

# WHO IS UNIT 3?



## RESEARCH ASSISTANTS OR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS?

Sometimes both! The Collective Agreement states that Unit 3 is all graduate students registered as full-time at York University who are receiving financial assistance from or through the University and in connection with such assistance are employed in administrative, clerical and research work. This is what we tend to label GA work.

Further: "For the purpose of clarity, graduate students registered as full-time at York University who receive financial assistance from or through York for research or academic activities which are predominantly for the purposes of advancing the student's progress towards the fulfilment of their program and degree requirement are not in the unit." This is the kind of stuff we tend to consider RA work.

**The distinction between GA and RA** is that one is administrative work, the other research. Both jobs may fall into Unit 3.

What makes you Unit 3 is that the work you are doing is not related to your academic progress or program requirements. And that is a job that would have been created and filled without regard to you finding work, then it is Unit 3.

So, clarify this... I'm working for FGS alphabetizing report cards from the 1970s, am I in Unit 3? YES! I'm working for a prof in my field, alphabetizing her report cards from the 1970s. Am I in Unit 3? YES! And if York, FGS, or your department don't know it, talk to us at the union!

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? WHY DOES IT MATTER IF I'M IN THE UNION OR NOT?

The headache arises when work that is really a GA job description is labelled as RA work. Perhaps the university has signed a contract to give you funding, so why bother clarifying if you're in Unit 3 or not? A non-union RA hourly wage is higher, but being a Unit 3 member tops up your pay, fairly substantially...

- ★ **Benefits:** as a graduate student you are covered by a bare-bones plan. With CUPE 3903 benefits you can get coverage for a broader range of services and can extend your benefits to your children and/or partner
- ★ **Funds:** Access to childcare subsidies for on-campus day care, eligibility for the Graduate Assistant Bursary Fund, and access to the Professional Development Fund (to cover seminars for skills you need or to offset conference expenses)
- ★ **Graduate Financial Assistance:** this is a top up that you get each term you are employed and a member of CUPE 3903. It amounts to about \$590 per term (more for international students) to offset the cost of tuition.
- ★ **Additional funds** through a grant in aid (currently about \$3,200 for a 270 hour contract)



Representing, Organizing, & Activating the Contract Faculty, Teaching Assistants,  
Graduate Assistants & Research Assistants @ York University, Toronto, Canada

Canadian Union of Public Employees / Syndicat Canadien de la Fonction Publique Local / Section Locale 3903

<http://3903.cupe.ca>