

TA and RA Handbook

For members of OCADFA



FALL/WINTER 2021-2022

Forward

Land Acknowledgement:

OCADFA acknowledges the sacred land on which we live and work. For over 15,000 years this land has been home to Indigenous people who have lived and continue to live in relation with the land in ways that have been proven to be ecologically sustainable and vital, and that deepen our humanity by honouring our relations.

This land is the territory of the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, and Huron Indigenous Peoples.

Today, this meeting place of Tkaronto/Toronto is still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to be here together, in conversation with Indigenous histories. We are committed to working in solidarity with Indigenous-led activism and to upholding the values and practices that protect the land, care for the people and make it possible to plan for a peaceable future.

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Hello! Welcome to OCADU and to becoming a member of OCADFA! Whether you are a first-time TA/RA or a returning TA/RA, we hope that you will find the information in this handbook useful to better understanding your role and rights as a TA/RA and to help you navigate your workplace. We have tried to include resources that may be useful to support your work as a TA/RA and as a student, as well as information that we wish we had learned when we first started here at OCADU. If there is anything that we have left out of this handbook that you wish we had included, please don't hesitate to let us know as we will update versions of this handbook for future TAs and RAs.

Originally researched and drafted by Elena Chou, with edits and feedback from OCADFA Board members and Executive Director. All rights reserved by OCADFA.

OCADFA would like to thank Elena and all Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant members who participated in consultations in developing this document.

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1. Knowing Your Union

We encourage you to visit the [OCADFA website](#) to learn more about who OCADFA is and what we do in service of our members.

a. Who is OCADFA?

The Ontario College of Art & Design Faculty Association (OCADFA) is the union that represents more than 600 faculty and academic staff at OCAD University. The Association was formed in 1965 with the mandate of protecting the rights and improving the working conditions of its members and continues today as the sole recognized bargaining agent for its members and as their voice in the complaint process.

OCADFA Members	
Faculty	Academic Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sessional➤ Teaching-Intensive Stream (TIS)➤ Contractually Limited Term Appointment (CLTA)➤ Continuing➤ Probationary➤ Tenured	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Technicians (contract, probationary, and permanent)➤ Academic Counsellors (contract, probationary, permanent)➤ Teaching/Research Assistants

OCADFA is comprised of an elected Board of Directors and various Committee Members, elected by the membership for limited 3-year terms. The current Board of Directors are:

- President: [Min Sook Lee](#), Faculty of Art (term ends 2022)
- Vice-President: [Mary Eileen Wennekers](#), Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies (term ends 2021)
- Negotiations Chair: Eric Steenbergen, Faculty of Art Technician (term ends 2020)
- Grievance Chair: [Natalie Waldburger](#), Faculty of Art (term ends 2021)
- Secretary/Treasurer: Christopher Bennell, IT Technician (term ends 2021)
- Director: Richard Hunt, Faculty of Design (term ends 2023)
- Director: Tannis Nielsen (term ends 2022)
- Director: [JJ Lee](#), Faculty of Art (term ends 2022)
- Director: Laura Lovell-Anderson (term ends 2023)

Non-Board Position

- Associate Grievance Chair: Richard Hunt, Faculty of Design (term ends 2023)

Executive Director

- [Graeme Reniers](#)

b. What does OCADFA do?

OCADFA represents teaching and research faculty including Tenured, Probationary, Continuing, CLTA, Teaching-Intensive Stream, and Sessional, along with Academic Staff including Technicians, Academic Counsellors, Teaching Assistants (TAs), and Research Assistants (RAs). If you are employed by OCADU in any of these positions with a signed contract, you are a member in good standing of OCADFA.

From the OCADFA website:

1. Negotiations:

OCADFA negotiates a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the University. The MoA lays out the terms and conditions of employment for all faculty and academic staff. The MoA is your comprehensive resource regarding all the details of your job, expectations and rights at the University.

The current MoA is being drafted. You can find the most recent MoA [here](#), as well as changes made to it as a result of the most recent bargaining round [here](#).

2. Grievances and Member Representation:

In collaboration with its members, OCADFA monitors the University's compliance with the MoA. The Association may file grievances on behalf of itself and/or one or more of its members if it believes the MoA, or relevant policy or legislation, has been violated, in order to defend its members' individual and collective rights. If you think your labour rights have been violated, you should check our [OCADFA Grievance FAQs](#) on our website and contact us [here](#).

In the case of discrimination concerns, we may refer you to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Sustainability Initiatives to pursue a complaint through the Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy, because the Ontario legislative environment generally requires that discrimination complaints follow that path. Even there, however, we often can help you assess your situation and provide support in filing and pursuing a complaint.

3. Advocacy:

On the provincial and national level, OCADFA advocates for issues affecting the postsecondary sector by working with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association (OCUFA) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

4. Outreach and Communication:

OCADFA keeps its members informed about the issues affecting them and the broader University sector through internal email and social media. Keep an eye out for our newsletter, which should come to your OCADU email monthly.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ocadfa1>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCADFA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ocadfa/>

2. Knowing Your Workplace

a. TAs and RAs at OCADFA

Teaching and Research Assistants at OCADU are hired on fixed-term annual contracts, based on a specified number of hours per term as determined by the Dean, Associate Dean and/or supervising faculty member based on the particular needs and format of the course or research project, and set out in writing in advance of the appointment.

OCADFA does not determine the number of hours assigned for TAs and RAs, but if you believe your assigned hours is inconsistent with our Letter of Understanding (LOU) re: TA Assignments, as outlined below, please contact us.

Hours for TA contracts (either a Marker/Grader or a Tutorial Leader) are determined by the following formula based on enrolment numbers in the LoU in the MoA:

- For courses with no tutorials, faculty will not be assigned a TA subject to the below.

Studio	30 students or fewer	No TA	TA support may be considered in atypical studio classes where class size significantly exceeds 30 students or specific significant teaching assistance is required.
Lecture & Studio Seminar	45 students or fewer	No TA	

- For courses with no tutorials, faculty will be assigned a Marker/Grader or Tutorial Leader in accordance with the below.

Lecture & Studio Seminar	Greater than 45 students	Typically assigned 1.5 hours per student over 45
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- If a course has 90-150 students, one Tutorial Leader, and one possible Marker/Grader may be assigned.
- If a course has more than 151 students, two Tutorial Leaders, and one possible Marker/Grader may be assigned.
- A one-hour tutorial with 30-35 students will be assigned a Tutorial Leader.
- Teaching Assistants who are assigned more than one tutorial will have their hours adjusted.
- In any case, Teaching Assistants/Research Assistants may be assigned no more than an average of 10 hours per week

i. Categories of TAs and RAs

- Undergraduate Research Assistant
 - Responsibilities listed under MoA Article 37.4.2
- Marker/Grader
 - Responsibilities listed under MoA Articles 37.4.1.1 and 37.4.1.4
- Tutorial Leader
 - Responsibilities listed under MoA Article 37.4.1
- Graduate Research Assistant
 - Responsibilities listed under MOA Article 37.4.2

All TAs and RAs are also paid 6% in lieu of benefits as well as 4% pay in lieu of vacation.

ii. Hourly rates of pay for TAs and RAs (Effective July 1, 2021)

Undergraduate Research Assistant	\$19.99
Marker/Grader	\$27.14
Tutorial Leader	\$31.68
Graduate Research Assistant	\$31.68

b. Applying for TA and RA positions at OCADU

As a result of the MoA signed on May 7, 2021, a new hiring process has been implemented for all TAs in which all current and previous TAs need to apply through the [OCADU HR](#) site.

You will be asked to submit a cover letter (try to keep these brief) and to identify specific courses for which you're applying, as well as indicate if you're a current OCADU student, a recent OCADU graduate student, or an external TA who has worked with OCADU previously. Please note that as per the hiring departments, all positions are subject to budgetary approval and meeting target course registrations, and so you will only be contacted if you are shortlisted for an interview.

The same hiring process, i.e. via the OCADU HR site, applies if you are:

- a currently enrolled graduate student
- a recent OCADU graduate
- a non-OCADU student

Please note:

For current OCADU graduate students, if you had a guaranteed TA position as part of your acceptance package during your first year, you are not guaranteed a second or subsequent TA position and will need to apply again each year.

Please also keep in mind, as per the MoA, the applicable TA term limits that were negotiated between OCADFA and OCADU, where the TA term limit for all TA grades is 3 years. This means if you have been a TA for over 3 years (cumulatively) you will have reached your term limit and will not be eligible for these positions.

Unfortunately, this stipulation has already been agreed to in the current MoA but can be revisited during the next round of bargaining. However, as stipulated in the current MoA, in exceptional circumstances (i.e. when agreed to be of benefit to both the University and the Teaching Assistant), a Teaching/Research Assistant who is also a current OCADU student may be renewed beyond the initial 3 years, subject to approval by the Dean of Faculty or designate – please reach out to OCADFA for more details about this policy if you are unsure about whether you have reached the 3 year limit.

c. Responsibilities of OCADU faculty and academic staff to students and colleagues

As per Article 6.1.1 of the MoA, all faculty and academic staff (including TAs and RAs) must adhere to a set of responsibilities to students. These include (from the MoA):

“[Faculty] and academic staff shall deal fairly and ethically with students, make themselves accessible to students for academic and creative consultation, honour commitments to students (including, but not limited to, adhering to class schedules or posted office hours), and provide students with course outlines and other relevant information to assist them in the successful pursuit of their studies. Faculty and academic staff shall make every effort to create an atmosphere in which students may learn and thrive.”

Furthermore, as per Article 6.3.1 of the MoA, all faculty and academic staff (including TAs and RAs) must engage in collegial behaviour when dealing with students, colleagues, and other members of the OCADU community:

“[In] performing their professional responsibilities, faculty and academic staff must demonstrate Collegial Behaviour at all times when dealing with academic and administrative colleagues, students, and other members of the University community. “Collegial Behaviour” includes treating others with dignity, respect, fairness, equality and integrity, and maintaining confidentiality when required. Faculty and academic staff shall not criticize colleagues to students, encourage or solicit criticisms of colleagues from students, or discuss professional or personal grievances with students.”

3. Knowing Your Rights as a TA and RA

As per the MoA, “Teaching/Research Assistants are intended to assist, rather than replace (emphasis added), faculty in the delivery of curriculum or carrying out research activities. Because Teaching/Research Assistants are temporary employees with whom the University does not have a long-term employer/employee relationship, they are hired on the basis of fixed-term contracts, and receive additional pay in lieu of benefits. The maximum renewal period is intended to ensure the ongoing creation of employment opportunities for new Teaching/Research Assistants, and to ensure that increased expectations for Teaching/Research Assistants are not made beyond those outlined in Article 37.4.

Employment may be terminated through non-renewal of contract, resignation (with appropriate notice), retirement, dismissal as a result of Performance Review, dismissal for just cause, or termination of contract for enrolment funding or other operational reasons. In the event his/her appointment is cancelled less than one week prior to the scheduled first day of class, a Teaching Assistant will receive a payment of one week’s salary.”

a. Understanding your contract

i. Contracted hours of work

If you are hired as a TA or an RA at OCADU, you will receive a contract with an offer of employment that includes, as per Article 34.5.8 in the MoA:

- 1) the term of contract;
- 2) the hours of work; and
- 3) the starting salary.

This offer of employment must be signed and returned by the listed date along with any other necessary documents such as Ontario and Federal tax forms, direct deposit information for Payroll, and personal contact information if you have not already completed these.

If your hours of work for your TAship or RAship are not clearly listed on your contract, please get in touch with OCADFA and/or whomever sent you your appointment offer, as you have the right to know how many hours have been assigned as part of your TA or RA contract.

If you are working at OCADU for the first time, you will also be required to submit your Social Insurance Number (SIN) number to OCADU HR to verify your identity.

ii. TA and RA duties

Your duties as a Teaching Assistant are outlined in Article 37.4.1 of the MOA, and Article 37.4.2 for Research Assistants.

Teaching Assistant

- Please note that if you are Marker/Grader, you're responsible for only the 1st and 4th duty.
1. Working with 1 or more OCAD U Faculties, directly supervised by 1 or more faculty members with administrative supervision of or more Associate Deans;
 2. Working with Associate Deans, Chairs, faculty members and other academic staff in support of the University's educational goals and objectives;
 3. Meeting these educational goals by assisting with course preparation and delivery, i.e. organizing teaching and learning materials, and other resources, based on curricular outlines provided by a supervising faculty member, or by providing group instruction in specialized techniques;
 4. Assisting in the evaluation of student work, using criteria established by the supervising faculty members;
 5. Supporting students in their learning, i.e. through individual or small group instruction and/or assisting with assignments
 6. Conducting separately scheduled tutorial classes;
 7. Working with Technicians, class assistants and/or monitors, where relevant, by ensuring the appropriate and safe use of materials, equipment and/or facilities; and,
 8. Participating in the provision of a safe and secure environment for all members of the University community and its facilities.

If you are employed as a Tutorial Leader the below is a sample of some of the duties assigned as part of your position along with suggested number of total hours allotted for each duty. We strongly encourage you to discuss with your supervising faculty the associated duties for your position along with the breakdown of hours for each duty to ensure that you do not go over the hours assigned in your contract. Please note that there may be some duties that are not included in the below list that supervising faculty may like you to complete and so it is imperative that you discuss this with your supervising faculty to ensure that you are both aware of what duties are included in your position so as to not be asked to complete or take on work that you were previously unaware of.

As a TA, you are expected to work no more than an average of 10 hours a week on TA related duties, though there may be some weeks where you will occasionally exceed this number, such as during the grading of exams and assignments.

TEACHING ASSISTANT WORKLOAD TA IV & III 2020-2021

TA IV & III Pay Rate = \$31.05/hour plus 6% in lieu of benefits plus vacation pay

One Tutorial Section	TA IV w/ Tutorial Class (VISC 1001-1002)		TA III In Class	
Attend all lectures, help proctor				
midterm & final exam	2 hrs x 13 weeks	26	3 hrs x 13 weeks	39
Tutorial class	1 hr x 12 weeks	12		
Preparation/Consultation	hrs over 12 weeks	30	hrs over 12 weeks	6
Office hour/Admin.	1 hr x 13 weeks	13	1 hr x 13 weeks	13
Marking	1.5 hrs x 30 students	45	1.5 hrs x 60 students	90
Final wrap up	1 hour	1	1 hour	1
Pay	Total Hours	127	Total Hours	149
	Hours/week @15 weeks	8	Hours/week @15 weeks	10

Two Tutorial Sections In Same Lecture Section	TA IV w/ Tutorial Class (VISC 1001-1002)		TA III In Class	
Attend all lectures, help proctor				
midterm & final exam	2 hrs x 13 weeks	26	3 hrs x 13 weeks	39
Tutorial classes	2 hrs x 12 weeks	24		
Preparation/Consultation	hrs over 12 weeks	42	hrs over 12 weeks	6
Office hours/Admin.	1 hr x 13 weeks	13	1 hrs x 13 weeks	13
Marking	1.5 hrs x 60 students	90	1.5 hrs x 120 students	180
Final wrap up	2 hours	2	1 hour	1
Pay	Total Hours	197	Total Hours	239
	Hours/week @15 weeks	13	Hours/week @15 weeks	16

Three Tutorial Sections	TA IV w/ Tutorial Class (VISC 1001-1002)	
Attend all lectures, help proctor		
midterm & final exam	2 hrs x 13 weeks	26
Tutorial classes	3 hrs x 12 weeks	36
Preparation/Consultation	hrs over 12 weeks	54
Office hours/Admin.	1 hr x 13 weeks	13
Marking	1.5 hrs x 90 students	135
Final wrap up	3 hours	3
Pay	Total Hours	267
	Hours/week @ 15 weeks	18

Four Tutorial Sections	TA IV w/ Tutorial Class (VISC 1001-1002)	
Attend all lectures, help proctor		
midterm & final exam	2 hrs x 13 weeks	26
Tutorial classes	4 hrs x 12 weeks	48
Preparation/Consultation	hrs over 12 weeks	66
Office hours/Admin.	1 hr x 13 weeks	13
Marking	1.5 hrs x 120 students	180
Final wrap up	3 hours	3
Pay	Total Hours	336
	Hours/week @15 weeks	22

First Year Writing TA IV (ENGL 1003)

TA Hours	1st Section	2nd+ Sections in Same Lecture Section
12 x 1.5-hr tutorials =	18	18
Lecture attendance =	18	
Meetings w/instructor =	7	
Prep class/tutorial =	30	30
Tests/Midterms/Invigilation =	10	7
Marking 1.5 hours x 35 =	52.5	52.5
Total Hours	135.5	107.5
Grand Total Hours for two sections		243
Grand Total Hours for three sections		350.5

Research Assistant (Undergraduate or Graduate)

1. Working within 1 or more OCAD U Faculties, directly supervised by 1 or more Principal Investigators whose workload includes Research/Professional;
 2. Working with Associate Deans, Chairs, and/or faculty members and other academic staff in support of the University's research goals and objectives;
 3. Meeting these research goals by assisting with data collection, literature searches, data compilation, processing, entry and analysis, and experimental systems design, fabrication and maintenance;
 4. Assisting with supervision of research activities in the lab, classroom, and within the field;
 5. Assisting with preparation of proposals, progress and final reports, and promotion of research activities;
 6. Providing project coordination, budget management, and administration of research activities;
 7. Participating in the hiring, scheduling and supervision of Undergraduate Research Assistants, for Graduate Research Assistants, Class Assistants, and/or Student Monitors, where relevant;
 8. Working with Technicians, class assistants and/or student monitors, where relevant, by ensuring the appropriate and safe use of materials, equipment and/or facilities; and
 9. Participating in the provision of a safe and secure environment for all members of the University community and its facilities.
- For both categories, your responsibilities are not limited to the above, but if you're given responsibilities that seem unreasonably outside the expected duties please check in with OCADFA.

iii. [Payroll and how to submit timesheets](#)

- a. If you are employed as a Marker/Grader in order to get paid you will need to submit weekly timesheets online through the web time entry portal in increments of 0.25 hours. For example, if you have marked for 15, 30, or 45 minutes, these would be inputted as 0.25, 0.50, or 0.75 increments of an hour. You will need to input your hours each week even if you worked 0 hours that week as hours are approved bi-weekly, and making backdated claims after the hours have been approved creates issues for the administrative staff and Payroll. It is also important that you do not work on statutory holidays when possible, as any hours claimed on statutory holidays are paid as time and a half, which means you use up more of your assigned hours in your contract.

To enter your hours you would log into your MyOCADU Portal and select “Time Entry and Approval.” Detailed instructions on how to enter hours into the web time entry portal as well as the bi-weekly payroll schedule from OCADU HR should be included with your offer of appointment.

- b. If you are employed as a Tutorial Leader or a Research Assistant, you do not need to submit weekly timesheets as you will be paid automatically on a bi-weekly basis provided that your banking information has been received and processed by Payroll.

- iv. [Accessing your paystubs](#)

To access your paystubs, you would log into your MyOCADU Portal, select “Pay Statements,” and select the year.

- b. [Keeping track of your hours](#)

- i. [Tips and tools for tracking your hours](#)

We want to reassure you that no one – not faculty, not your Department Chairs or Deans, and not administrative staff – thinks it acceptable for you to work more hours than you’re paid for. However, to make sure that isn’t happening it’s important to track your hours so that you can inform your supervising faculty member if it appears that you will exceed your contracted hours of work before the end of your appointment.

There are a few ways we recommend to track your hours:

1. Task based:
 - Where you calculate the average time it takes to assess a project, and multiply that by how many of those you’ve marked to determine how much of your contracted hours were expended on each task.
2. Manually: In a day planner, journal, or Excel spreadsheet
3. Using a time tracking application: The two free apps that are most suited to TA positions are [Clockify](#) and [Toggl](#). These are particularly suitable because they are not very complicated to set up, and you can alert them to begin clocking whenever you are working on Canvas as well as manually input hours that you spend working offline.

Any time spent in the Service of TAing or RAing should be counted for compensation. This includes time spend doing course readings, viewing lecture content or attending lectures, conducting Teams meeting, answering emails, and corresponding with your supervising faculty as well as any time spent marking.

ii. What to do if you've gone over your contracted hours

As noted earlier, you are expected to work no more than an average of 10 hours a week on TA related duties, though there may be some weeks where you will occasionally exceed this number.

Please let your supervising faculty know as soon as possible if you are close to or have exceeded the number of hours as agreed upon in your supervising faculty. If you are close to reaching your assigned hours, your supervising faculty and yourself (and the other TAs) can revisit the agreed upon TA duties to adjust the time of completion for the expected duties or eliminate some of these duties altogether. Your supervising faculty may also, with your permission, request from your hiring department or the Dean's Office that additional hours be added to your contract to fulfill your expected duties; please note that additional hours are not guaranteed and is subject to approval.

It is important to note that you do NOT have to work unpaid hours beyond your contract if your assigned hours have already been exceeded. It is your right as a member of OCADFA to refuse to complete unpaid work and your supervising faculty, as a fellow OCADFA member, should not be putting you in the uncomfortable position of asking that you work for free. If your supervising faculty is insisting that you take on additional unpaid work beyond your contract after you have let them know that you have exceeded your contracted hours, please get in touch with OCADFA and we can discuss with you the possible remedies you may have to address this situation, which can include filing a grievance if need be.

We stress that while you may feel pressured to take on this additional unpaid work so as to not upset or rock the boat with your supervising faculty or your hiring department, it is your supervising faculty who should not be putting you in the untenable position of doing additional unpaid labour, and so please do reach out to OCADFA if you find yourself in this situation.

c. TA training and pedagogy

i. TA Training

As per the MoA, once per academic year, OCADU will provide TAs with 5 hours of training paid at their regular hourly rate. Upon each appointment, TAs will also receive 3 additional hours of training per course provided by the faculty member teaching the course. These training hours will be in addition to the weekly allocation of hours as outlined in Article 29.4 of the MoA.

ii. Further pedagogical training

OCADFA is not involved in the training of TAs or in any issues related to grading, teaching or pedagogy as this is the jurisdiction of the OCADU administration. If you feel that you would like or need further TA training, or have any questions regarding any teaching or grading related issue, you can reach out to [Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre \(FCDC\)](#), who can provide you with additional resources and support, including workshops and communities of practice for TAs (see OCADU Campus Resources for more information on FCDC).

d. Academic freedom

As per Appendix 5 of the MoA, all faculty and academic staff, including TAs and RAs, have the right to academic freedom in their teaching, including the right to conduct tutorials as you see fit, as adopted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) on May 5, 1988.

“Academic freedom is essential to the teaching function of the University, as well as to the creative and scholarly pursuits of the faculty, academic staff, other staff, and students. This includes a commitment to unfettered intellectual and aesthetic inquiry and judgment and to the provision of those textual, audio, and visual resources necessary to free inquiry and practice. Academic freedom includes: the right of responsible teaching from a subjective point of view; the right to freedom of creative practice or expression; and the right of dialogue, discussion, debate and criticism in the exercise of professional responsibilities including those referred to herein.”

e. Filing a complaint or grievance (OCADFA)

i. What is a grievance?

From the OCADFA website:

“A grievance is an allegation made by OCADFA, generally on behalf of itself and one of its members, that the Employer has violated the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) or an applicable policy or legislation. Such a violation may follow from the Employer’s interpretation, application, or administration of the policy in question.”

If you have any concerns about whether your contract or your workplace rights are being violated in any way, please get in touch with us and we will help you assess whether your concern falls within OCADFA’s purview and whether a complaint or grievance should be filed. If you think your rights have been violated, please contact the [OCADFA President](#) or the [OCADFA Grievance Chair](#). We will discuss your concerns confidentially with you and

seek legal advice as needed to determine if you have grounds for a complaint. The rule of thumb is that if something feels wrong, there's a good chance it is, and you should confer with us.

There are 3 types of complaints or grievances that can be pursued.

From the OCADFA website:

1. "Complaint

A complaint may be discussed informally between a member and their Dean or Manager. Many complaints can be resolved at this stage. OCADFA can assist by consulting with the faculty member beforehand, clarifying their rights within the context of the MoA or applicable policies and legislation, assisting with correspondence, or accompanying a member to a meeting with the Dean/Manager. This option is especially worth considering if you have a positive relationship with your supervisor, or feel that your supervisor will be receptive to your concern. If the complaint doesn't resolve the problem, a grievance can be filed. See [Article 13.3 of the MoA](#).

2. Grievance

A grievance is a written allegation made by OCADFA that the MoA or an applicable policy or law has been breached. The alleged infraction(s) and proposed remedies are submitted in writing to the Vice-President Academic or designate, and a meeting is held to try to resolve the grievance. If there is a proposed resolution from the Vice-President Academic or designate, the proposed resolution is presented to the grievor for approval. OCADFA then confirms in writing to the Vice-President Academic if the resolution is agreeable. See [Article 13.4 of the MoA](#).

3. Grievance Mediation/Arbitration

Either OCADFA or the Employer may refer unresolved grievances to Mediation/Arbitration. Typically—although not always—this process starts with Mediation in which the Arbitrator tries to work with the two sides to reach a mutually-agreeable resolution. If mediation is not successful in resolving the grievance, then the process reverts to arbitration. At this stage, the Arbitrator assesses evidence brought forward by the Faculty Association and the Employer and renders a binding decision. See [Article 13.5 of the MoA](#)."

A grievance must be submitted to the Vice-President Academic within 21 calendar days of the alleged infraction, or of the date on which the Grievor first knew or ought reasonably to have known of it, and so please reach out to us as soon as possible if you feel you may have grounds for a complaint or

grievance as there are time limits in which the grievance process must be initiated.

The grievance procedure applies only to disputes between OCADFA members and our Employer, and so grievances cannot be filed from one OCADFA member against another OCADFA member (such as a TA or RA against their supervising faculty).

ii. [What are the steps in the grievance process?](#)

The first step would be OCADFA assigning a member of the grievance team who becomes your primary contact through the entire process. Their job is to draw on the appropriate resources (such as consulting with OCADFA's President, Grievance Chair, or legal counsel) to assess your situation and to develop and execute an appropriate grievance strategy. Your grievance team member can accompany you to any meetings connected to the grievance, provide progress updates, and answer any questions you may have about the process as it unfolds. Article 13.2 of the MoA affords you the right to OCADFA representation through all stages of the grievance procedure, and we strongly recommend that should never meet with any OCADU body about your grievance without your union representative.

In terms of issues of confidentiality in the grievance process, while both the Employer and OCADFA are committed to keeping the grievance process as confidential as possible, please note that it will be necessary to exchange information with the Employer to try to resolve your grievance and especially if the grievance proceeds to the arbitration stage. While mediations are typically confidential, if a grievance proceeds to arbitration, the hearing is typically open to the public, so any testimony given or documents submitted in such a hearing is normally in the public domain. However, a grievance arbitration is rare and so if confidentiality were an issue, OCADFA and the grievance team would consider that before proceeding to arbitration. That said, it is rare for a grievance to reach the arbitration stage.

f. [Discrimination, harassment, and bullying \(ODESI\)](#)

For cases related to discrimination, harassment, and bullying within the OCADU community, including from OCADU students (graduate, undergraduate, and continuing education students, and students in process), staff, faculty, visiting professors, sessional faculty, teaching assistants, librarians, volunteers, visitors, observers, institutional administrators, officials representing OCAD U, and contractors and employees of other organizations not related to the University but who nevertheless work on, or are invited onto, University premises, this would fall within the purview of the [Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment Policy](#) (RWLEP) and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Sustainability Initiatives (ODESI) would address these issues.

Types of behaviour which would fall within the scope of the RWLEP would include discrimination, harassment, and bullying on any Ontario Human Rights Code grounds, such as on the basis of one's race/ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)/sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression, disability (including mental, physical, developmental and learning disabilities, including temporary and episodic disabilities), age, religion and spirituality, family status (being in a parent-child relationship)/marital status, and citizenship status. Sexual harassment (including sexual solicitation) as well as creating a poisoned work environment would also be behaviours which violate the RWLEP.

Members should contact the Director of Human Resources or the Director of ODESI with concerns that fall under the purview of this policy, though OCADFA can work with both complainants (if you are filing an RWLEP complaint) and respondents (if you are on the receiving end of one) throughout the RWLEP process. Please contact the [OCADFA President](#) or the [OCADFA Grievance Chair](#) in regard to any issues related to the RWLEP.

g. Sexual violence

If you are a graduate student and have experienced sexual violence, you can reach out to the Student Wellness Centre for support.

From OCADU's website:

“OCAD U's [Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence](#) establishes the Student Wellness Centre as the primary point of contact for students who experience sexual violence. Through the Centre, students can access medical and counselling services, academic accommodations, learn about options for reporting, and receive guidance on formal complaint options through the policy.

Student Wellness Centre
416-977-6000, Ext. 260
studentwellness@ocadu.ca
230 Richmond St. W., 6th Floor
Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Urgent same-day appointments are available.

Even if you're unsure what your options are, or what your next step should be, Student Wellness staff will discuss all options with you in a confidential, non-judgmental and safe environment. You will be respected and supported in whatever decisions you make about next steps. A student is not required to make a report or file a complaint about an incident of sexual violence in order to obtain support or accommodations from the university.”

If you are not a graduate student and have experienced sexual violence, you can reach out to ODESI for initial support and they can direct you to other campus services.

From OCADU's website:

“OCAD University’s [Respectful Work & Learning Environment Policy](#) states that harassment and discrimination violate an individual’s human rights and run contrary to the university’s fundamental values. This includes sexual and gender-based harassment on campus, off-campus and on-line. At any time, employees may contact OCAD U’s [Office of Diversity, Equity and Sustainability Initiatives \(ODESI\)](#) to confidentially ask a question, raise a concern or seek assistance. Meetings can be arranged off-campus if preferred.

Employees who require accommodations related to experiencing sexual violence may also contact OCAD U’s [Human Resources office](#), and seek support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#).”

h. Dealing with workplace health and safety issues

You have the right to a safe workplace, including a harassment free work environment. If you have any health and safety concerns, please speak to your supervising faculty or faculty office as soon as possible. If you are unable to find help, or are unsatisfied with the help you received, please contact OCADFA.

Every worker in Ontario also has the right to refuse unsafe work - that is, work that is likely to endanger yourself. While we do not anticipate you should ever need to refuse unsafe work, we invite you to read the following [guide on your right to refuse unsafe work](#).

i. Right to reasonable accommodation

You also have the right to reasonable accommodation on *Ontario Human Rights Code* based grounds, such as on the grounds of disability, sex/pregnancy, family status, age, creed, gender identity, and gender expression. If you think you may need a workplace accommodation to perform your employment duties, please see OCADFA’s [guide to workplace accommodations](#) and contact us for any questions or support you may need.

4. Knowing Your Benefits

a. Health benefits

Unfortunately, TAs and RAs with contracts at OCADU are not eligible for any benefits or pensions with OCADFA as per the MoA.

However, undergraduate students who are enrolled in 1.5 credits or more in September or January as well as graduate students who have declared full-time status are automatically enrolled in the OCAD U Student Health and Dental Plan. All students are

able to make changes to their coverage during the first month of studies by opting in, opting out, or adding dependents to the health and/or dental plans.

The plan covers:

- prescription drugs;
- health practitioners (e.g. chiropractors, physiotherapists, massage therapists, etc.);
- dental exams and cleanings;
- fillings and root canals;
- travel health coverage

You can find more details in the [OCADU Student Health and Dental Plan](#).

b. Funding for conference travel and presentation

Unfortunately, OCADFA's MoA does not provide any funds for conference travel or presentation. However, Graduate Studies does provide these funds for full-time graduate students in their first five terms of study, up to a maximum of \$500.00 per student, per year.

From the OCADU Graduate Studies website:

"To apply, you would submit an [Application for Conference and Travel Funding](#) to your Graduate Program Coordinator 60 days before the conference date. If your request is approved, you will be required to submit an [Expense Reimbursement Form](#) with all original receipts upon your return."

c. Accommodations as a student

As a student, if you require any academic support or accommodations, you would contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at OCAD U. While you are free to register with SAS at any time throughout the year, SAS recommends that you register with SAS prior to the start of your classes to ensure you have the appropriate academic accommodations in place.

From the SAS website:

"To register with SAS, please follow the registration process below:

1. Download and complete our registration form: [SAS Registration Form](#)
2. Contact SAS to schedule a Registration appointment by:
 - emailing SAS at sas@ocadu.ca
 - calling SAS at 416-977-6000 extension 339
 - visiting SAS (6th floor, 230 Richmond St. W, located in the Student Wellness Centre) during office hours
 - if you have an accommodation need in order to participate in the registration process, please let us know.

3. Bring your completed medical and/or psychoeducational documentation to your registration appointment if it is available to you. You can find a copy of our medical documentation forms here.

4. During the registration appointment you will meet with an Accessibility Advisor who will review your medical/psychoeducational documentation with you (if available) and discuss the functional impact of your disability(ies), learning needs, essential requirements of your program of study, and previous academic accommodations (if applicable). Following this discussion, appropriate academic accommodations will be identified, and your accommodation plan will be developed with your Advisor.

For information on requesting academic accommodations following your registration appointment please contact your primary Accessibility Advisor.

Medical Documentation:

In order to finalize your registration with SAS, students are required to submit supporting medical documentation from a Regulated Health Care Professional (e.g. Medical Doctor, Medical Specialist, registered Psychologist). You are eligible for interim accommodations and can receive accommodations while you are in the process of obtaining your medical documentation.

The SAS medical documentation form can be downloaded by clicking the link below:

[Fillable SAS Medical Documentation](#)

If you have a psychoeducational assessment completed by a registered Psychologist for LD, ADHD, or ASD, please bring this documentation to your registration meeting. This documentation is sufficient for SAS and as such you are not required to complete the SAS medical documentation.

The medical documentation provided should include:

1. confirmation that the student has a disability or medical condition
2. the functional impact/limitation or needs associated with the disability or medical condition
3. recommendations of the type of accommodation(s) that may be needed to allow the student to fulfill the essential duties or requirements of their course/program of study.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) can support the process but are not considered sufficient documentation.

If you have other existing medical documentation, you are encouraged to bring this to your registration meeting.

Supporting Documentation Guidelines:

As per the Ontario Human Rights Code, students are not required to disclose their disability diagnosis to register with SAS or to receive academic accommodations and

supports. There may be instances when a disability diagnosis is required, for example when the academic accommodation needs are complex. Students have the option of disclosing their disability diagnosis to SAS. There will be instances when the Type of Disability is required to establish eligibility for specific disability-related supports/funding under the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).”

d. Student leave of absence

From the OCADU Graduate Studies website:

“Although all graduate students must maintain continuous enrolment in their program, under extenuating circumstances a student may request approval to take a leave of absence from their studies. Students who do not register in a term and have not requested a leave of absence are deemed to have withdrawn from their program and from the university and are not eligible to return to their studies.

Approved Leave of Absence:

A student may apply to go on leave if both of the following conditions are met:

- a. a situation arises which makes it necessary to interrupt their studies; and
- b. no substantial use will be made of university facilities during their 2 absences.

Students who wish to request a one to three-term Leave of Absence must submit the appropriate form, including a short written rationale, for approval by their Principal Advisor (if applicable), the Graduate Program Director and the Dean, Graduate Studies. Time spent on leave of absence will not be included in the calculation of time to complete the degree.

Retroactive Leaves of Absence: A retroactive Leave of Absence request must be approved by the student’s Principal Advisor (if applicable), the Graduate Program Director and the Dean, Graduate Studies. A retroactive request follows the same steps (form and rationale) outlined above.”

To apply for a Leave of Absence:

“Submit the completed [Leave of Absence \(LOA\) Form](#) to your Graduate Program Coordinator 30 days before the start of the term for which the request is being made. (You may not apply for an LOA in order to reduce tuition fees. If you have unsatisfactory or incomplete grades, you may not be eligible for an LOA.)

If approved, you will receive a letter detailing the terms of your leave, and the date upon which you will be required to notify the office of your reinstatement. Part B of the LOA form is due to the Office of Graduate Studies 30 days prior to your return.”

e. Sick leave

Sick Leave for Academic Staff such as TAs and RAs is provided for in Article 31.6 of the MoA. If you require sick leave you should inform your supervising faculty as soon as

reasonably possible. You may be required to provide proof of illness or disability for any absence of more than seven calendar days.

f. Pregnancy and parental leave

Covered by Article 31.7 of the MoA, Academic Staff such as TAs and RAs who have been employed by the University for at least thirteen (13) weeks shall be entitled to a leave of absence without pay for pregnancy and/or parental leave in accordance with the provisions of the *Employment Standards Act*. Pregnancy leave may be taken for up to seventeen (17) weeks.

Graduate students may also to take parental leave as per Graduate Studies. From the OCADU Graduate Studies website:

“Parental leave may be taken by an enrolled graduate student at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption, and/or to provide full-time care during the child's first year. Parental leave must be completed within twelve months of the date of birth or adoption. Parental leave can be taken for a maximum of three continuous terms per birth or adoption. A parental leave of absence is approved by the student's Principal Advisor (if applicable), the Graduate Program Director and Dean, Graduate Studies.”

To apply for a Parental Leave:

“Complete the [Parental Leave of Absence \(PLOA\) Form](#) and submit this to your Graduate Program Coordinator. A formal letter will follow detailing the terms of your leave, and the date upon which you will be required to notify the office of your reinstatement.

In order to return to regular status in your program, you must submit Part B of the PLOA form to the Office of Graduate Studies 60 days before the planned date of return to your program of study.”

g. Bereavement leave

As per Article 31.9.1.3 of the MoA, Bereavement Leave without pay for up to three days may be granted, approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. If you find yourself needing bereavement leave, please notify your supervisory faculty as soon as reasonably possible.

h. Compassionate care leave

As per Article 31.9.2 of the MoA, you may be granted a leave of absence without pay for up to eight (8) weeks to provide compassionate care and support to an immediate family member with a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death occurring within a period of twenty-six (26) weeks. Approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

i. Personal emergency leave

As per Article 31.9.3 of the MoA you may be granted a leave of absence without pay for up to ten (10) days per calendar year because of personal illness, injury or medical emergency, or death, illness, injury or medical or other emergency of a family member. Documentation (medical or otherwise) may be required to substantiate such leave.

j. Legal leave (i.e. jury duty)

As per Article 31.10 of the MoA, you shall be granted leave of absence with pay to serve as a juror or witness in a court of law in a matter in which you are not a party or an accused.

5. OCADU Campus Resources

a. OCAD Student Union

From their website:

“The OCAD Student Union is an independent, democratically run student organization with approximately 5000 members, incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation. The OCAD Student Union operates a variety of programs and services on campus at OCAD University including access to legal services, student advocate, campus food bank, community drop-in lunch, student grants, social events, and workshops.

The OCAD Student Union represents the best interests of all OCAD U Students to OCAD U administration and all levels of government. The OCAD Student Union represents the OCAD University student population within the Canadian Federation of Students, and within the Toronto art and design community, the OCAD Student Union is represented by its subsidiary, [Xpace Cultural Centre](#). Xpace Cultural Centre is a membership driven artist-run centre dedicated to providing emerging and student artists with the opportunity to showcase their work in a professional setting.

The OCAD Student Union is committed to ensuring that the OCAD University campus and broader OCAD U community are inclusive spaces where all members are treated with respect and dignity.”

[OCAD Student Union](#)

[Kalina Nedelcheva](#) is the current Executive Director of Graduate Students at the OCAD Student Union from May 2021 to April 2022. She can help you with any graduate student related issues or concerns.

Email: graduate@ocadsu.org

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00pm - 3pm
Telephone: (416) 977-6000 ext. 241

b. [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)

From their website:

“Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at OCAD University supports any undergraduate, graduate and/or continuing studies students who require academic supports related to a temporary and/or permanent disability.

It is best to register with SAS prior to the beginning of classes to ensure you have the appropriate academic accommodations in place, however you are free to register with SAS throughout the year.”

[OCADU Disability Services](#)

[OCADU Disability Services - Info for Students](#)

c. [IT Services](#)

For help with using Canvas, Office 365, MS Teams, Knowledgebase, TechSmith Knowmia or other programs related to teaching, please contact [OCADU IT Services](#)

IT Services Help Desk

100 McCaul St. Room MCA 341
Telephone: (416) 977-6000 x444
Email: ithelp@ocadu.ca

d. [Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre \(FCDC\) – Teaching and Pedagogy](#)

From their website:

“The Faculty & Curriculum Development Centre (FCDC) supports the development and implementation of OCAD University’s Academic Plan and enhances teaching and learning at the university through programs, initiatives and resources that foster pedagogical reflection, strengthen educational quality, guide educational change and support student success in art and design education. We work with faculty, academic leadership and other members of the university, scholarly and local communities to facilitate decolonizing and Indigenous learning, curriculum development and renewal, faculty professional learning and educational research. Our Centre takes a collaborative approach to our work, grounded in community engagement and relationship-building, and we strive to integrate our commitments to equity, access and decolonization throughout the different areas of our mandate.”

[OCADU Faculty Curriculum Development Centre \(FCDC\)](#)

e. Office of Diversity, Equity and Sustainability Initiatives (ODESI)

From their website:

“ODESI is committed to creating a collaborative ecosystem of constituent engagement and participation, and building reciprocal relationships and community collaborations with equity-seeking communities, locally and globally.

While ODESI plays a vitally important leadership and advisory role, the responsibility for human rights, equity and sustainability is shared within the OCAD U community.

Engaging the OCAD U community in collaboration and common purpose in understanding and advancing equity and sustainability is essential and continuous, and OCAD U’s Employment and Educational Equity Committee (EEEC) plays a vital role ensuring progress on OCAD U’s strategic equity and sustainability priorities.

ODESI will continue to develop practices to increase its accountability and transparency to the OCAD U community, including regular reporting on ODESI activities and on information and issues of importance to the OCAD U community.”

[OCADU Office of Diversity, Equity and Sustainability Initiatives \(ODESI\)](#)

f. PROUD at OCADU

From their website:

“PROUD at OCAD U is an LGBTQ+ student organization dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive and positive community at OCAD University. We are committed to an intersectional, diverse approach and strive to provide LGBTQ+ students on campus with support and resources, ways to create art and design, and celebrate our identities through meetings, events, and other initiatives. In addition, PROUD at OCAD U is a resource for students, staff and faculty who are not part of the LGBTQ+ community to learn how to better support and accommodate their students and colleagues; however, emphasis will always be placed on the LGBTQ+ student population.”

[Proud at OCADU Facebook page](#)
[Proud at OCADU](#)

g. Indigenous Student Centre at OCADU

From their website:

“The Indigenous Student Centre offers a welcoming environment with a wide range of specialized services to support academic, cultural, social and emotional well-being of Indigenous students at OCAD University.

The Indigenous Student Centre is a culturally activated space where students can meet, study or relax between classes. We host weekly events, guest lectures, workshops, visiting artists, field trips and a number of extra-curricular activities supporting Indigenous visual arts and culture. The centre includes a resource library and archive, computer workstations, lounge, workspace and amenities including a microwave, fridge, coffee maker and snacks.”

[Indigenous Student Centre at OCADU](#)

6. Additional Resources

a. Applying for EI

In order to apply for Employment Insurance (EI) you will require a Record of Employment (ROE) from OCADU Payroll to be sent to Service Canada. To request your ROE to be sent to Service Canada, please email Payroll at: hri-payroll@ocadu.ca.

To apply for EI, you will need to visit the [Service Canada - EI](#) website and follow their instructions for applying for EI.

b. T4 forms

To access your T4 forms, you would log into your MyOCADU Portal, select “T4 Slips” and then the year.