

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

# FAMILY RELATIONS & APPLIED NUTRITION

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA)  
ORIENTATION

Wednesday, September 6, 2017 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
MACS 121

UNIVERSITY  
*of* GUELPH

IMPROVE LIFE.

# THE BASICS

GTAs at the University of Guelph

# WHAT IS A GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA)

- A graduate student hired by an academic department to provide teaching-related services to support the instruction of an undergraduate course.
- A graduate student can also apply to and work as a:
  - (1) Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) contributing to the research of a faculty member or to their own research program.
  - (2) Graduate Service Assistant (GSA) employed in work that may or may not be related to an academic endeavour.
- The Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition (FRAN) mostly posts GTA opportunities.

# WHY ARE GTAs NEEDED?

- GTAs are vital to the successful delivery of the department's teaching commitments to undergraduate students.
- To offer graduate students employment with excellent learning opportunities in the field of their studies and choice.
- To offer graduate students a source of funding.

# FRAN'S COMMITMENT TO GTAS

- FRAN makes a financial commitment to graduate students guaranteeing them work assignments in the following way:
  - PhD** students are guaranteed 1.0 GTA for each of 2 semesters in an academic year for 3 years.
  - MSc** students (not MAN) are guaranteed 0.5 GTA work assignment for 1 semester in an academic year for 2 years.
- Any commitment made to you is noted in your Offer of Admission package.

# GTAs ARE EMPLOYEES

- As a GTA, you have an employment contract with the department and you are an employee of the University of Guelph.
- The Chair of the Department oversees all departmental activities BUT your immediate supervisor is the instructor of the course you have a work assignment in.
- Your duties as an employee are separate from your duties as a student.
- Your faculty advisor is not involved with your employment role.

# GTAs ARE MEMBERS OF CUPE 3913

- When you have a GTA work assignment, you are a member of CUPE 3913, Unit 1, which is an employee group at U of G with a Collective Agreement.  
[http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/facultyrelations/pdf/CUPE\\_Local\\_3913\\_Unit1\\_C.pdf](http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/facultyrelations/pdf/CUPE_Local_3913_Unit1_C.pdf)
- The Collective Agreement contains many terms and articles covering a range of topics. Please familiarize yourself with it.
- As a department we follow the guidelines outlined in the Collective Agreement regarding the employment of GTAs.

# APPOINTMENT OF GTA ASSIGNMENTS

- The CUPE 3913 Collective Agreement (CA) outlines the employment process of GTAs including posting, selecting and offering work assignments. We have a Selection Committee as per the CA which ensures fair and transparent hiring practices.
- GTA positions are offered as follows:
  - 1.0 work assignment = 140 hours/semester or 10 hours/week
  - 0.75 work assignment = 105 hours/semester or 7.5 hrs/week
  - 0.5 work assignment = 70 hours/semester or 5 hrs/week
- The level of work assignment(s) required for each course is determined by the department's assessment of course enrolments, teaching methodologies and overall workload.



# THE GTA SELECTION COMMITTEE

As per the CA, the Selection Committee:

- Is composed of minimally 2 people (FRAN has 4) with relevant knowledge. At least one is a member of an equity seeking group.
- Ensures that their members attend an orientation session with Diversity and Human Rights at least once during each 3 year cycle of the Collective Agreement.
- Establishes and uses a rubric for evaluating an applicant's qualifications as compared to specific qualifications noted in the job posting. This is established prior to reviewing applications.

# THE GTA SELECTION PROCESS – LEVELS OF CONSIDERATION

- Selection Committee considers all applicants, however, must **firstly ensure** fulfillment of terms and conditions of a student's Job Security Period by paying close attention to Levels of Consideration.

It is IMPORTANT to understand and know your Level of Consideration.

- **Level of Consideration 1:** Candidates applying for positions within their home department and are still within their Job Security Period (JSP) will be considered first. That is, we have not yet fulfilled our financial commitment to these students as per their Offers of Admission.
- **Level of Consideration 2:** Candidates have completed their Job Security Period (student has already been awarded the number of work assignments that were committed to them in their Offer of Admission package) and are still within their prescribed program.
- **Level of Consideration 3:** Candidates have exceeded the prescribed program period for their program of studies and no longer guaranteed funding.

There are 2 more levels of Consideration not frequently used – please see the Collective Agreement 11.04 (d) for further details.

## WITHIN LEVELS OF CONSIDERATION...

The Selection Committee then:

- Only reviews qualifications (academic courses completed and professional), competence, capability, skill and ability and prior relevant experience. In cases where applicants are demonstrably equal the applicant with more seniority points will be awarded the work assignment,
- Ensures the best coverage of all required work assignments,
- Considers class schedule and availability, and
- Considers student's stated preference.

# GETTING PAID AS A GTA

- Ensure you have completed and submitted to the department the Employee Hiring Information form and the Direct Deposit Authorization form as instructed in an email sent the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>. If you have not done this, do so immediately and by September 12, 2017 at the latest.
- For those who have submitted the necessary forms correctly, first pay is on September 7 2017.
- Even if you did not receive a GTA offer for Fall 2017, set yourself up now!
- If you wish to have your tuition fees deducted from your payroll you would have had to complete the “Graduate Settlement” by Sunday, August 27, 2017. If you have not done this, do it through WebAdvisor today – there is a late fee of \$60. Tuition deductions come off every pay until December 28, 2017.

## MORE PAY-RELATED INFORMATION

- The work period for Fall is September 5 to December 22, 2017 with paydays every other Thursday starting September 7<sup>th</sup> and ending December 28, 2017.
- You pay union dues in the semester(s) you are a working member.
- You have a student health plan and CUPE benefits for health/dental/vision. Please attend an upcoming presentation by FRAN's graduate student representatives for further details on benefits.

# PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

- Once per semester an employee may request that their work performance be evaluated in accordance with Article 13 of the Collective Agreement.
- At this time, FRAN is not routinely evaluating GTA performance.

# YOU HAVE ACCEPTED A GTA POSITION...NOW WHAT?

GTA's at the University of Guelph

# THE GTA WORK ASSIGNMENT

- The specific services and the hours required to complete them are detailed in a signed Work Agreement between the instructor on behalf of the department and the student.
- Meeting between instructor and student takes place within 5 days of start of employment and shall be included in the Agreement's hours of work.
- Look for clarity in the work assignment and ask questions. **If your work is progressing differently than noted in the work agreement talk to the instructor immediately.**
- Instructor and student sign the work assignment. Keep copy for self and copy to Ruth within 5 days of start of employment.



# GTA DUTIES

- Can include:

Orientation training, office hours (you can book CSAHS MINS 123 or 125 in Outlook – see Grad handbook), preparation, student consultation, attendance at lectures (although not always), email correspondence and monitoring, conducting labs/seminars, meetings, supervising field trips, grading, monitoring discussion boards, other duties as required and outlined in the work agreement and

- Invigilating Exams – GTAs will be expected to invigilate 2 final exams, their own course and one other. **You are expected to be available during the entirety of the final exam period for undergraduate students to cover any final exam.** A schedule is distributed after the 40<sup>th</sup> class day of a semester.

- Completion of 3 online training modules:

Employee Health Services – Worker Health and Safety Awareness

AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)– Accessible Service Provision

AODA – Making Education Accessible

These each take 1 hour to complete on Course Link (will be available by the end of September) and will be noted in work assignment.

Once done you will not have to do again!

# AT THE END OF A GTA WORK ASSIGNMENT

- Seniority Point is earned at successful completion of the work assignment.
- Successful completion includes the completion and uploading of the 3 online AODA and EHS modules.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

- Caution about the use of social media.
- No confidential material should appear on social media, regardless of individual privacy settings (e.g. excerpts from exams, papers or students' personal information)
- University of Guelph Media Guidelines:  
<http://www.uoguelph.ca/web/socialmediaguidelines>

# COMMUNICATION WITH GTAs

- The University's official means of communication is through the U of G email system.
- We will contact GTAs using the FRAN-GRADSTUDENT ListServ. That means that all graduate students will receive these emails even if you are not working as a GTA in that semester.

# GTA RESOURCES

Develop yourself as a GTA!

## Graduate Teaching Community (GTC):

- <http://opened.uoguelph.ca/students/Graduate-Teaching-Community>

## *The Ultimate TA Guide*- How to Survive and Thrive as a Graduate Teaching Assistant:

- <http://theultimatetaguide.dudaone.com/>

## Centre for Open Learning and Educational Support's Graduate Student Teaching Development Program:

<http://opened.uoguelph.ca/student-resources/graduate-student-teaching-development-program>

# GTA RESOURCES CONTINUED

- **The instructor of the course you are a GTA in!**
- **The FRAN Departmental Handbook has information on a variety of topics, including the following. Please ask for a copy in MINS 247.**
  - Contacts
  - Academic Policies and Procedures
  - Examination and Marking Procedures
  - Details of University Services and Resources
  - Key dates for the semester
- **CUPE website**
  - Collective agreement
  - Benefits
  - Union news
- **Undergraduate/Graduate Calendars or ask Ruth**

## RESOURCES FOR GTAs

- The best resource is someone who has actually worked as a GTA.
- Chris Quinn- Nilas will describe some of his experiences as a GTA.
- If you have questions, you may email Chris at:  
[cquinni@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cquinni@uoguelph.ca)

# SOME NOTES FOR THE FUTURE

GTAs at the University of Guelph



# BEING A FIRST YEAR GTA APPLICANT

- Sometimes first year incoming graduate students do not have teaching skills yet or an extensive background of qualifications. Don't worry – we expect that!
- We ensure graduate students in their Job Security Period will receive a work assignment as best suited to them and the course as possible.
  - Please always apply to more than one job.
- Sometimes there are more graduate students than positions available. DO NOT worry if you didn't get a position, you will be definitely assigned a work assignment next semester to fulfill our financial commitment to you.
- There are opportunities all three semesters but much less in the summer semester – please ensure you apply in Fall and Winter semesters

## LOOKING AHEAD TO WINTER 2018

- We will email you when GTA postings for FRAN go up on the central job website:  
[https://www.uoguelph.ca/sessional\\_ta/](https://www.uoguelph.ca/sessional_ta/)
- Expect postings for Winter 2018 up late October to early November.
- Those graduate students who did not receive a work assignment in Fall will receive first consideration for Winter.

# APPLICATION DETAILS

## REMINDERS ABOUT APPLICATIONS AS WE MOVE FORWARD:

- Like most jobs you must apply to be considered. This means applying each semester in which you hope to hold a GTA position.
- It is critical you read the details of the position's posting. Know what levels of appointments are available in that course, the duties and responsibilities, qualifications and days required.

# APPLICATION DETAILS CONTINUED

**As with all employment applications your resume and cover letter are very important.**

Clearly demonstrate why you are a good candidate for the position.

BEST way is list the qualifications of the job as noted in the posting in point form on your letter followed by your experience.

For example: FRHD\*1010\*DE needs substantive knowledge of the course content area in the introduction to the study of the development of the individual throughout the life cycle

A cover letter might be set up as:

Substantive knowledge:

- titles of relevant undergraduate courses taken,
- relevant plans for your Masters,
- relevant work experience or.
- do not have knowledge in this area but interested and currently in Job Security Period

Please check your own class schedule and only apply to positions that do not conflict. Not all positions require attendance to lectures, but some do – Please read the posting carefully!



## NEED SOME HELP?

- For any administrative question about the GTA process:  
Ruth Lesins, Academic Administrative Assistant  
MINS 247 x. 53582 or <franwork@uoguelph.ca>
- For photocopy codes, department supplies and materials:  
Marita Liebregt, Department Clerk  
MINS 251 x.53519 or <liebregt@uoguelph.ca>
- For teaching support or any concerns with the course:  
Instructor of the course for which you are a GTA
- For concerns with instructor or issues not being addressed by the instructor:  
Chair of the Department, Dr. Clare MacMartin  
MINS 245 x.56321
- Collective Agreement questions:  
CUPE 3913 at <questions@cupe3913.on.ca>

# IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS

Process for raising concerns or questions:

1. Course instructor (supervisor)
2. Academic Administrative Assistant (Ruth)
3. Department Chair (Clare)
4. Union representatives at CUPE 3913