



Graduate Students' Association  
University of Alberta

# Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement



## What is a Collective Agreement?

- ◆ A Collective Agreement is a legally binding written agreement between two parties that regulates the terms and conditions of employees in their workplace, their duties and the duties of the employer.
- ◆ The Graduate Student Assistantship CA is made between the University Board of Governors and the Graduate Students' Association.
- ◆ As per the *Labour Relations Code*, Section 58.4(1)(c), the GSA has the exclusive authority to act in representing graduate students in negotiating the CA.



## What is a Collective Agreement?

- ◆ Provides requirements for Letter of Appointment
- ◆ Outlines minimum stipend rates
- ◆ Describes leaves and benefits
- ◆ Outlines general expectations for safe work environment
- ◆ Stipulates a Dispute Resolution Process
- ◆ Provides Time Use Guideline Templates



## Who is covered under the CA?

- ◆ The CA covers academically-employed graduate students:
  - ◆ Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA)
  - ◆ Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)
  - ◆ Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowship (GRAF)



## GTA (including Principal Instructor)

- ◆ Teaching related duties
- ◆ Eg: preparing and conducting seminars, discussion groups and lab sessions, offering office hours, grading examinations
- ◆ Article 8 in the CA



## GRA

- ◆ To support a faculty member's academic research
- ◆ Eg: collecting/coding/analyzing data, literature review, preparing materials for submission to funding agencies
- ◆ Article 9



## GRAF

- ◆ Financial assistance to support graduate students' own research
- ◆ No work hours, no minimum stipend, and no EI
- ◆ Article 10





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## Stipend Components \*January 2023 rates\*

Graduate Teaching Assistantship/Graduate Research Assistantships							
Hrs/Wk	Award (Fixed)	Salary (Minimum)			Total Stipend		
		GTA/GRA- Doctoral	GTA/GRA - Master's	GTA-PI	(Award + Salary)		
					Doctoral	Master's	GTA-PI
12 hrs	1102.57	1214.74	1121.24	1540.95	2317.31	2223.81	2,643.52
11 hrs	1010.68	1113.53	1027.80		2124.21	2038.48	N/A
10 hrs	918.81	1012.29	934.37		1931.10	1853.18	N/A
9 hrs	826.93	911.06	840.93		1737.99	1667.86	N/A
8 hrs	735.05	809.84	747.48		1544.89	1482.53	N/A
7 hrs	643.16	708.6	654.05		1351.76	1297.21	N/A
6 hrs	551.29	607.38	560.62		1158.67	1111.91	N/A
5 hrs	459.40	506.14	467.18		965.54	926.58	N/A
4 hrs	367.52	404.91	373.74		772.43	741.26	N/A
3 hrs	275.64	303.69	280.32		579.33	555.96	N/A
2 hrs	183.77	202.46	186.88		386.23	370.65	N/A
1 hrs	91.88	101.24	93.43		193.12	185.31	N/A





## Hours of Work

- ◆ Maximum hours = 12 hours (full time)  
6 hours (part time)
- ◆ Time Use Guideline (Appendix C)
- ◆ Keep track of hours worked



## Benefits

- ◆ Annual performance increase
- ◆ Vacation
- ◆ Leaves:
  - ◆ Child-bearing and parental leave
  - ◆ Medical leave
  - ◆ Compassionate and bereavement leave
  - ◆ Jury duty leave
  - ◆ Indigenous Practices Leave\*
  - ◆ Academic Conference Leave\*



## Safety, Health, and Wellness

- ◆ Expectation to work in a safe and respectful environment
- ◆ Provincial Legislation (Bill 17) came into effect on June 1, 2018
  - ◆ Right to refuse dangerous work
  - ◆ Right to know
  - ◆ Right to participate



## Occupation Health and Safety Act (OHS)

- ◆ Additional changes to OHS includes:
  - ◆ Harassment and Violence = workplace hazards
  - ◆ Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee
  - ◆ Reporting incidents



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## Supporting Academically-Employed Graduate Students

- ◆ Provide advice and support for students
- ◆ Respond to questions by emails, phone calls, drop in visits or appointments
- ◆ Follow up with Provost's Office as needed
- ◆ Collaborate with Provost's Office to ensure CA compliance
- ◆ Advocate for academically-employed graduate students



## Labour Fund

- ◆ Fund intended to support labour activities
  - ◆ These can include outreach, training of stewards, and a strike
  - ◆ Supplemented by a seed fund of \$100K
- ◆ Involves collection of 1% of academically employed graduate students' salaries
- ◆ Launched September 2021



## Union Stewards

- ◆ Union stewards will be volunteers deputized to spread awareness of our collective agreement rights
- ◆ Launched Fall 2021
- ◆ One steward appointed per faculty
- ◆ Report back to the LRC





## Partnership with PSAC

- ◆ The GSA chose to partner with an outside union in anticipation of a change in legislation regarding our role as a union.
- ◆ Signed a service agreement (Established October 2021)
- ◆ PSAC expands our capacity to offer labour services and advice to graduate students and assist with collective bargaining



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## 1. Negotiating Team Chosen

- The VP Labour and Provost's Office name their negotiating representatives
- These are named in the Fall of the year before the current Collective Agreement expires
- Maximum of 5 representatives for each party allowed

## 2. Chairs of Negotiating Teams Meet

- Informal agreement of procedure for upcoming process
- Confirm proposal format, scheduling, and exchange relevant information

## 3. Bargaining Priorities Developed and Proposals Exchanged

- The GSA names their bargaining priorities, which are voted upon by all current Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGS), which the Negotiating Team then uses to write its Bargaining Proposal
- The GSA and Provost's Office exchange proposals
- Proposals are shared before the end of the Fall semester of the year before the current Collective Agreement expires



## 4. Bargaining Proper Begins

- Bargaining must be conducted in good faith, working towards a Memorandum of Settlement
- Once a Memorandum of Settlement is reached, it's submitted to the Board of Governors and GSA for ratification by all current AEGSs

## 5. If Mediation Is Needed...

- If a Memorandum of Settlement is not reached, a voluntary mediator can be appointed if both parties agree
- Both parties may also submit unresolved issues in binding arbitration following mutual agreement





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## Contact Information

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