



CASUAL UNIT

UNION INFO SHEET

WHAT DOES BEING IN A UNION MEAN?

- **You are represented by a labour union and we are here to help you.** You can contact your Union (United Steelworkers Local 1998) at any time with questions about your rights, your compensation, concerns about working conditions, health and safety issues, or anything else.
 - Many U of T casual employees, including those hired through UTemp, are members of USW Local 1998 (the Union). Your letter of offer will indicate if you are in a labour union.
- You have a **collective agreement** which spells out your rights and entitlements as workers.
 - You can pick up a printed copy from the USW 1998 office (25 Cecil St., 3rd floor) or view the document on our website at usw1998.ca.
- You have a right to a Union Representative if you are being disciplined or fired; if there's a formal complaint against you; if you are in a meeting that could lead to discipline (i.e., a fact-finding meeting); or for any grievance matter you have.
- As a member of USW Local 1998, you can receive weekly newsletters with important information from your union. E-mail info@usw1998.ca to sign up.
- As a Union member, you can participate in all USW local 1998 activities such as attending and voting in union meetings, joining standing committees, receiving training in courses and conferences, and running for positions within the Local.

Union Membership and Activity is a Right

You are legally allowed to exercise your collective agreement rights. Management should not intimidate, discriminate, or take other negative action against you because you are in a union or because you exercise your rights as an employee—that's called "reprisal." There should be no reprisal against you if you communicate with your union; file a grievance or complaint; or exercise your worker rights. If you encounter any of this, reach out to us right away at info@usw1998.ca.

LETTER OF OFFER

This is a statement from your employer that communicates its intent to either hire you or extend your casual employment. It must include:

- the **date of offer; end date** (if known); and **rate of pay**,
- whether the position is **tied to the Staff-Appointed salary grid** (and a position title, if so),

- a **brief, general overview of the main duties and/or responsibilities** (including if they are known at time of hire to be other than in-person),
- a broad, general indication of the **expected hours of work and/or scheduling (if known)**,
- your **supervisor's name**, and
- the **name of your Business Officer or payroll contact**.

It should and be **signed by both you and your supervisor and you should get a copy of the signed letter**.

Regardless of whether you're in the position for the first time or if you are being renewed, you should receive a letter of offer from U of T's Human Resources department before you begin work. If you do not have one, or if there is an issue with yours, contact the Union office.

New Member Orientation

Members who are newly hired into the Casual Unit are allowed to attend a USW 1998 New Member Orientation session that are one hour in duration, with no loss of pay. These sessions are held monthly and alternate between either 9:00 am or 4:00 pm start times. Members wanting to attend an orientation must notify their manager and their attendance at the session should not unduly interfere with operations and management should allow the employee to attend the session on paid university time. Casual members can also attend a session on their own time without remuneration. Members will learn more about their rights, benefits and supports offered under their collective agreement.

WAGES

- Per the current contract with U of T, which will expire on June 30, 2026, the minimum wage for any Casual Unit member is \$18/hour (plus 4% vacation pay), but a majority of Casual Unit members make more than this. This minimum will increase to \$19/hour effective 1 July 2024, and to \$20/hour effective 1 July 2025.
- Our contract also has an equal-pay provision. If you are replacing, filling in for, or doing the same work as a salaried/Staff-Appointed employee in that position, then you are entitled to the base rate of pay for that position. If you are not sure, ask if your pay is tied to a salaried position. If it is, you should also be receiving the same annual pay increases as the salaried staff. Contact the Union office for more information.
- Any Casual Unit member earning more than the minimum rate and not tied to a Staff-Appointed position will receive a wage increase of 2% on 1 July 2024 and 1.8% on 1 July 2025.
 - The wage increases noted for 1 July 2024 and 1 July 2025 will be implemented so that a member who receives a wage increase after 30 June of the previous year for reasons other than a material change in duties will receive a top-up wage increase such that the total of the wage increase is equal to the applicable wage increase for that period of time.

Overtime

- Overtime pay for casual employees begins after having worked 44 hours in a week. Provisions for such pay are laid out in Ontario's Employment Standards Act (See: [ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/overtime-pay](https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/overtime-pay)).

Cancelled or Shortened Shifts

- If your shift is cancelled or shortened with less than 24 hours' notice, you will be paid for the full length of your scheduled shift.

TIME SHEETS

Time sheets are important to ensure that you're paid correctly for hours worked and that your hours count accurately towards conversion to Staff-Appointed status.

- Always fill in and sign your own time sheet with the exact hours worked and keep an electronic or hard copy.
- Your supervisor should neither alter your time sheet, nor ask you to alter it to reflect anything other than the hours you have worked—even if the hours worked go beyond what was originally scheduled.
- If your supervisor allowed you to work past the original hours scheduled, then you should be paid for those additional hours worked.

CONVERSION

Conversion is one of the ways casual employees can become a continuing, salaried employee (i.e., gain Staff-Appointed status).

- If you work in the same position for 18 months at 60% or more full-time hours (FTE) or 24 months at 40% or more FTE, then you qualify. UTemp hours count towards conversion if you meet the above criteria in the same position, department, and reporting relationship.
 - Note: 100% FTE = 36.25 hours/week.
- It is especially important to have records of your employment (i.e., time sheets, letters of offer, duties, etc.) for conversion to occur. If you think you are close to conversion, you may ask Human Resources for access to your timesheets so you can double-check.
- Time in the Casual Unit that is eligible for conversion will be recognized for the purposes of vacation accrual and payband progression in the Staff-Appointed Unit.
- Full-time U of T students do not convert to continuing status.

BENEFITS

Benefits Bargained with the Employer

- **Paid Sick Shifts:** Casual Unit members have access to **three paid sick shifts** each July – June year of the collective agreement.
 - Sick time is defined as absence because of illness or injury (not incurred at work), quarantine, or accident not covered by WSIB.
 - If you have to miss a shift due to illness, you will be paid the wages that would have been payable for the scheduled shift, less deductions. E.g., if you were scheduled to work for four hours on 13 May, but could not due to illness, your paid sick pay would equal the wages of four hours of work. If you have two separate shifts on the same day and call in sick, this would count as two sick shifts.
 - Some casual members may have the flexibility in their schedule to move or trade their shift if they're sick, so they may not need to use a paid sick shift.

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP):** Casual Unit members have access to EFAP for the life of the Collective Agreement.
 - EFAP provides callers with confidential short-term counselling, coaching, and support for all types of issues relating to mental health, health management, and achieving greater personal and workplace well-being. Learn more at people.utoronto.ca/employees/efap
- **Bereavement Leave:** Casual Unit members are entitled to up to five days of paid bereavement leave.
- **Public and Additional Holidays:** If eligible under the provisions of the *Employment Standards Act*, Casual Unit members are paid holiday pay for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday (August), Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

Benefits Provided by Your Union

- **Paramedical Benefit Plan (Effective January 2026):**

The current dental benefit plan will no longer be active and the Paramedical plan will commence January 1, 2026. The paramedical benefit will cover the same services as those available to members in the Staff Appointed Unit: Chiropractor, Physiotherapist, Registered Massage Therapist, Naturopath, Osteopath, Acupuncturist, Homeopath, Occupational Therapist, Chiropracist, Podiatrist, Dietitian or Nutritionist, Psychologist, Master of Social Work or Psychotherapist.

- The paramedical benefit will be processed by W.E. Health, which is the provider for the Steelworkers District 6 health care plan and Local 1998's dental and prescription drug plans.
- The eligibility rules and documentation requirements are not changing with the addition of the paramedical benefit. The paramedical benefit and the drug benefit will each have a maximum total payout of \$400 per eligible member for each calendar year.

- **Who is Eligible for Casual Unit Health Care Benefits?**

- 1) Be an **active casual employee** who has worked in the 12 months prior to submitting a claim.
- 2) Have held an **appointment of 20% or more** (or worked the equivalent of **7.25 hours per week**) for **4 consecutive months** in the past twelve months.

-- OR --

If you work on an **irregular or intermittent basis**, have completed **at least 5 shifts per month** in any four consecutive or non-consecutive **months** in the past twelve months.

Members are eligible to claim up to **\$400 in paramedical services** and up to **\$400 in prescription medication** costs per calendar year.

- **Who is Not Eligible for the Casual Unit Health Care Benefits?**

- Casual employees who are **University of Toronto students** and eligible for a student union health plan.
- Casual employees who have **access to health benefits** through another University of Toronto employment group or retiree benefit plan.
- **Family members** are not eligible - coverage is for employees only, and specifically for **dental and prescription drug costs**.

- **Details on how to apply and submit claims**
 - If you have specific questions about your claims, you can contact W. A. Health, Inc :
 - Email: claims@wahealth.ca Tel: 289-768-3621 Fax: 289-768-3620 Toll Free: 1 -877-207-8234
 - Eligibility criteria, exclusion criteria and more information can be accessed on our website which can be found under *Member Resources* or [found here](#).

Benefits Provided by Your Union (continued)

- Access to the **Lifeline Foundation**, an employee assistance plan: usw1998.ca/lifeline
- USW non-profit dental service: steelworkersdental.com
- Various discount programs for union members: unionsavings.ca

Rights Under the Employment Standards Act

An employee is entitled to take the paid and/or unpaid leaves of absence set out in the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, subject to any applicable provisions of that Act in respect of those leaves, including but not limited to, any eligibility criteria or evidentiary requirements. See: ontario.ca/document/employment-standard-act-policy-and-interpretation-manual/part-xiv-leaves-absence

NEED HELP?

As your Union, USW Local 1998 is here to help you. Contact us if you have any questions about your pay, hours of work, health and safety, working conditions, bullying and harassment or any workplace issue.