

Employment Insurance Information for CUPE 3906 Members



As employees of McMaster with 'insurable hours', members of CUPE 3906 may be eligible to receive Employment Insurance (EI) benefits when your employment ends, depending upon whether or not you have worked enough qualifying insurable hours.

Employment Insurance also covers parental leave, pregnancy leave, sickness benefits, compassionate care leave, and family caregiver benefits.

Who is eligible?

All legally employed workers who have accumulated enough insurable hours and who are out of work for reasons beyond their control (like TAs and Sessionals whose contracts end when the course they are teaching is over, or Post Docs whose fellowship comes to an end) are eligible to claim benefits.

While we strongly encourage all members to apply, the reality is that TAs tend to lack enough qualifying hours to be eligible, and Sessionals generally need to have taught 3 courses over the past 52 weeks to qualify. Almost all Post Docs will qualify.

How many hours do you need?

The number of hours you need to qualify depends on several factors, including where you live and the unemployment rate in that region. The number of hours required changes on a monthly basis.

More information can be found here:
<http://srv129.services.gc.ca/rbin/eng/canada.aspx>

provide more details. This does not apply to those of parental leave or other forms of EI.

Are there any other EI benefits available?

Yes, if you become unemployed due to pregnancy, childbirth, familial responsibilities 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 up to 18 months. Maternity and parental benefits may be supplemented by additional Employer-paid leave provided by your CUPE 3906 collective agreement. Please contact the union for details. In many cases, you can receive 90% of your wages through a combination of EI benefits and top-up from the Employer that has been secured through collective bargaining.

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. Remember, if you do not receive a ROE, please contact your Union 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. Members of all three units can find some basic information <https://cupe3906.org/sessionals-unit-2/employment-insurance-unit-2/> but more detailed information is available by calling the office at x24056. 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: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list.html>



EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE INFORMATION

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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). If you feel you have worked more than this, please let us know and your Record of Employment can be amended to reflect this.

You can add any other TA positions or hourly positions, or any other work for any employer, 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 consists of 50 minutes of teaching and 10 minutes of prep time.

How do hours work for Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants in lieu?

You can add the hours that have been assigned to you as TA/RA in lieu, as well as any other work for any employer, in counting your hours.

How do hours work for Post Docs?

Post Docs are considered full-time employees and are credited with 35 hours worked per week.

However, if you have worked more (as many Post Docs do), this should be reflected on your weekly hour sheets that you submit to your supervisor and will factor into your insurable hours for EI.



What is a Record of Employment?

A Record of Employment (an ROE) is a form used by Service Canada to determine whether or not 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 does this electronically.



Once issued, your ROE can be found on-line at: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/online/mysca.shtml> (you will need to create an ID and sign in).

How much are Employment Insurance benefits?

The basic rate for calculating EI benefits is 55% of your average insurable weekly earnings, up to a maximum amount. As of January 1, 2018, this means that you can receive a maximum amount of \$547 per week, though the amount may be less depending upon your total yearly earnings.

There are no benefits paid for the first week 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 maximum duration varies from region-to-region based on unemployment rates.

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 days.

If you have questions, it's best to contact your Union.



Can I work and still collect EI?

If you are collecting regular, parental, compassionate care or Family caregiver benefits, and have a chance to pick up part time or occasional work (such as a short-term teaching contract or other part-time work), you have a choice of two options to better support the work you do while on claim.

For more information on these options, please see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei-list/ei/working-while-claim.html>

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. "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. For this reason you cannot claim regular EI benefits while outside the country, but those on parental leave or other forms of EI benefits can still collect while outside of Canada.

After the first few months, you will likely to be expected to begin to broaden your search to related kinds of work that utilize your skills. Members on regular EI benefits will also be expected to submit logs of work searches and applications. Service Canada can