

What is CUPE 2278?

CUPE 2278 is the Graduate Teaching Assistant Union. All GTAs are members of the union and their employment is governed by the Collective Agreement. For general information or any questions, please contact Human Resources at UNBC (graduateTARecruit@unbc.ca).

What instructors need to know about our contract:

Although the Collective Agreement governs the relationship between UNBC and the GTAs, instructors end up implementing the relationship on the ground. This Quick Guide outlines:

- **Hiring** – how to advertise and appropriately hire GTAs
- **Hours** – planning a work schedule, when GTAs can be asked to work, and for how long
- **Academic Harm** – how academic & workplace interactions are governed

Who is a Graduate Teaching Assistant?

Anyone hired to help faculty deliver course material and/or assigned a GTA contract, regardless of year of study, is considered a GTA and a member of CUPE 2278.

Hiring a Graduate Teaching Assistant

The hiring process allows GTAs with the requisite skills to be able to apply for courses that best fit their proficiencies, interests, and experience. See steps for hiring a GTA at: <https://www.unbc.ca/career-opportunities> Graduate postings page.

- GTA descriptions should be posted on the HR GTA Posting website normally two months prior to the start of the term.
- The TA request form must be completed in full as this is used to develop the job description. TA request forms are on the website referenced above.
- All hiring must be carried out in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner. Job descriptions cannot deliberately privilege or exclude any candidate for any reason other than genuine suitability.
- GTA positions are normally not less than one semester in length

Workload Agreements and Monitoring Hours

The Workload Agreement form (provided on the Human Resources GTA page, and included in the GTA's employment offer) is required at the beginning of each term – normally within one week of semester start. Faculty and GTAs must discuss the allocation of hours assigned to the GTA for the term, and must record mutual agreement to these expectations in the Workload Agreement.

- Workload Agreements are an opportunity for faculty to outline their expectations for the term, and to mentor their junior colleagues on time management for teaching.
- All expected duties, including assigned work beyond regular

instructional hours, must be included in the calculation of required hours.

- Excess hours worked by a GTA must be paid the hourly rate.
- Workload Agreements can be amended if mutually agreed upon by the instructor and the GTA; such amendments must be accompanied by a new Workload Agreement.

Remember: Ensuring that your GTA does not work over their allotted hours is the joint responsibility of the GTA and the instructor. GTAs will not work for free.

Working Hours

- GTA duties in a single day cannot exceed 8 hours without GTA consent.
- GTAs cannot be required to work before 7:45 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m.
- GTAs are entitled to a twenty-minute break every three hours of instruction, and cannot be required to teach without interruption for more than three consecutive hours.
- GTAs cannot be required to work 24 hours prior to one of their own final exams, thesis, or dissertation defense. Frequent communication between GTAs and instructors, especially after the exam schedule is posted, will help avoid problems.
- A GTA is not required to prepare or deliver more than half of the scheduled lectures of any course.

Critically, if instructors ask GTAs to work outside of these guidelines and they refuse, it is not a cause for reprimand. Please plan accordingly.

What counts as hours?

Any mandatory work a GTAs does counts toward paid hours. This includes: the GTA Workshop/orientation, safety training, class preparation, attending lectures, marking and recording grades, preparing and conducting labs and tutorials, office hours, meetings with students, GTAs, or instructors, e-mail, administration of online classroom environments, invigilating, training, and photocopying.

Sick leave and Parental leave

- Sick leave – A GTA is allowed the equivalent of one-week average hours sick leave. GTAs must notify their instructor as soon as possible, in which case the instructor is responsible for finding a replacement GTA.
- Parental leave – A GTA is allowed unpaid maternity/parental leave. Upon returning, the GTA will be placed back in their original position or reassigned to a new position.

Academic Harm

A GTA's status as a student and as an employee of UNBC are separate and distinct – one cannot affect the other. The Collective Agreement ensures that any attempts to harm a GTA's academic record because of an employment issue, or to make employment decisions based on a GTA's academic record, are strictly prohibited and subject to the grievance procedure.