
CUPE5524 UNIT 1 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT SUMMARY

BETWEEN

**THE CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES,
and its LOCAL 5524.01 (TA's & RA's)**

AND

THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Expiry: April 30, 2027



In 2026, CUPE5524 signed a contract with the University of Waterloo to outline a collective agreement on the relationship between the university and the union representing graduate TAs and RAs. This document provides a general overview of that contract and is not a strict legal interpretation.

Purpose and Recognition, Management Rights, Scope:

This contract establishes the bargaining relationship between the Employer (University of Waterloo) and the Union representing graduate TAs and RAs. It includes dispute resolution, pay rates, and other protections. Note that the university is still entitled to manage its workforce in any way not forbidden by the contract.

Union Security, Information, Representation, and Strikes + Lockouts:

- The Union receives dues deducted from wages based on our [Bylaws](#) (2.25% of regular wages). If changed, 45 days' notice is required. The Union receives a list of all dues-paying unit employees.
- No strikes or lockouts while the contract is active.
- The Union will receive a list of unit employees, including positions and wages by faculty and department.
- You have access to a union representative when you talk to the university about discipline, accommodations, hours of work, or grievances.

Discipline:

- Discipline of employees requires just cause and must progress through a set process (detailed in the contract)
- The university may investigate before imposing discipline, including suspension with pay.
- You are entitled to a steward as representative in any disciplinary meetings.
- The university must meet with you prior to issuing any penalties, which will be documented and maintained in a record for up to 12 months.
- You can grieve disciplinary measures. Informal discussion is not considered discipline.
- The university can dismiss you from multiple appointments, but only if justified/relevant.
- Supervisors who are in Unit 1, e.g., head TAs, won't be required to attend disciplinary meetings with their direct reports. Declining to attend can't be penalized.

Discrimination and Harassment, Accommodations:

- The Union and University both agree that there shall be **no discrimination or harassment** allowed, including: age, race, creed, colour, national origin, language of origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, caste, religious affiliation or belief, sex, gender, marital or parental status, number of dependents, sexual orientation, sexual identity or expression, gender identity or expression, record of offenses, or disability.
- Harassment in the workplace means a course of comment or conduct that ought reasonably be known to be unwelcome or in which rejection could negatively impact decisions that concern the recipient.

- The Union and University agree to uphold and provide accommodations for those who seek them, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code. The University has an obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for human rights needs up to the point of undue hardship.
- Employees may confidentially seek an accommodation, and have a right to Union representation in accommodation-related meetings.
- Employees with disabilities will be accommodated, which may require the university to purchase equipment or resources, or reassign classrooms or office space.

Labour Relations, Grievances, and Arbitration:

- The Union and University both can assign representatives to a committee to discuss labour relations issues.
- You have the right to submit a grievance: If you feel that the contract is being violated, that action against you was unfair, or that any other workplace problem has occurred, **you may speak with the union and seek representation to solve the problem.**
- All grievances start with informally speaking with your workplace supervisor to solve the problem, **unless you feel unsafe doing so.** All grievances are strictly confidential.
- When this fails:
 - The Union and University meet within 14 days to discuss the issue, or 21 in the case that you weren't able to meet with your workplace supervisor informally.
 - Then the grievance process can take up to 21 more days to be solved.
 - If it remains unsolved, the issue may be referred to arbitration within 28 days, with a full timeline outlined following this.
 - If the solution involves money, you must be paid within 30 days.
- Arbitration is a meeting between the Union and University with an impartial moderator. It is detailed in the contract.

Seniority, Appointments, Hours, Technology, and Closure:

- All members have seniority. Those who have worked longer are preferred when **applying for positions.**
- If you receive a guaranteed appointment, the University **must honour it.** Funding cannot be offset by decreasing non-Employment income (such as scholarships).
- A full TA position averages 10 hours per week, and goes up to 160 hours. Usually, you won't be asked to work more than 8 hours in a day, or 20 in a week. Partial positions can be assigned. Work on weekends, holidays, or after hours (10:00pm - 8:30am) counts for **time-and-a-half** towards your total contract hours.
- You **cannot** be forced to work above your maximum hours for the position. The work must be reallocated, or you must be paid for the extra hours with your consent and university authorization. You have a right to union representation whenever you meet with the university regarding your hours of work.
- You can't be required to grade and correct work during 5 days prior to your exam, thesis defense, or masters research paper defense.

- Your pay cannot be cut due to technology changes (such as the introduction of AI tools), and all technological training must be paid.
- You continue to receive regular salary and benefits when the University declares an emergency and closes.

Meetings, Academic Freedom, Intellectual Property, Privacy:

- Up to 2 graduate TAs/RAs in a department may participate in departmental meetings.
- You cannot face censorship or penalty for sharing political, cultural, or philosophical ideas where relevant and educationally valuable. This **does not** include discrimination, harassment, or hate speech.
- Any intellectual property you create as a TA/RA **belongs to you** subject to Policy 73.
- All information collected through university systems cannot be used for performance management or discipline unless prior probable cause has been found.
- Your data **will not** be sold to third-parties, and can only be given out when required by law, as part of this contract, or with your consent.
- Data storage will comply with data protection and privacy laws.

Evaluation, Files, Office Space, and Dossiers:

- For any performance evaluations, you will be given a 2 weeks notice as to what you will be evaluated on. You may request a performance evaluation to get feedback.
- Any files on you must only contain information about your employment, and you may request to see, correct, or add comments to it.
- If you need access to facilities to perform your TA or RA duties (such as AV equipment), or an office/workspace to do that work on campus, the department must provide it.
- You may have the university send mail to your home address.
- Gender neutral washrooms will be available.
- The union is provided an office (It's in MC1027!), can book university rooms for meetings, and can meet new employees to provide union information. All faculties also have a bulletin board for union notices.

Health and Safety:

- The Union and University are committed to safety and the prevention of occupational illness/injury.
- The university must comply with OHSA. You will not be required to act, and you may not act, in breach of OHSA.
- If necessary, you will be provided protective equipment. You must use it. On request, you will be given CA-N95 masks.
- Appropriate air quality will be provided to all buildings. You may grieve poor air quality.
- The union may attend health and safety education provided/sponsored by the university.
- The union is entitled membership to any joint health and safety committee formed. Certification training will be provided at no cost to you if you sit on one.

- You will be made able to complete any required health and safety training or courses. Any required health and safety training will be included in your hours of work.

Holidays, Wages, Leaves:

- You don't have to work on statutory holidays. Though Truth and Reconciliation Day is not recognized, the university will accommodate you upon request.
- There will be 3-4 "floating days" depending on which days of the week Canada Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day fall upon. You don't have to work on days that the university is closed in accordance with the academic calendar.
- Minimum wage is, per hour, \$51.53 for TAs, \$49.14 for Master's RAs, and \$58.46 for PhD RAs. If you make more than the minimum, your pay won't be reduced. Mandatory vacation pay is in addition to these rates. Pay will be biweekly by May 1, 2027.
- Statutory deductions including income tax, CPP contributions, and Employment Insurance premiums apply.
- Academic financial support is separate from wages. Your wages/appointment offerings will not be reduced if you receive a scholarship, and your scholarships will not be reduced if you receive wages, unless you request it.
- Travel Expenses: Reasonable costs of travel, for work-related purposes, shall be paid by the university, in accordance with Policy 31.
- Work Location Change: If the university changes an accepted appointment's location, or temporarily requires work at another location, travel costs are reimbursed (Policy 31).
- You are eligible for **paid** sick leave and bereavement leave (immediate family members) for up to 6 working hours/appointment. You are also eligible for leave for jury duty.
- You must inform your supervisor of any leave, and may need to provide updates for extended absences (5+ days).

LoU - Pay in Lieu of Benefits

As compensation in lieu of benefits, you'll receive \$100 per completed Appointment, and a prorated amount for fractional appointments.

LoU - Implementation

The CA is effective from 26-Jan-2026 (date of ratification), and the Employer shall make efforts to implement these timelines. Wage rates start May 1, 2026; guaranteed appointments start September 1, 2026; and biweekly pay starts April 30, 2027. Seniority lists and appointment application process (Fall 2026) shall be completed by June 15, 2026.

Acknowledgements

CUPE5524 Bargaining Team: *Avery Hiebert, Erin Silver, Gina Villafañe, Katie Pita, Kian Drew, Murad Alizada, Pam Hopwood, Nolan Shaw, Joel Bentley, Katie Winstanley, Tim Wilson.*

Document Prepared By: *Artemiy Vishnyakov, Erin Silver, Gaia Noseworthy, Julia Schirmeister, Pavithra Parthiban.*