

# Welcome to



Representing contract academic staff at the University of Toronto since 1975

Welcome to the University of Toronto Education Workers, CUPE Local 3902: the Union that represents contract academic employees at the University of Toronto. Our membership includes Teaching Assistants, Student and Postdoctoral Course Instructors, TA Trainers, Graduate Assistants, Accessibility Services Workers, Exam Invigilators, Lab Demonstrators, Writing Instructors, Sessional Lecturers and Postdoctoral Research Fellows.

Over 40 years ago, we became the first student employees in Canada to unionize, and since that time we have grown to be Canada's largest and strongest Union of academic workers, with five bargaining units representing over 9,500 members.

**As a Graduate Assistant at OISE, you are a member of Unit 7.**

## YOUR UNION RIGHTS

The Unit 7 Collective Agreement (CA) sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Union, bargaining-unit members and the Employer. A copy is available on the Local's website. The current C.A. expired on August 31, 2021.

### *Wages (effective Sept 2020)*

- 54.12/hour for the 2020 Academic Year (September 1, 2020 - August 31, 2021)

Vacation pay (4%) shall be calculated, identified separately, and included as part of an employee's regular monthly salary payment.

### *Hours of Work*

A Graduate Assistantship is 120 hours over one term, or 240 hours over two terms. The hours of work referred to in a letter of appointment shall be the total number of hours over the entire period of employment.

All duties required, expressly or by implication, shall be included in the calculation of hours worked. Your immediate supervisor, or Chair if necessary, shall meet with you to discuss hours and work assignments as soon as possible and no later than 10 working days after the job has been assigned. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to specify in appropriate detail the manner in which assigned duties are to be performed.

You and your immediate supervisor have a mutual responsibility to ensure that the hours of work specified in the offer of employment are neither exceeded nor reduced. That means keep track of the hours you work!

**Work will not normally be assigned beyond the end of the contract;** that is, the end of the relevant term, provided the GA has been available to undertake the assigned GAship during the course of the term. You and your supervisor may reach an agreement to complete work assigned in a different time frame. **Make sure to get this in writing, and signed by both you and your supervisor.**

### *Leaves of Absence*

Under the Collective Agreement, you are entitled to certain leaves of absence, including:

- Pregnancy/Parental/Adoption leave
- Bereavement leave
- Compassionate leave
- Sick leave
- Leaves for serious illness, surgery and hospitalization
- Academic conference leave
- Jury duty leave
- Domestic or sexual violence leave
- Union leave

More information is available on the Local's website.

### *Health & Safety*

You have the right to a safe, accessible and harassment-free workplace. If you feel a task assigned to you is unsafe, you have the right to refuse that work without fear of consequence.

## YOUR UNION BENEFITS

For more information, please consult the Unit 7 benefits tab on the website.

### *Health & Dental Top-Up Benefit Plan*

You have access to additional benefits, including a Top-up Health and Dental Plan. Plan Year runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. If you are a member of Unit 7 and are employed for at least one term, then you are eligible for coverage under the Unit 7 top-up benefits plan.

You do not need to do anything to enroll. Your coverage will begin once Green Shield Canada (GSC) receives the information (late October/early November) from the University.

- Eligible employees enrolled under the student plan will be eligible for coverage under the Unit 7 Health Care Plan A: Top-up + HCSA.
- Eligible employees who have opted out of the UTGSU plans will participate in the Unit 7 Health Care Plan B: HCSA only.

**What is the Health Care Spending Account (HCSA)?** The Health Care Spending Account is like a bank account that you can use to pay for eligible health and dental expenses not fully covered by your group benefits plan or your provincial health plan. University.

- The individual HCSA is worth \$300/year
- The Family HCSA has a value of \$600/year

## *Financial Assistance Fund (FAF)*

The Financial Assistance Fund will be distributed to applicants who apply in one of the following categories:

- University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) Rebate Fund: Graduate assistants registered as international students are eligible to receive a partial rebate for UHIP fees.
- Child Care Expense Fund: Members who have children and need assistance with child care expenses. You must provide proof of expenses which would be considered eligible under the Canada Revenue Guidelines for Child Care Expenses.
- Hardship Fund: For members who incurred economic hardship during the application period.

For eligibility requirements, please visit the Union website.

## GRIEVANCES

Grievances are the normal way in which problems are solved in a unionized workplace. A grievance is filed when a member or the Union believes that the Employer has violated some part of the CA.

Contact your Department Steward or Lead Steward ([u7leadsteward@cupe3902.org](mailto:u7leadsteward@cupe3902.org)) to determine whether the problem you are experiencing is a violation of the collective agreement and how to go about solving it.

Your communications with CUPE 3902 staff are confidential and staff will never share your personal information without your permission. Nothing moves ahead without your express consent.

## UNION STRUCTURE & MEMBERSHIP

As a member of a CUPE 3902 bargaining unit, 2.45% of your salary will be deducted for Union dues. We encourage you to become a political member of the Union by signing a membership card. Once your application is approved, you will be able to participate in membership meetings, vote in referenda and run for elected positions.

Our Union is democratic. Major decisions are made at general membership meetings. We will hold at least 3 GMMs during the F/W session. In between, stewards representing members in each Unit meet monthly. The 10-member Executive Committee oversees the day-to-day affairs of the Union. Their meetings are open to all members. A list of representatives can be found on the website and member portal.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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