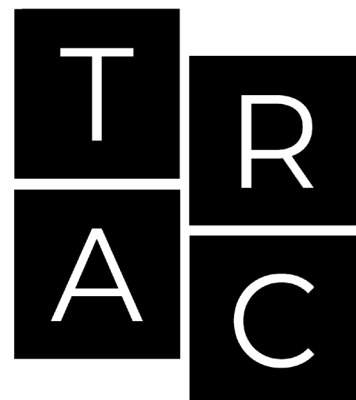


**Everything you need to know  
about research assistant and  
teaching assistant contracts.**



# Research Assistants (RA)

So you've finally been offered a position to assist a professor in their research projects. What are the next steps?

1. Make sure you receive an RA contract – either as an Excel spreadsheet or a PDF to sign and fill. (Some professors may still print out a physical copy and have you fill it in by hand).
2. Read all sections that the professor has already filled in for you regarding
  - The duration of the contract
  - The number of hours you are expected to work
  - The hourly rate at which you will be paid

**TRAC has negotiated a base hourly rate which is listed on the contract as a guide for professors. This is the minimum you can be paid!**

However, if you have previously worked for the professor, or if you have already done RA work in the past and have received a higher rate, you can negotiate your pay. Of course, you want to maintain a good working relationship with the professor because this is critical for your academic/professional careers. It may help to send a copy of your previous contract with the higher rate as proof.

Remember though, that the funds professors pay RA's with comes from research grants they have applied for and have been awarded by governments and research centres - most of these funds are not directly from the university. Therefore, their room to negotiate is limited by their funding budget. *But it is still worth asking.*

If all of this is correct and gets sorted out:

3. You will have to fill in the top section of the contract with your personal information, as well as the bottom section with your signature and the date.
4. The professor should provide you with a copy of the union membership form to sign.
5. The professor will then submit this to the department administrators to be processed by Concordia and get payroll going.
6. Only after signing the contract should you begin performing any research work that the professor requests.

# Teaching Assistants (TA)

1. You will receive a Workload Form by email from the professor – usually as a Word document.
2. If you agree to the Workload Form, you will then have documents to sign on MyConcordia under the TA Menu.
  - This lists the total number of hours you are expected to work on contract, and how your hours will be distributed for each task that is required.
  - It will indicate how many hours of grading, office hours, weekly meetings with the professors, etc.

**Read through this carefully. If you have any questions now is the time to speak with the professor.**

3. If you agree to the Workload Form, you will then have documents to sign on MyConcordia under the TA Menu.
  - Sign the union membership form each academic year
  - Sign the TA Workload Form – this should be the same as the one you agreed to by email
  - Sign the TA Contract
    - This will list the total number of contract hours, the duration of the contract, and the hourly rate
    - Typically for TAs the hourly rate is fixed – regardless of your degree level or experience

**At each step, read through the documents carefully. If there are any errors, do not sign it. Contact the professor.**

4. Only once you have signed all these documents should you then begin to perform work.
5. Remember to track your hours throughout the semester. Our website has different templates you can use, or you can use your own method or apps to help track your time.
6. If you run out of hours but still have grading to do, **STOP!** Contact the professor and explain the situation. If they are willing to provide you with another contract for the remaining hours your need, get the paperwork signed and continue grading/teaching. Otherwise, if there is no more funding available, it is the professor's responsibility to assume the remaining workload.