 for a complete appointment. For most guarantees, you should receive 130 hrs, or some variation thereof (ie/ two 65 hour appointments). Please note that you will receive an additional 3 hours for health and safety training, which cannot be used for any work aside from health and safety training (See above).

The hours of work meeting between you and your supervisor is an opportunity for you to work collectively to come up with a fair allocation of hours. It is also the space to get an idea of the expectations around running tutorials or labs and how much marking is to be done. If you have never TA'd before, anticipate things taking you a little longer than you expect them to. The time spent in this meeting should be accounted for on your Hours of Work form.

Adjustment of Hours (Article 12.04)

If, at any point during your teaching assistant assignment, you realize that you are taking longer to perform your duties than stipulated on your Hours of Work forms and think you are likely to go over your total number of hours, you can request a meeting between you and your supervisor to discuss the workload. If changes are made to the Hours of Work form that you agree with, your Hours of Work form should be amended and these changes should be reflected on the hours of work form. Both you and your supervisor should initial the changes to the Hours of Work form indication that you have both agreed to the changes. If you need help or are concerned about overwork and amending your Hours of Work form, please contact your union (staff@cupe3906.org) and we can assist you through the process.