

AGSEM Teaching Assistant Frequently Asked QUESTIONS

Questions about Payroll:

1. Are you deducting income taxes from my pay and how much?

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "The University will identify the amount withheld for Union dues on the T4 and Relevé 1 forms of each employee" (Article 4, p. 8: Union Rights and Privileges).

2. Where do I find how much I am getting paid each pay period?

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "All members of the Bargaining Unit shall be entitled to a 4% vacation pay. The vacation pay will be included, in equal instalments, as part of the employee's regular salary payments. The rate of pay as of: (vacation pay (4%) and statutory holiday compensation included):
 - January 1st, 2012: \$25.74
 - January 1st, 2013: \$26.51
 - January 1st, 2014: \$26.83" (Article 17(17.01), p. 37: Rates of Pay).
- [Minerva](#)
 - To access pay information, login to Minerva and select the *Employee* tab. Here, TAs will find several resources, including the following:
 - **Pay Information Menu**
 - Pay stubs, earnings, deduction history, eliminate printed paper pay stubs and eliminate pay stub email notification
 - **Tax Slips Menu**
 - View and print options for tax slips: T4, T4A, T4A-NR, NR-4, T5, Relevé 1, Relevé 2 and Relevé 3
 - **Direct Deposit Bank Account**
 - View/update bank information for direct deposits from McGill (pay cheques, reimbursement of expenses, student financial aid/awards, etc.)
 - **Jobs Summary**
 - View employment history at McGill, with corresponding job title, salary and grade
 - **Salary Policy Confirmation**
 - View salary policy confirmation

3. Is there a delay for my first pay cheque? When is my last pay cheque?

- First, ask the department administrator to check into the progress of the payment.
- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "The first pay cheque will be issued no later than one (1) month from the start of the appointment. Subsequent pay cheques will be issued semi-monthly. Payment shall be made by direct deposit" (Article 17(17.03), p. 37: Rates of Pay).

Hiring Questions:

4. Can I apply for TAships outside of my department?

- 'Yes', provided that you meet the relevant criteria, you may apply for a TAship outside your department. However, if you have previously TA'd within your department and, therefore, have Priority Pool status, this priority status will not carry with you to the other department when they are selecting candidates.

5. Where do I find job listings?

- [AGSEM Guide for New TAs:](#)
 - "Look for job postings on the AGSEM bulletin board in your department. New jobs should be posted according to the following schedule: March 1st for Spring/Summer courses; April 30th for Fall/Full Year courses; and October 15th for Winter courses (Note: Postings may go up before this.) You may also consult the TA job postings on the [Career and Planning Services website](#). All applications for Teaching Assistantships must be submitted through the CaPS website."
 - "Each posting should include all you need to know about the position: course title and number, estimated number of available positions, total number of hours of work per term, effective dates of appointment, summary of duties, salary, required qualifications, and the application deadline."

TA Evaluations:

6. How do I know if my supervisor completed a TA evaluation?

- [AGSEM Guide for New TAs:](#)
 - "Criteria for the formal performance evaluations must be submitted to you, in writing, at the beginning of the term. Once per term, the course supervisor may conduct a formal, written performance evaluation. Within thirty days of the evaluation, the written evaluation must be discussed with you. You must sign the written evaluation as confirmation that this discussion took place and may record any comments that are relevant to the evaluation. An informal performance evaluation may take place whenever the course supervisor feels it necessary to bring comments or concerns to the attention of a TA. Formal written evaluations will be included in the employee file while informal ones will not."
- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "An informal evaluation for the employee's performance may take place, where the supervisor shall bring forward to her attention any concerns or problems regarding her performance. However, this in no way restricts the employer from conducting formal written evaluations" (Article 14(14.02.01), p. 28: Performance Evaluations).
 - "A formal written evaluation must be discussed with the employee within thirty (30) days of the performance evaluation. The employee has the right to Union representation at any meeting at which a formal evaluation is discussed. The employee shall sign the written evaluation to acknowledge that a discussion took place. The employee may add her written comments to the performance evaluation if she so desires" (Article 14(14.03), p. 28: Performance Evaluation).
 - "All formal written evaluations shall be included in the employee's employment file. In considering performance evaluations, more recent evaluations shall generally carry greater weight" (Article 14(14.04), p. 28: Performance Evaluation).

7. How do I access the student TA evaluations for the course I am TAing?

- [Teaching and Learning Services](#)
 - TA course evaluation results are available once the final grades for a course in a term are submitted and approved.
 - Student TA evaluations can be accessed by following these steps:
 - Login to Mercury. Select *Teaching assistant evaluation results*
 - Select *View course evaluation results*
 - An alternate way to access course evaluations is to:
 - Select the *Student Menu* tab
 - Click on *Mercury Online Course Evaluation Menu*
 - Click on *Teaching Assistant Evaluation Results*
 - Refer to the Mercury online manuals, which show you how to download course evaluation results
- * Access [TA evaluation forms](#) here

Academic Honesty:

8. Regarding students: What steps should be taken if I believe a student is plagiarizing? Whom do I talk to?

- [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
 - If a TA believes that plagiarism or cheating is happening, they should report this directly to the prof who should report it to the disciplinary officer. The TA should not discuss the issue with the student at all, not even to refer them to the Code.
 - If you discover plagiarism, you should report the incident to the course instructor, who has the responsibility to report it to the disciplinary officer. It is helpful to submit a copy of the description of the lab requirements or assignment that students received as well as copies of the student's work and the source material, with plagiarized passages highlighted.

9. By professors: What do I do if I believe a professor is inappropriately altering grades?

- If you believe a professor is inappropriately altering grades, you should report the incident to the department chair, who has the responsibility to deal with the issue.

Conflict and Harassment:

10. What do I do if students are having trouble working together (e.g. in a lab or during group assignments)?

- Report this to the prof who is teaching the course.

11. What are the steps to take if someone is being harassed by another student? By a professor?

- Report this to the immediate supervisor of the alleged harasser (professor in the case of a student, Chair in the case of a professor). Suggest that the person being harassed make a complaint under the Harassment Policy.

12. What steps should be followed if a student is being disruptive?

- Call Security if necessary. Report the incident to the professor or directly to the Discipline Officer for your Faculty.

13. What do I do if I have a conflict with a student (e.g. over grades)?

- Report to the prof who is teaching the course.

14. What do I do if a student makes racist/sexist/other offensive remarks during a lab or tutorial?

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "Acts of harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination prohibited by law are University offenses subject to disciplinary measures. Noting shall preclude an employee from exercising any internal or external recourse available. Any grievance concerning such behaviour must be filed within ninety (90) days of the last incidence of the offending behaviour. This policy is to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the goals in the *Statement of Principles* as well as the provisions of the *Civil Code of Quebec*, the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Labour Standards Act of Quebec*" (Article 6(6.01), p. 9: Discrimination and Harassment).
- [Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#)
 - McGill's policy on harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination can be found here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/harass>

Miscellaneous:**15. Are there policies about cell phone/laptop use in class?**

- [Guidelines for the Use of Mobile Computing and Communications Devices in Classes at McGill](#)

16. What do I do if I'm having trouble using myCourses?

- [myCourses](#)
 - myCourses for Instructors [Knowledge Base](#)
 - FAQs for instructors using myCourses
- [SKILLSETS](#) offers periodic workshops on myCourses for AGSEM TAs

17. What policies is the course supervisor responsible for setting? The department? Which policies are University-wide?

- [Course Outline Guide](#), Teaching and Learning Services

Hiring:**18. If you have not been hired for a TAship when you believe you were entitled to one**

- [AGSEM Guide for New TAs:](#)
 - "Problems sometimes arise, i.e., a job was given to someone with less priority or experience than you; you are working more hours than you agreed to; your working conditions are unsafe. If you need help or advice, please contact the TA Grievance Officer. The first step in resolving any problem is an informal problem solving/ complaint stage. This involves an informal discussion between you and the course supervisor. If after taking this step the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can arrange a meeting with the Grievance Officer. They can help you decide what the best options are for you and your situation. If a formal grievance is required, it is the Grievance Officer's job to work with you and to file a grievance on your behalf. Grievances must be filed in a timely manner—you should contact the union as soon as the issue arises. AGSEM encourages employees to fight for their rights, but the union will not file a grievance without the consent of an employee."

19. If you have been offered a TAship but had it withdrawn

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "The employer may withdraw a position offered to a candidate:
 - When a position has been offered to a candidate in accordance with Article 13.04.01 is withdrawn, the Teaching Assistant shall be placed in a vacant position of at least equivalent remuneration, if such position is available, subject to the employee meeting the required qualifications;
 - (ii) If an employee refuses an alternate appointment offered in accordance with (i), she will be deemed to have resigned from her position and will not be entitled to any compensation notwithstanding the preceding, the provision at 13.01.04 will apply to an employee who refuses an alternate appointment;
 - (iii) When the position offered as per Article 13.04.01 is withdrawn for insufficient enrolment or course cancellation and no position is available as specified in section (i), she shall receive 2/15 of the appointment's salary. When the position is withdrawn for any other reasons, the employee shall receive 2/5 of the appointment's salary;
 - (iv) Notification of the withdrawals must be provided immediately to the Union in writing(13.04.04), p. 26g, by mail or by electronic mail" (Article 13(13.04.04), p. 26: Selection and Appointment).

20. If you are dismissed from your TAship (i.e. fired): Pay, work hours, and the workload form

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "In all cases of suspension or dismissal, the following rules shall apply:
 - a) A suspension or dismissal must be preceded by a meeting between the University, the Union and the employee concerned;
 - b) The employee and the Union shall be convened to the meeting in writing with at least three (3) working days notice, which notice shall inform the employee of the disciplinary nature of the meeting;
 - c) During this meeting, the University shall inform the Union and the employee of the grounds on which it intends to suspend or dismiss the employee;
 - d) If there is an agreement between the University and the Union, the terms of this agreement shall take effect upon the signing of a written understanding in this regard;
 - e) In the event of a disagreement, the University's decisions shall take effect upon notice thereof to the employee. Notice of the decision shall be given to the employee in writing, at her last known address; a copy of the notice in question shall also be sent to the Union" (Article 9(9.05), p. 15: Disciplinary Measures).
 - "An employee or the Union may grieve a disciplinary measure taken against her. In the case of a suspension or dismissal, where a disagreement contemplated in section 9.05 c) has occurred, the employee or the Union may file a grievance immediately at the second step of the Grievance Procedure" (Article 9(9.06), p. 15: Disciplinary Measures).

21. If you have not been paid for work indicated in your workload form

- Ask the department administrator to check into for you. Or Contact: Robert Comeau | Director, Labour & Employee Relations | Tel: 514-398-2295 | E-Mail: robert.comeau@mcgill.ca

22. If you are asked to work for fewer hours than indicated in the workload form, or in the letter of offer; if you are asked to pay back any unpaid hours

- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "The University shall not require an employee to reimburse or to carry forward to another term any hours not worked in the appointment" (Article 11(11.03), p. 20: Positions).
- [AGSEM Guide for New TAs:](#)
 - "Problems sometimes arise, i.e., a job was given to someone with less priority or experience than you; you are working more hours than you agreed to; your working conditions are unsafe. If you need help or advice, please contact the TA Grievance Officer. The first step in resolving any problem is an informal problem solving/ complaint stage. This involves an informal discussion between you and the course supervisor. If after taking this step the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can arrange a meeting with the Grievance Officer. They can help you decide what the best options are for you and your situation. If a formal grievance is required, it is the Grievance Officer's job to work with you and to file a grievance on your behalf. Grievances must be filed in a timely manner—you should contact the union as soon as the issue arises. AGSEM encourages employees to fight for their rights, but the union will not file a grievance without the consent of an employee."

23. If you are not given a workload form

- [AGSEM Guide for New TAs:](#)
 - "Course supervisors and TAs must agree on the type and amount of work to be done (including time spent attending lectures). At the beginning of the appointment (before the add/drop deadline for the course), TAs and course supervisors will meet and discuss the anticipated work schedule. The result of this meeting will be recorded on a [Workload Form](#). The total anticipated hours of work cannot exceed the total hours specified in the letter of offer unless both parties agree and full remuneration is given at the stipulated rates. If a Workload Form is not provided by the department, one can be downloaded from our website. TAs should keep track of the time it takes to complete assigned tasks. To help prevent the problem of unpaid overtime, course supervisors and TAs must meet again within 2 weeks of the mid-term to review the objectives and make appropriate revisions to the Workload Form. All versions must be completed carefully, signed and dated. Keep photocopies of the original and revised versions."
*Workload form can be found [here](#)

24. If you are not given an initial meeting with the course supervisor to complete the workload form, or a midterm review meeting

- Make an appointment with the course supervisors as soon as possible. If they are not available, ask the department administrator that assigned you the TAs hip to help you make an appointment.
- "A grievance shall be defined as any difference arising between the University and the Union, an employee, or a group of employees out of the interpretation or application of this Agreement. The parties agree to deal with all grievance filed fairly and promptly. The intention of the Parties shall be to encourage the settling of grievances as often as possible" (Article 8, p. 11: [Grievances and arbitration](#)).

Conflict:

25. If you are being harassed by the supervisor of a course you are TAing, whether or not they are your academic supervisor; or any other McGill employee
- The TA should first go to the chair of the department
 - [AGSEM Teaching Assistants and Invigilators](#)
 - "We (AGSEM) would like to remind all of our members that if you are facing any form of oppression or have questioned about it, do not hesitate to contact us in confidentiality at mail@agsem-aeedem.ca or call us at 514-398-2582."
 - [Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination](#)
McGill's policy on harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination can be found [here](#)
 - [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "An employee with a problem concerning the application of her working conditions is encouraged to discuss it with the Course Supervisor to solve the problem. If this discussion between the employee and Course Supervisor does not succeed in resolving the problem, the employee may discuss the matter with the Hiring Unit Designee. The Hiring Unit Designee shall use all reasonable efforts to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of both the employee and Course Supervisor" (Article 11(11.04), p. 20: Positions).
26. If you have a conflict with your course supervisor over work hours, pay, etc.
- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "An employee with a problem concerning the application of her working conditions is encouraged to discuss it with the Course Supervisor to solve the problem. If this discussion between the employee and Course Supervisor does not succeed in resolving the problem, the employee may discuss the matter with the Hiring Unit Designee. The Hiring Unit Designee shall use all reasonable efforts to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of both the employee and Course Supervisor" (Article 11(11.04), p. 20: Positions).
27. If any disciplinary action is initiated against you (written reprimand, suspension or dismissal)
- [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "Written reprimand, suspension, or dismissal are disciplinary measures which may be applied according to the seriousness and frequency of the alleged offense. The University shall not dismiss, suspend or reprimand without just and sufficient cause, for which it has the burden of proof. It is the declared intention of the parties to this agreement that the procedure contemplated in Article 9 be used only in cases of misconduct, insubordination, negligence or neglect of duty" (Article 9 Measures (9.01), p. 14: Disciplinary).
 - "Any employee called to a meeting by the University for disciplinary reasons has the right to be accompanied by her Union representative" (Article 9(9.03), p. 14: Disciplinary Measures).
 - "An employee or the Union may grieve a disciplinary measure taken against her. In the case of a suspension or dismissal, where a disagreement contemplated in section 9.05 c) has occurred, the employee or the Union may file a grievance immediately at the second step of the Grievance Procedure" (Article 9(9.06), p. 15: Disciplinary Measures).

Health and Safety:

28. If you have any health or safety concerns about your work as a TA
- Speak with the course supervisor since s/he has certain legal obligations to look out for your health and safety.
 - When that fails it is the right time for the union to take up the employee's cause. To help them do that AGSEM now has a seat on the University Health and Safety Committee.
 - AGSEM Guide for New TAs:
<https://www.mcgill.ca/desautels/sites/mcgill.ca.desautels/files/agsem-guide-for-new-tas.pdf> check for more generic posting
 - "Problems sometimes arise, i.e., a job was given to someone with less priority or experience than you; you are working more hours than you agreed to; your working conditions are unsafe. If you need help or advice, please contact the TA Grievance Officer. The first step in resolving any problem is an informal problem solving/ complaint stage. This involves an informal discussion between you and the course supervisor. If after taking this step the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can arrange a meeting with the Grievance Officer. They can help you decide what the best options are for you and your situation. If a formal grievance is required, it is the Grievance Officer's job to work with you and to file a grievance on your behalf. Grievances must be filed in a timely manner—you should contact the union as soon as the issue arises. AGSEM encourages employees to fight for their rights, but the union will not file a grievance without the consent of an employee."
 - [Collective Agreement between McGill University and the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill \(AGSEM\)](#)
 - "An employee with a problem concerning the application of her working conditions is encouraged to discuss it with the Course Supervisor to solve the problem. If this discussion between the employee and Course Supervisor does not succeed in resolving the problem, the employee may discuss the matter with the Hiring Unit Designee. The Hiring Unit Designee shall use all reasonable efforts to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of both the employee and Course Supervisor" (Article 11(11.04), p. 20: Positions).
 - "The University recognizes its responsibility to maintain safe working conditions for its employees" (Article 15(15.02), p. 29: General).
 - "All employees shall be made aware of occupational health and safety regulations related to their employment" (Article 15(15.02.01), p. 29: General).
 - "The University will provide employees with safety equipment, materials and protective devise required for the safer performance of an employee's duties" (Article 15(15.02.02), p. 29: General).
 - "The Union shall have the right to appoint a representative to the University's Central Safety Committee" (Article 15(15.02.03), p. 29: General).
 - "The University will ensure first-aid service during working hours and will, at the University's expense, have the employee transported to the hospital of her choice if her condition warrants it. The University will arrange for the return of the employee to the University or home, whichever is appropriate" (Article 15(15.02.04), p. 29: General).
 - "An employee has the right to refuse to perform a task if the employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the performance of the task would engager her

health, safety or physical well-being, or would expose another person to a similar danger. An employee may not, however, exercise this right if their refusal to perform the task places the life, health, safety or physical well-being of another person in immediate danger or if the conditions under which the work is to be performed are normal for that type of work" (Article 15(15.02.05), p. 29: General).