

School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences

Graduate Student Orientation

September 8, 2026

Western  Science

Land Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.



SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

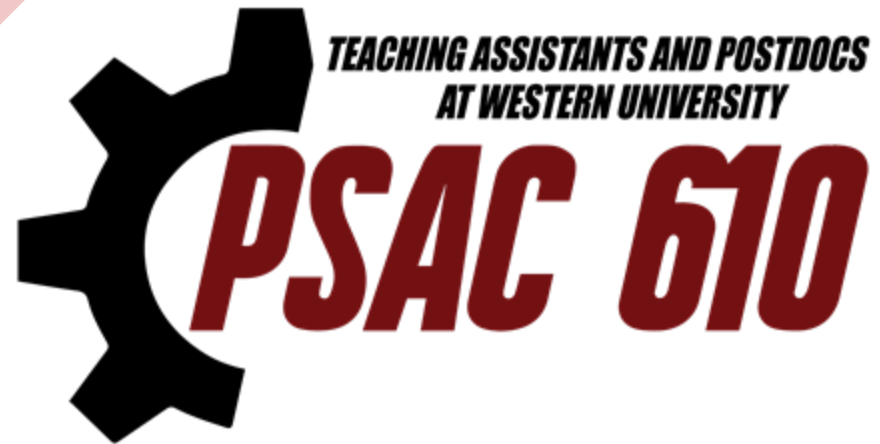
WESTERN UNIVERSITY
MIDDLESEX COLLEGE, ROOM 8
LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

SOGS@UWO.CA | 519.661.3394 | SOGS.CA



@WESTERNSOGS

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16vhQu-fL4-i4eDliBoq_jNxvsQZhXW6j/view?usp=sharing



Orientation



www.psac610.ca



[@psac610](https://www.instagram.com/psac610)



[PSAC Local 610](https://www.facebook.com/PSACLocal610)



[@PSAC610](https://twitter.com/PSAC610)

Who are we?

- The Public Service Alliance of Canada (**PSAC**) is a parent union.
- PSAC represents over **230,000** employees in Canada and across the world.
- **PSAC 610** is a **labour union** at Western University



Who is a member of PSAC 610?

- ***Assistantships and Fellowships***

GTA

PDA

GRA

GSA

GRF

WGRS

- ***GTA and PDA***

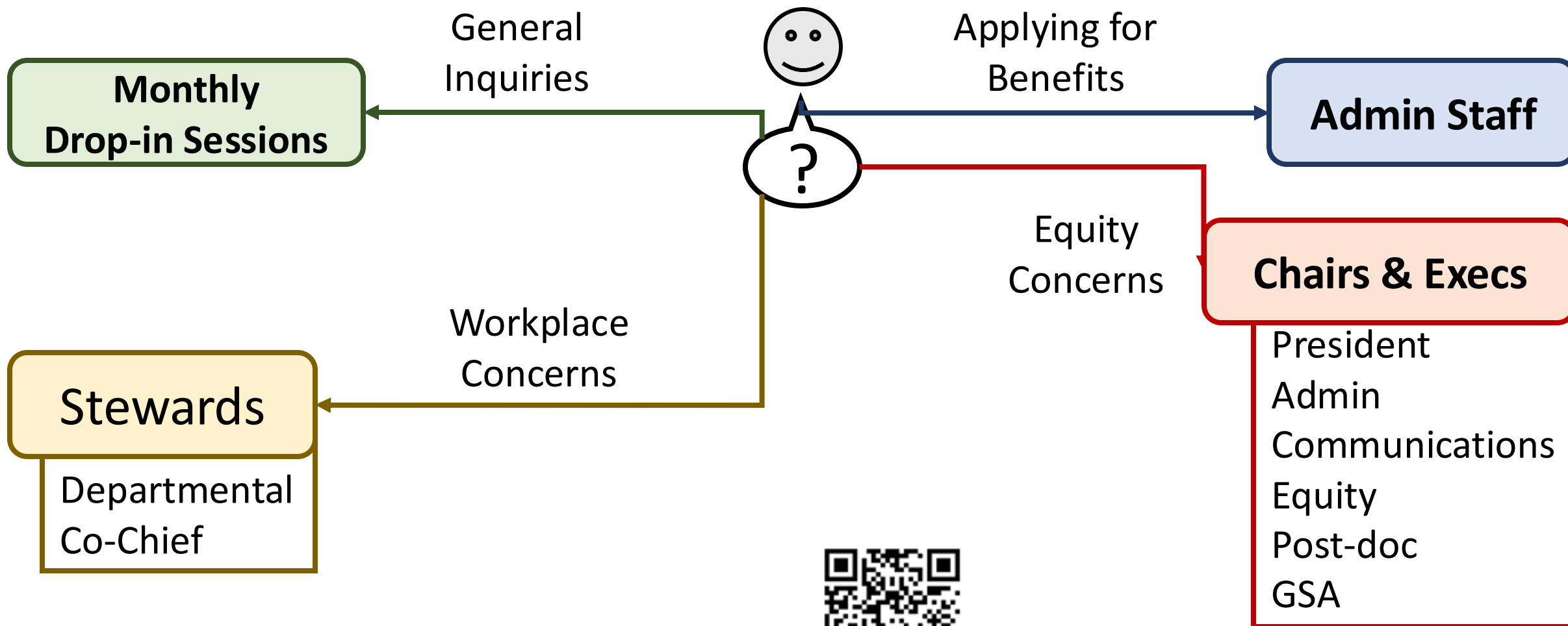
- **Automatically pay union dues**
- **Have access to benefits**

How does the Union support you?

- Union representation in meetings with your Course Supervisor
- Negotiating better contracts (Collective Agreements)
- Providing additional **financial aid and benefits**
- Advice and legal assistance with workplace issues
- **Fights for better working conditions** for GTAs, PDAs, and now GSAs



Want to contact PSAC 610?



Contact info at: www.psa610.ca/executive



What is the Collective Agreement?

- A **legal agreement** between Union members and the employer.
- It is negotiated every **three years** (2023-2027)
- It outlines worker and employers **rights and responsibilities**, including:
 - Wages and hours of work
 - overtime pay, and personal leaves
 - harassment and bullying procedures



See: psac610.ca/resources

Why does all this matter?

- GTAs are paid hourly, so **track your hours** to have evidence to request for **overtime pay when necessary**.
- Overtime needs to be submitted with **advance notice**.
- Use **mid-point review** to revise DSA.

Hour Tracking Resources

As TAs we are paid hourly. Tracking your hours is important, so that you don't work more than what you are getting paid for, and that you have the evidence that you are in need of overtime if necessary.

App

Sheet



PSAC Local 610
Western University
1313 Somerville House
London, ON N6A 3K7
Phone: (519) 661-4137 e-mail: psac610.ca@psac610.ca
Web: www.psac610.ca Fax: (519) 850-2998

HOURS LOG SHEET

GTA Name

Course Supervisor

Course

Term

	Instruction / lecturing / etc.	Preparation of Materials	Presence at Lectures	Grading / Proctoring / Marking	Office Hours	Corresponding with Students	Training / Other GTA Duties	Hours Allotted in DSL*	Hours Running Total
Week 1									
Week 2									

Find hour tracking resources at : www.psac610.ca/resources

What is a grievance?

- A grievance is a **FORMAL** work-related dispute involving the interpretation, application, administration or **violation of the Collective Agreement**
- PSAC 610 provides advice, support, and **legal assistance** for members who experience a workplace issue or violation of the CA.
- Grievances need to be filed within **21 days** after the incident
- Common grievances:
 - Overtime Hours
 - Harassment and/or discrimination
 - TA appointments

What benefits can I access?



Financial Assistance



Extended Health Plan

*supplemental coverage



Mental Health Fund



Food Support

For additional info and even more benefits see: www.psac610.ca/benefits-1

What about Health and Safety?

- Collective Agreement holds the list of your rights and duties:
 - Complying with the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act
 - Access to appropriate training and PPE
 - Remember to inform of any circumstance endangering you or others
- Learning about H&S: uwo.ca/hr/learning/required/index.html
- Health and Safety contacts: uwo.ca/hr/safety/contacts/index.html

Do you want to get involved?



- Become a Steward
- Join a Committee
 - For more info about our committees go to: www.psa610.ca/committees
- Attend union events.



Checklist

- ✓ Know your contract
- ✓ Track your hours
- ✓ Know your benefits
- ✓ Know your Steward
- ✓ Get involved
- ✓ Contact us



www.psic610.ca



[@PSAC610](https://www.instagram.com/PSAC610)



[PSAC Local 610](https://www.facebook.com/PSAC610)



Graduate Student Orientation

September 8, 2026



Western  Science

Meet the Faculty

Given Name

A



Z

Meet the Faculty

Length of Time at Western

Least  Most

Meet the Faculty

Best Looking

Worst



Best

Meet the Faculty

Field of Study

Act. Sci.

Fin. Mod.

Statistics

Welcome!

Graduate Students

MSc

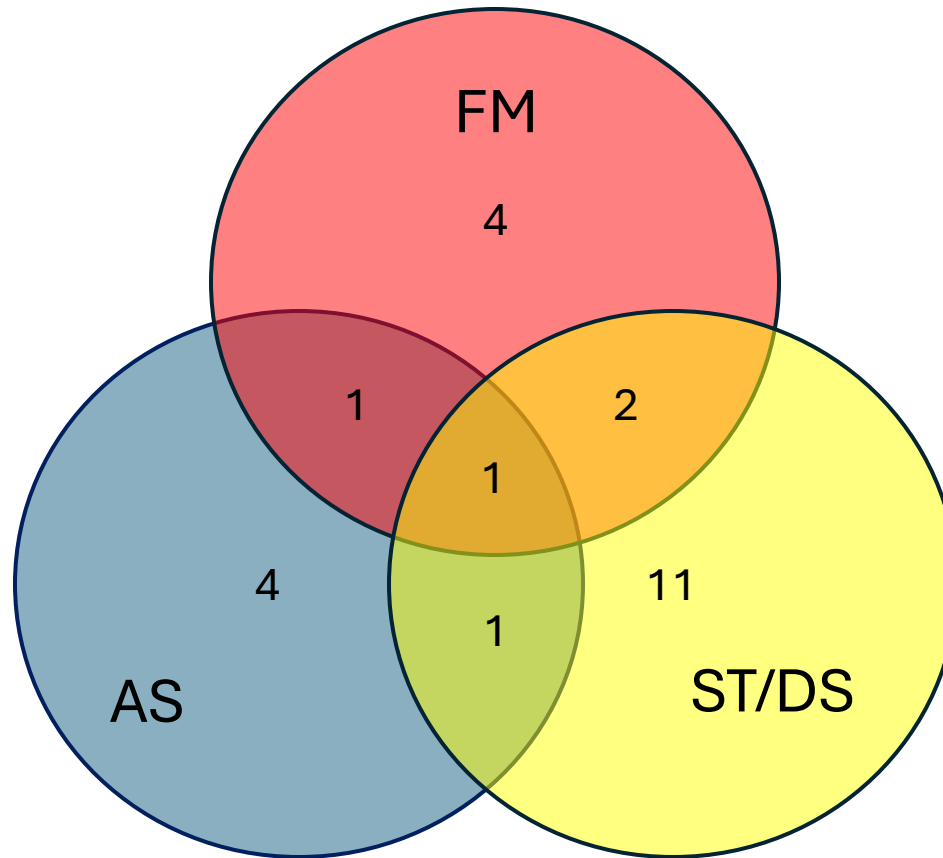
	Incoming	Returning	Total
Actuarial Science	4		4
Financial Modelling	9	1	10
Statistics	4	4	8
	17	4	21

Graduate Students

PhD

	Incoming	Returning	Total
Actuarial Science	1	8	9
Financial Modelling	3	7	10
Statistics	3	17	20
	7	32	39

Faculty



Graduate Affairs Committee



Ankush Agarwal (AS, FM, ST)



**Simon Bonner (ST)
(Graduate Chair)**



**Thao Dang
(Graduate Coordinator)**



Wenqing He (ST)



Guowen Huang (ST)



Shu Li (AS)

Administrative Staff



Jane Bai
Administrative Officer (SMSS)



Thao Dang
Graduate Coordinator

Aron Downes
IT Specialist

Audrey Kager
Financial Assistant



Jennifer Rombouts
Human Resources (SMSS)



Cassandra Schultz
Undergraduate Coordinator

Facilities

Facilities

Laurene O. Paterson (Western Science Centre, WSC)



Statistical and Actuarial Sciences

- Main Office – WSC 262
- Student and Faculty Offices -- First and Second Floors

Facilities

Middlesex College (MC)



School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences (SMSS)

- Main Office – MC 255

Facilities

WSC 250 -- TA office.

- May be booked through the Graduate Coordinator for office hours.

WSC 256 – Computer Lab/Study Space

- Equipped with modular tables, chairs, and white boards.
- Available for individual or group study when not in use.

WSC 263 – Conference Room

- Equipped with large meeting table, white board, and conference AV.
- May be booked through the Graduate Coordinator for group study, presentations, etc.

WSC 277 – Department Lounge

- Kitchen with refrigerator, sink, microwave, Keurig coffee maker, and kettle.
- Tables and chairs. Please be respectful of others.

Facilities

Keys

- Request your key once your office is assigned:
https://uwo.ca/fm/client_services/keys.htm

After Hours

- Buildings may be locked after hours and on weekends. You should be able to access WSC with your Western ONECard.
- Please contact Thao if you have any difficulty accessing the building.

Computing

Computing

Western Technology Services (www.wts.uwo.ca)

- Central campus computing services.
- Password update/reset, Microsoft 365, HelpDesk,...

Wireless Access (<https://wts.uwo.ca/wireless/index.html>)

- uwosecure-v2
- eduroam

Computing

Please read and ensure that you adhere to Western's policies on Computing, Technology, and Information Resources

- Computing resources are provided for authorized academic, administrative, and incidental non-commercial personal use.
- Computing resources must be used in an ethical and lawful manner.

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf

Computing

E-mail

- Please check your UWO e-mail regularly (at least daily on weekdays). This is the main method of communication from the Department, SGPS, and the University.
- Please use your UWO e-mail to correspond with faculty and administrative staff.

Computing

Printing, Copying and Scanning

- The copier in WSC 256 is available to for printing, copying, and scanning.
- Each student has \$30 credit for black & white copies for personal use.
- You may also use the printers in the libraries

High-Performance Computing

- All Western graduate students have access to the high-performance computing (HPC) clusters supported by the [Digital Research Alliance of Canada](#).
- Please speak with your supervisor.

Computing

Emergency Notification System

- Western uses mass e-mail and the Alertable cellphone app for emergency notifications.
- Please download and install the Alertable app.

<https://alert.westernu.ca/index.html>

Academic Matters

Academic Matters

Complete Policies and Procedures for graduate studies at Western are available on the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website:

https://grad.uwo.ca/about_us/policies_procedures_regulations/index.html

Academic Matters

Program Requirements: Project-Based MSc

- Expected to complete your program in three terms.
- Required to complete 8 half-year courses during the fall and winter semesters. Please check the requirements for your program on [the department website](#).
- Must complete either a research project or experiential learning opportunity (i.e., internship, AS & FM only) during the summer term.
- Must present your project/internship at the annual MSc day in July and submit a report on your work to your supervisor at the end of the summer term.
- Note: your official day of completion will be August 31, 2027. If you are an international student, then you will not be able to apply for a Post-graduation Work Permit until after that date.

Academic Matters

Program Requirements: Thesis-Based MSc

- Must complete the same courses but extend their research over two to four terms.
- Must submit thesis based on your research.
- Do not have to present at MSc day but must defend your thesis at the end of your degree.

Academic Matters

Program Requirements: PhD

- Expected to complete your degree in 4 years (12 terms).
- Coursework
 - Must complete 8 half courses chosen with your supervisor.
 - Two (2) half credits may be counted toward the PhD based on previous graduate coursework.
 - Three (3) half credits may be counted toward the PhD based on the comprehensive exams.
- Qualifying Examinations
 - Must pass three qualifying exams on topics related to their specialization in May of the academic year that they enroll in the PhD program (details provided on the department website).
 - The GAC may exempt you from one or more exam based on performance in related coursework.
 - If you fail an exam, then may be allowed to take the exam one additional time or complete the associated coursework, at the discretion of the GAC.

Academic Matters

Program Requirements: PhD (ctd)

- Thesis Proposal
 - You must submit and defend a thesis proposal within 28 months (7 terms) of enrolling in the PhD program.
 - The proposal will be examined by a member of the faculty chosen in cooperation with your supervisor.
- Presentation
 - You must present your work at a Department colloquium or research conference prior to their thesis defense. The Graduate Colloquium does not satisfy this requirement.
- Thesis Defense
 - You must submit and defend a thesis that is judged satisfactory by a committee of experts including at least one external examiner.

Academic Matters

Progression Requirements

- **All** students must maintain an average of 70% in each term with no grade less than 60% in order to continue in their program.
- Students who do not meet these requirements will be asked to withdraw.
- Students must maintain an average of 78% in each term with no failures to retain funding (including supervisor support and TA appointments).

Academic Matters

Thesis Supervisory Committee (Thesis-Based MSc and PhD)

- You and your supervisor must find another faculty member to serve on your thesis supervisory committee by June, 2028.
- Thesis supervisory committees must occur within one year of starting for Thesis-based MSc students or annually by December 31 for PhD students.

Academic Matters

Internal Funding

- Includes Western Graduate Research Scholarship, Teaching Assistantships, and Research Support.
- Contingent on student performance. Funding requires you to maintain an average of 78% in each term with no failures.
- MSc students in the project-based program will not be funded beyond 3 terms (1 year).
- MSc students in the thesis-based program will not be funded beyond 6 terms (2 years).
- PhD students will not be funded beyond 12 terms (4 years).

Academic Matters

External Funding

- Eligible students are expected to apply for external funding.
- National Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
 - CGRS-D
 - Open to students enrolled or applying for PhD studies who have completed fewer than 36 months of their degree at the time of application.
 - \$40K/year for three years
 - University Deadline: September 18, 2026
 - CGRS-M
 - Open to Canadian citizens and permanent residents enrolled in or applying to MSc programs.
 - \$27K/year for one year
 - University Deadline: December 1, 2026 (to be confirmed)

Academic Matters

External Funding (ctd)

- Ontario Graduate Research Scholarship (OGS)
 - Open to all students enrolled in or applying for graduate studies (limited for international students).
 - \$15K/year for one year
 - University Deadline: January 30, 2026
- WSIB Statistical and Actuarial Science Graduate Award
 - Open to students enrolled in the MSc program in statistics.
 - \$10K
 - Deadline: September 30, 2025
- Other Scholarships
 - Please check the university database https://grad.uwo.ca/finances/external_funding/index.html
- Further support
 - Please check the SGPS website for information on [Graduate Bursaries](#), the [Work Study Program](#), [OSAP/Government Student Loans](#), and funding for [Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Matters

Colloquia and Research Talks

- Graduate students are expected to attend colloquia and research talks by students, faculty members, or visiting researchers provided that they do not conflict directly with courses.
- Attendance will be recorded.
- Students are also encouraged to attend proposal defenses and thesis defenses.

Student Experience

Student Experience

Western Student Experience

- Academic Support & Engagement
- Career Support
- Student Newsletter
- Wellness & Well-being
- Sports & Recreation
- Thrive Online

Student Experience

Academic Support and Engagement (ase@uwo.ca)

- Oversees Accessible Education and Learning development on campus.
- Hosts the [Writing Support Centre](#).
- Please contact ASE if you require accommodation or support relating to a disability of any kind.

<https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Student Experience

Wellness & Well-being (health@uwo.ca)

- Health and Wellness Appointments
- Counselling Support
- Group Care & Workshops
- Peer-to-peer Support
- Sexual Violence Support
- Wellness Events

<https://uwo.ca/health/>

Student Experience

Mental Health Support

- Mental Health Appointments
- Group Care & Workshops
- Wellness Resources
- Community support for 2SLGBTQIA+, International, and Racialized Students
- 24/7 Emergency Support (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/crisis.html>)

<https://uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Student Experience

Vacation

- Graduate students are entitled to two weeks (10 business days) of annual vacation.
- Please discuss vacation with your supervisor.
- Record your vacation time with the Graduate Coordinator.
- Vacation time may not be accumulated between years.
- If a student does not report vacation time within an academic year (Sept 1 to Aug 30), then they are deemed to have been on vacation for the final two weeks of August.

Student Experience

Leaves of Absence

- Students may request a leave of absence if they will be away from their normal activities for an extended period of time for medical, parental, or compassionate reasons.
- Leaves of absence must be granted by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/registration/leave_of_absence.html

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships

Your rights and responsibilities as a TA are governed by the [Collective Agreement of Teaching Assistants' and Postdoctoral Associates' Union at Western University](#).

Further information is also available on the [SGPS Website](#).

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these documents.

Teaching Assistantships

Training

- DSAS Mandatory TA Training
 - Tuesday September 8, 1:30 – 4:30pm
 - WSC 240
- Teaching Assistant Training Program (Recommended)
 - Next offered in January
- Further training is available from the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)

Teaching Assistantships

Duties and Assignments

- Assignments will be announced in the first week of the semester and contracts will be circulated by the Graduate Coordinator.
- Duties Specification Agreements will be completed by the individual course instructors shortly thereafter.
- Duties may include marking, proctoring exams, hosting office hours, leading tutorials, proofing assignments and exams, preparing test questions, etc. Be sure you understand what is expected by the specific instructor.

Teaching Assistantships

Expectations

- Your teaching assistantship is a form of employment. You are expected to act professionally:
 - Complete your assigned work on time and to the best of your ability.
 - Treat instructors and students with respect at all times.
 - Communicate with the instructor and the rest of the teaching team.
- You are expected to work 10 hours per week *on average*.
- Your performance will be monitored by the course instructors.

Teaching Assistantships

Confidentiality

- You will have access to confidential material including grades and personal information (student number, e-mail addresses, etc).
- Keep this information private. Do not share it and guard against releasing it accidentally (e.g., leaving a browser window open on an unattended computer).

Teaching Assistantships

Office Hours

- Contact the Graduate Coordinator (pdang9@uwo.ca) to request space for assigned office hours.
- Please do not hold office hours in your shared offices.

Other Items

Other Items

Mandatory Training

All graduate students are required to complete training on :

1. Academic Integrity
(https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/academic_integrity.html)
2. Gender-Based and Sexual Violence (GBSV) Prevention Education: Supporting Safer Professional Practice
(<https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/prevention/grad-training.html>)

You will not be able to register for the second term if you have not completed the training.

Other Items

Student Centre Payments

Please make sure that you review the information at https://grad.uwo.ca/finances/receiving_payment/index.html.

Any questions about receiving payments can be directed to Erin Daley at edaley2@uwo.ca.

Other Items

Get Involved

Graduate Affairs Committee

- One Student Representative
- Graduate Coordinator: Thao Dang (pdang9@uwo.ca)

Social Committee

- Student Representatives welcome
- Committee Chair: Simon Bonner (simon.bonner@uwo.ca)

Society of Graduate Students

- Two Student Representatives
- See the Western [Society of Graduate Students](#) for further information

Questions?