

CUPE 3913

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers at the University of Guelph

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2024

FEATURED TOPICS

What's going on?

- Bylaws revisions
- Continuing status fees program update
- Upcoming events:
 - International members' social
 - New members' social
 - Fall membership meeting
- Orientation week
- Introducing CUPE 3913's new Grievance Officer
- S24 union hours
- Benefits processing
- Reminder to submit benefits claims for 2023-2024 academic year
- Financial Assistance Fund reminder for Unit 1 Members

Learn more about...

- **Appointments for Sessional Lecturers**
- **Benefits:** know your benefits and claim up to \$600/\$1200 (Unit 1/Unit 2)
- **Special discounts for CUPE 3913 members:** car and home insurance, Ford & Lincoln vehicles
- **Student Wellness support resources**
- **Contact information**

What's going on

BYLAWS REVISIONS



The CUPE 3913 Bylaws Committee is currently working on revising the local's bylaws. The proposed changes will be uploaded to the CUPE 3913 website in February 2025 for members to read over and present questions. We aim to put the revisions to a member vote in March / April of 2025.

[CUPE3913.ON.CA](https://cupe3913.on.ca)

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What's going on

CONTINUING FEES STATUS PROGRAM UPDATE

Important update on

Continuing status fees program.

Dear members,

The university administration has informed us that all members who are eligible for the continuing status fees program have been contacted by email.

Please note that WebAdvisor accounts will not reflect the change until the first day of the month of the next registered semester (e.g. Sep. 1 for F24). The university's intention is to review students on a semesterly basis and inform them as the status is applied, minimizing the need for members to reach out or make any requests.

If you believe you are eligible for this program and have not received an email from the university, please reach out to Scott at president@cupe3913.on.ca. Please note that the program is only applicable to full-time PhD students beyond their 12th semester of study.

We have been working hard to ensure that all eligible students receive the continuing status fees program. If you have not heard from the university and believe you should be eligible, please reach out to us! For more information, please visit:

<https://graduatestudies.uoguelph.ca/current/fees>

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What's going on

UPCOMING EVENTS IN FALL 2024

International Members' Social:

This event will provide International Members with relevant information, provide an opportunity to connect, and a space to discuss issues relevant to the International Members in our union. It will take place on **September 24, 2024, from 4-6 PM.**

New Members' Social:

This event will provide a general orientation to New Members, and will provide an opportunity to connect with others . We aim to offer a space to discuss issues relevant to the New Members in our union. It will take place on **September 25, 2024, from 4-6 PM.**

Fall Membership Meeting:

Our Fall Membership Meeting is scheduled for **September 26, 2024, from 7-9 PM.** This is a semesterly meeting that is open to all members. Members in Good Standing will be able to vote on motions and resolutions. We will be presenting our revised bylaws and addressing any questions from the membership.

Please keep an eye on our social media accounts for more information about these exciting events!

FALL 2024 ORIENTATION WEEK

This year, CUPE 3913 will be participating in the University of Guelph's "Amazing Race" event and the refreshments hour on **September 3, 2024.** We will be greeting members and providing swag items. Keep an eye out for more details on our social media pages. We hope to see you there!

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What's going on

INTRODUCING OUR NEW GRIEVANCE OFFICER

In our July 2024 meeting, the CUPE 3913 executive committee welcomed back **Alexis Fabricius** as **Grievance Officer** for CUPE 3913.



Alexis Fabricius (she/her) has worked with the Union for the past four years, first as department steward (Psychology), then college steward (CSAHS), and as Vice President External for the past two years. As VPE, she was an active member of the CUPE 3913 Bargaining Team and participated in the 18-month process of renegotiating our Collective Agreement. Alexis now brings her experience to the role of Grievance Officer and is keen to help members navigate the unique labour issues that sometimes come with TA and sessional work. Outside of the Union, Alexis is a fifth year PhD candidate whose work focuses on data, AI and ethics, though she is also an avid watercolour painter and huge fan of her perfect, grey cat, Bootsie.

REMINDER FOR UNIT 1 MEMBERS

We would like to remind Unit 1 members to be mindful in tracking their hours to prevent overwork. In the case you are over your hours, please report this to your supervisor. If at any point there are any issues, please contact our Unit 1 Steward, Michael Yu at unit1@cupe3913.on.ca



S24 UNION HOURS



For the summer semester, the union will be closed on Fridays from May 3 to September 1.

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What's going on

BENEFITS PROCESSING

With the launch of the new website, we want to address some important information to our members:

- The address remains the same <https://cupe3913.on.ca/>
- Your login is your uoguelph or guelphhumber email address
- Members will be required to change their password during their first login.
- Please update your member profile and add family members if needed

Claims

- To submit a claim,
 - Select "My Account"(top right)
 - From the pulldown menu select the type of claim that you would like to make (i.e. Unit 1 claim, EFAF claim, or Unit 2 claim)
 - Select "New Claim" Enter the claim information, click next
 - On the next page upload your claim documents and click submit.
- We have changed the structure of the benefits plan
 - **Unit 1 members:** the limit of \$300 for vision & \$300 for mental health has changed to \$600 in total for vision/mental health claims and now also includes prescription medications. Members can use the \$600 for any eligible expense and for any amount up to \$600.
 - Mental health claims are now being reimbursed at 100%.
 - **Unit 2 members:** the limit of \$1000 and \$200 for prescriptions has changed to \$1200 for any medical expense currently covered under the benefits program.
- EFAF claims are now being processed through the members portal. We are no longer processing EFAF claims via email.
- EFAF application forms are no longer required.
- **Unit 1 -** please be reminded to ***submit health claims first to their primary insurance provider*** (CanadaLife through the GSA), and be sure to submit an "explanation of benefits" when submitting your claim to CUPE

Please note that we are in the process of determining how benefits will be dispersed according to the new collective agreement, and changes will come into place as of September 2024. Details will be announced soon!

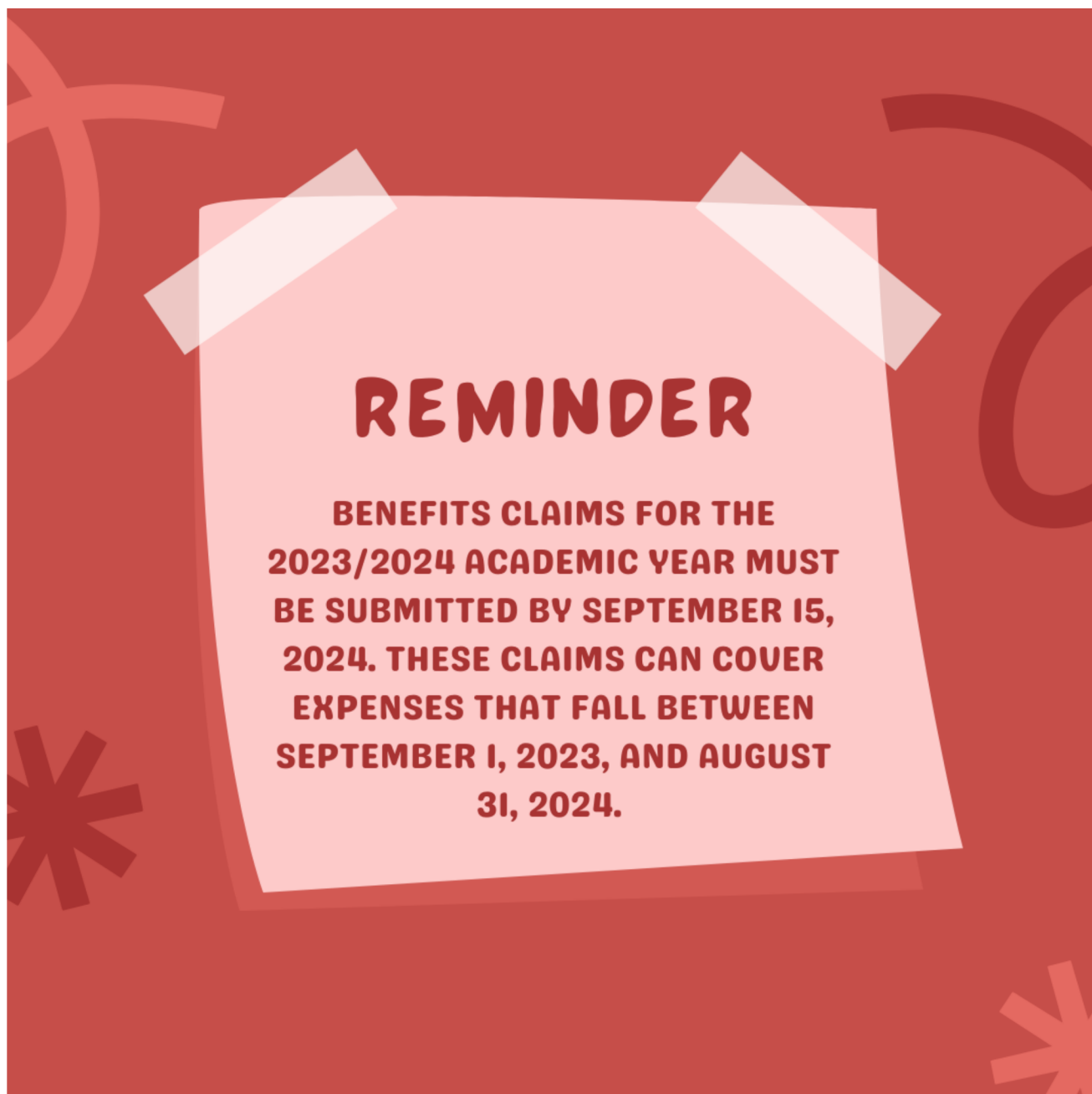
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What's going on

REMINDER TO SUBMIT BENEFITS CLAIMS FOR 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR



Benefits claims for the 2023/2024 academic year must be submitted by **Sept. 15th, 2024**. These claims can cover expenses that fall within your political membership and occur between Sept. 1st, 2023, and Aug. 31st, 2024.

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What's going on

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND REMINDER FOR UNIT 1 MEMBERS



ATTENTION UNIT 1 MEMBERS!

DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS, OUR EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND (NOW CALLED THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND) IS NEARLY EXHAUSTED FOR THE 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR. WE ENCOURAGE ANY MEMBERS WHO REQUIRE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SUBMIT ANY APPLICATIONS BEFORE WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14TH IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED. WE WILL ASSESS APPLICATIONS ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.

Please file claims at cupe3913.on.ca

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Learn more about...

APPOINTMENTS FOR SESSIONAL LECTURERS

We often receive questions regarding appointments to positions involving open competitions for sessional lecturers. This information is general and does not specifically speak to appointments for TAs or positions that hold **Right of First Refusal (RoFR)**.

Please refer to Appendix F of our Unit 2 collective agreement to see how competing RoFR's are decided upon. When there is an open competition for a sessional lecturer position and two or more candidates apply and the qualifications are demonstrably equal, then the most senior candidate should receive the appointment.

As per Article 11 of our collective agreement, before the hiring, a selection committee must establish a rubric for evaluating applicants' application. The rubric will be specific for the position and could include things like education, publications, previous teaching experience in the area, other work experience, seniority points, etc.

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Learn more about...

APPOINTMENTS FOR SESSIONAL LECTURERS

One candidate may have strengths in one area while another candidate has strengths in a different area. On the rubric, the areas would be scored for each applicant. If two candidates are relatively equal, then the most senior candidate should receive the offer. If a lower senior candidate is demonstrably more qualified, as per the rubric, then the lower senior candidate would receive the job offer.

If you believe you should have received an offer but did not, feel free to reach out to our Labour Relations Coordinator, Jeff at **labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca**.

We can discuss your specific concern and we can contact the University for more information around that specific hiring decision. It is worth questioning if you have questions regarding hiring.

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Understanding CUPE 3913's Health Benefits

Grad students have benefits through the GSA; as workers, Units 1 and 2 are entitled to **additional benefits* offered by CUPE 3913:

- Supplemental health benefits **cover the academic year** (Sept 1-Aug 31); **claims must be submitted by Aug 31**
- Members are entitled to benefits for up to 1 year following their last work assignment
- Must use GSA benefits before you access your CUPE benefits
- Claims can be made through our website
 - FAQs re: how to submit a claim online + more info on benefits are also available on our site
 - Questions? benefits@cupe3913.on.ca

UNIT 1 (TAs and GSA-1s): UNIT 2 (Sessional Lecturers):

- \$600 total for vision and mental health claims
- Any expense under the Income Tax Act 118.2(2) up to \$1200, including
 - Dental
 - Prescription drugs
 - Vision care
 - Physiotherapy
 - Massage therapy
 - Chiropractic
- Prescription drugs

EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN YOUR ROLE AS A WORKER? WE CAN HELP

Our Labor relations Coordinator is here to advise you

Reach out to Jeffrey Cornelissen
labourrelations@cupe3913.on.ca to discuss the
issue and get insights into possible solutions.

Some things to know about resolving work issues

The earlier you contact us, the better

If an issue has arisen, contact us as soon as possible with the pertinent details so that we can offer you guidance on how to proceed.

You are in charge of all decisions

There are many ways a work issue can be resolved; we can lay out your options so that you can make an informed decision that works best for you. However, only *you* will decide what will happen.

EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN YOUR ROLE AS A WORKER? WE CAN HELP

One option is an informal resolution

The Union can bring the issue to the Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Relations (FASR) in the hopes that it will be addressed appropriately. We will discuss with you how we will present the problem to FASR to ensure your comfort. Note that we are able to settle the vast majority of issues through this route.

Another option is to file a grievance

If the matter is more serious or is not resolved appropriately through the informal route, we can file a formal grievance (though only if this is a route that you choose).

What is a grievance?

A grievance is a complaint put forth by the Union articulating that the employer has acted (or failed to act) in a way that violates the Collective Agreement. A grievance by the Union on behalf of the member.

Find more information about grievances and the grievance process on our website [here](#).

HAVING MONEY PROBLEMS?



Apply for the Emergency Financial Assistance Fund (EFAF)

Unit 1 members (TAs) experiencing financial hardships may apply for up to \$500 in financial assistance per academic year. To be eligible, you must have had a work assignment within the past year

How do I apply?

- Visit our website at cupe3913.on.ca, login, and under the “my account” tab you can submit an EFAF Claim



Take advantage of CUPE 3913's discounts

Car and home insurance

CUPE members receive a discount at Economical Insurance AND can win 1 of 36 cash prizes of \$5,000 when you call for a quote.

www.nationalbrokers.com or call 905-597-3390

Discounts on Ford and Lincoln vehicles

CUPE members are part of the Partner Recognition X-Plan Vehicle Pricing Program that gives you special pricing on many makes and models.

www.fordpartner.com



STUDENT RESOURCES

The following services are available to students. Virtual, phone and in-person appointments available as guidelines allow.

Student Wellness Services:

*All located in the J.T. Powell Building, on the first floor. 8:30am – 4:30pm (check online for individual services and hours)

Health Services – x52131

- Drop-In Clinic as well as booked appointments with doctors

Counselling Services – x53244

- Drop-in Counselling. Fall/Winter Mon to Fri: 1pm-3:30pm

Wellness Education & Promotion Centre – x53327

- Email to discuss training options and to book a training mentalhealth.training@uoguelph.ca

Student Support Network

- Peer-to-peer support. Fall/Winter Mon-Fri: 12pm-10pm wellness.uoguelph.ca/ssn

Accessibility Services – x56208

- Students requiring academic accommodations because of a disability (temporary or permanent)

*Current information on Student Wellness Services' hours and locations: wellness.uoguelph.ca

OTHER RESOURCES

Mental Health Training
morefeetontheground.ca

Feeling Better Now
feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph

AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES

Campus Community Police
Trent Building on Campus
x2000 or 519-840-5000; uoguelph.ca/police

Here 24/7 Crisis Line (Guelph or K-W)
1-844-437-3247 or
CMHA Crisis Line (Ontario) 1-833-456-4566

Text Crisis Line
Text UOFG to 686868

Good2Talk Crisis Line
1-86-925-5454

SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Sexual Violence Support Services on Campus (Non-Urgent)
x53020, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am – 4:30pm
svinfo@uoguelph.ca

Women In Crisis - 1-800-265-7233
24-Hour Crisis Support for Sexual or Domestic Violence. All genders welcome.

Guelph General Hospital Care and Treatment Centre for Sexual and Domestic Violence
153 Delhi Street, 519-837-6440 x2728
or call x2210 After Hours

Sexual Violence Support & Information
wellness.uoguelph.ca/sexual-violence-support

STAFF RESOURCES

Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

The EFAP is available to eligible employees and their immediate family members in need of confidential, professional counselling for personal, family, relationship, and wellness issues.

Access at any time: 1-800-663-1142 or contact the Manager of Occupational Health and Wellness at x5213

Responding to Students in Distress

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STAFF CONTACT

Executive

President

Scott Duchesne

Vice-President Internal

Kathleen Nolan

Vice-President External

Kimber Munford

Unit 1 Steward

Michael Yu

Unit 2 Steward

Evren Altinkas

Grievance Officer

Alexis Fabricius

Health & Safety Officer

Ahmed Mahmood

Equity Officer

Shruti Nadkarni

Staff

Labour Relations

Coordinator

Jeff Cornelissen

Admin & Finance

Coordinator

Shelly Sarkisian