

# WELCOME PACKAGE

## 2015-2016

Civil Engineering Graduate Student Association



## Welcome to Civil Engineering at U of T!

As a new graduate student, we'd like to welcome you as a member of the Civil Engineering Graduate Students Association (CEGSA).

We've compiled this welcome package to help you get started in the Department of Civil Engineering and help introduce you to the University of Toronto. We've done our best to highlight the most important aspects of university life, give you information about departmental administration, and tell you where to find other important information you may need. The best place to start is the Quick Start Guide, which lists everything you need to get your research and courses on the right track.

We'd like to thank the Chemical Engineering Graduate Students Association (also CEGSA) who developed a welcome package for new graduate students upon which this package is based.

After you've read the Welcome Package, please tell us what you think, so that we can make it better for next future students. Please direct comments to [cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca](mailto:cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca).

All the best,

Your friendly neighbourhood CEGSA Executive

## Table of Contents

Welcome to Civil Engineering at U of T! .....	i
1.0 Quick Start Guide .....	1
1.1 Pay Tuition OR Defer Payment .....	1
1.2 Get a T-card.....	1
1.3 Set up an Email .....	1
1.4 Set up a Computer Account .....	1
1.5 Set up your Payroll.....	2
1.6 Register for your Courses.....	2
1.7 Pick up your Office Keys.....	2
1.8 Start your Research.....	3
2.0 Student Life .....	3
2.1 About CEGSA.....	3
2.2 CEGSA Executive Committee .....	3
2.3 Events.....	4
2.4 Giving Back.....	4
2.5 Graduate Student Lounge.....	4
3.0 Graduate Courses .....	4
3.1 Ethics in Research Course .....	5
3.2 The Student Web Service / Repository of Student Information (ROSI).....	5
3.3 English Language & Writing Support (ELWS) Program .....	5
4.0 Money Matters .....	6
4.1 Tuition and Fees.....	6
4.2 Funding Packages.....	6
4.3 Scholarships .....	6
4.4 Teaching Assistant Pay.....	7
4.5 Budgeting for the Year .....	7
4.6 Choosing a Bank.....	8
4.7 Health Plans .....	8
4.8 Income Taxes .....	9

4.9	Expense Reimbursement .....	10
5.0	Teaching Assistant Positions .....	10
5.1	Overview .....	10
5.2	Training .....	11
5.3	TA Contracts / CUPE 3902.....	11
5.4	Things to Remember.....	12
6.0	Your Lab, Office and Home .....	12
6.1	Phone Lines and Office Space .....	12
6.2	Personal Mailbox .....	12
6.3	Ordering Supplies and Equipment .....	13
6.4	Ordering Computer Software .....	13
6.5	Housing .....	13
7.0	Food, Entertainment & Attractions .....	13
7.1	Food .....	13
7.2	Entertainment & Attractions .....	15
7.3	On-Campus Activities.....	16
7.3.1	UTGSU Gym.....	16
7.3.2	Hart House (HH).....	16
7.3.3	Athletic Centre Warren Stevens Building (WS).....	17
7.4	Intermural Athletics .....	18
8.0	Transportation Tips.....	18
8.1	Inside Toronto.....	18
8.2	Parking .....	19
8.3	Outside Toronto.....	19
8.4	Provincial, National Travel .....	20

## 1.0 Quick Start Guide

### 1.1 Pay Tuition OR Defer Payment

To become a registered student, you must either pay the minimum installment of your tuition or defer payment until April. Departmental services will not be available until a minimum payment or deferral has been made. Most PhD and MASc students in the department receive a funding package which covers tuition, and therefore qualifies the student to defer payment. Students who hold external scholarships may also defer payment. Tuition deferrals are completed through ACORN/ROSI ([www.rosi.utoronto.ca](http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca)) starting in August.

### 1.2 Get a T-card

The U of T student card (T-card) provides you with access to library services, various athletic facilities, after hours building access, student discounts, and much more!

To get your T-card, go to Robarts Research Library (on St. George Street), RM 2054A (second floor). You need your offer of admission which bears your University of Toronto student/applicant number and one piece of government issued photo identification. If possible, try to pick your T-card in the summer to avoid the long lines at the start of the term!

### 1.3 Set up an Email

Civil-engineering grad students, along with the rest of the UofT students, use an @mail.utoronto.ca account for email services. Once you have received your T-card (see section 1.2) you are automatically given an @mail.utoronto.ca email account. To set up this account, go to [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). Here you can activate your UTOrid and subsequently gain access to your account. This account is accessed at [www.mail.utoronto.ca](http://www.mail.utoronto.ca) using a web-based interface.

For configuration information concerning email clients such as Microsoft Outlook or Apple Mail, as well as mobile phones, refer to the UofT Information Commons website.

### 1.4 Set up a Computer Account

In order to access civil engineering computer labs, you must set up an ECF account. An ECF account is generated automatically for each student and gives you access to the ECF computer labs located in GB144, GB150, SF1012, SF1013, SF1106, and WB255. The labs in SF run on Linux; whereas the labs in GB and WB run on Windows.

To set up your ECF account, you'll need to have your student number. Go to one of the Linux labs (SF1012, SF1013, or SF1106) and type in "getname" as your login, leaving the password field blank. You'll be prompted to enter your student number, family name, and date of birth. Your login name will appear on the screen for about 10 seconds; make sure you copy it down! Your initial password consists of the last four digits of your

student number followed by your month and date of birth. For example, if your student number is 012345678 and your birthday is on June 8<sup>th</sup>, then your password is 56780608.

In order to set up your ECF account for a Windows environment (ECFPC), go to a Windows lab (GB144, GB150, or WB255). Your login is the same as your Linux login and the initial password is also the same.

## 1.5 Set up your Payroll

If a TA and/or RA are part of your funding package, you must fill out a Teaching/Research Assistant payroll information form, Provincial Income Tax form, Federal Income Tax form, and Banking information form. These documents can be picked up and returned to the Business Office in GB137. Only the payroll form can be downloaded from the department website:

<http://www.civil.engineering.utoronto.ca/programs/graduate/forms.htm>

\*If you do not fill out these forms you will not be paid\*

To receive external award payments via direct deposit, fill in your bank information on ACORN/ROSI ([www.rosi.utoronto.ca](http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca)) under Personal Information. If you have not filled in your banking information (or done so incorrectly), you will be mailed a cheque instead.

## 1.6 Register for your Courses

Both Master's and Ph.D. students \*must\* complete a Proposed Program Form. MASc, MEng, and PhD forms can be found on the department website:

<http://www.civil.engineering.utoronto.ca/programs/graduate/forms.htm>

These forms identify the courses you will take to meet your program requirements. Your supervisor/section coordinator must approve your course selections, and any subsequent changes must be approved on a revised program form. Submit your approved form in GB105 before December.

Students can select their "CIVIL" courses by using ACORN/ROSI ([www.rosi.utoronto.ca](http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca)) through the Student Web Service (SWS).

If you wish to enroll in any non-Civil courses, you must obtain supervisor/section coordinator approval, fill out an enrolment form and have it approved by the "other" department (except for MIE and IES courses), and then submit the form in GB105 for final processing. This form is also found on the department website:

<http://www.civil.engineering.utoronto.ca/programs/graduate/forms.htm>

## 1.7 Pick up your Office Keys

If you are a MASc or PhD student, then you will be assigned an office space on campus. Typically MEng students are not given office space. If you are a MEng student and require space please discuss this with your supervisor.

Keys for office space can be obtained from the Student Service Office in GB105. Each key requires a \$20 deposit which will be returned when you return the key.

## 1.8 Start your Research

After many forms, numerous signatures, and a few thousand dollars in tuition you are ready to begin your research! Only 2 to 5 years to graduation!

## 2.0 Student Life

### 2.1 About CEGSA

The Civil Engineering Graduate Students Association (CEGSA), established in 1971, is a course union which represents over 200 graduate students (including you!) in the Department of Civil Engineering. CEGSA is responsible for organizing social events, seminars, sports teams, orientation activities and much more!

CEGSA actively participates in the academic affairs of the Department of Civil Engineering by appointing graduate student representatives to department committees and councils. These bodies deal with graduate education such as curriculum and content, degree requirements, and graduate academic appeals.

As a course union, CEGSA is a member of the University of Toronto Graduate Students Union (UTGSU) which is then a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). CEGSA is represented by three appointed members on the UTGSU General Council. The UTGSU debates issues related to the entire graduate community at the University of Toronto. Information from the UTGSU is passed to you by the CEGSA representatives typically by email. For more information about the UTGSU, see their website at:

<http://www.utgsu.ca>

For more information about CEGSA and our upcoming events, see our website at:

<http://cegsaciv.sa.utoronto.ca>

You can also find us on Facebook by searching “University of Toronto Civil Engineering Graduate Student Association”.

### 2.2 CEGSA Executive Committee

The CEGSA executive committee consists of the following positions:

- President
- Vice-President, Finance
- Vice-President, Communications
- Vice-President, Academic
- Three (3) Vice-Presidents Social

Elections for these positions are held every September. Any grad student may run for a position on the executive. The top seven candidates form the committee and decide amongst themselves which member fills each position.

If you are interested in running for a position on the executive, please contact the current CEGSA Executive at [cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca](mailto:cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca). Full descriptions of these positions are available in our Constitution which can be downloaded from our website:

<http://cegsaciv.sa.utoronto.ca>

The Constitution is CEGSA's governing document which outlines the basic goals, principles and structure of the organization.

### 2.3 Events

CEGSA typically organizes a number of student events during the year. Events organized in the 2013-2014 year included several movie and pizza nights, bowling and table tennis nights, a photo contest, group trips to professional basketball and baseball games, a trivia night, CIV Talks, and biweekly coffee breaks. If you have any ideas for events, please consider joining the executive or sending an email to [cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca](mailto:cegsa@ecf.utoronto.ca).

### 2.4 Giving Back

The annual Civil and Mineral Building Community charity event has been held in 2013 and 2014. Graduate students, undergraduate students, and faculty members donated over \$1,000 each year to bring toys, music and food to the children of the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre; Canada's largest children's mental health institute. The event has always been a success, and we plan to continue our relationship with the centre and repeat the event in future years! We find ourselves in a fortunate positions as graduate students, and it is important to give back to the great community of Toronto.

### 2.5 Graduate Student Lounge

Graduate students in the Department of Civil Engineering have access to a private lounge in the Galbraith Building (GB129) that includes couches, tables, fridge, microwave and sink. Please note that the fridge is emptied regularly and no alcoholic beverages are permitted in the fridge. To access the lounge, you must get a fob by paying an online deposit of \$25 and picking it up from the Office of Student Services in GB 105. This fee will be returned to you when you return the fob.

## 3.0 Graduate Courses

The Department of Civil Engineering offers a wide range of courses at the graduate level. For more information on specific courses and timetables, consult the Graduate Timetables on the department website:

<http://www.civil.engineering.utoronto.ca/programs/courses.htm>

One of the biggest differences between undergrad and graduate studies is that graduate students are expected to be much more proactive and independent in their work. Many graduate students find that the workload for one graduate course is roughly equivalent to two undergrad courses, and some first year grad students run into trouble because they underestimate the amount of work that is expected of them. If you are unsure about course requirements, the best thing to do is to talk to your course instructor.

An important thing to remember is that at the University of Toronto, course lectures start 10 minutes after the hour (e.g. 10:10) and finish on the hour (11:00).

### 3.1 Ethics in Research Course

The JDE 1000H Ethics in Research course is a three hour seminar that is mandatory for all MASc and PhD students in the Faculty of Engineering. You only have to take it once, but you must take it before you can graduate. Watch for the emails or consult the Office of Student Services (GB 105) for more information.

### 3.2 The Student Web Service / Repository of Student Information (ROSI)

The University of Toronto is in the process of switching from ROSI to a new student web service called ACORN. This year, both services will be available to students to allow for a transitional period. If you are new to U of T, we recommend using ACORN from the start. ACORN/ROSI is the primary way to add or change courses at U of T and can be found at: <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca>

Login requires your student number and a 6-digit password. ROSI is also used for many of the administrative tasks associated with being a grad student, including:

- Your final course enrollment,
- Setting up a timetable,
- Elections,
- Ordering Transcripts or Printing Academic Histories (needed for scholarships),
- Graduation Paperwork,
- Financial Account Information,
- Printing off Tax Forms, and
- Updating Personal Information such as Permanent and Mailing Addresses.

### 3.3 English Language & Writing Support (ELWS) Program

The ELWS program provides graduate students with advanced training in academic writing and speaking. ELWS offers five types of support designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers of English: non-credit courses, single-session workshops, individual writing consultations, writing intensives, and a list of additional resources for academic writing and speaking.

All of the programs are free. While the workshops function on a drop-in basis, writing centre consultations require an appointment, and courses and writing intensives require registration. You will receive an email at

the start of each term with details on registration and course dates. For more information, check out the ELWS website:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/English-Language-and-Writing-Support.aspx>

## 4.0 Money Matters

### 4.1 Tuition and Fees

Each year in August you will be assessed tuition and student fees. Tuition (not including fees) in 2014-2015 was as follows:

- Doctoral Stream (MAsc or PhD)
  - Domestic: \$7,115
  - International: \$18,620
- MEng
  - Domestic: \$12,250
  - International: \$39,580

Your letter of assessment will state that “registration is only complete when the minimum payment has been made,” but this isn’t strictly true. Many students in Civil Engineering receive a guaranteed funding package which entitles you to defer your tuition and fees interest free until April of the current academic year. Tuition fee deferral is done through your ACORN/ROSI account ([www.rosi.utoronto.ca](http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca)). If you do not defer your tuition, than a minimum payment is required to be officially registered.

### 4.2 Funding Packages

MAsc and PhD students are guaranteed a minimum funding package in the Department of Civil Engineering. In 2014-2015, the minimum package was \$23,550 for domestic students and \$35,600 for international students. This package consists of a research stipend paid by your professor, a fellowship paid by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and 54 hours of paid TA work. All full breakdown of this package, and many others, is available on the department website:

<http://www.civil.engineering.utoronto.ca/programs/graduate/funding.htm>

### 4.3 Scholarships

The most common way to supplement your income is through scholarships. In Civil Engineering you will most likely be applying for NSERC, OGS and OGSST scholarships. The value of these awards range from a high of \$50,000 per year for an NSERC-VCGS to \$10,000 per year for an OGS. These awards replace your guaranteed stipend but also come with a departmental ‘top-up’ fellowship as a way of recognizing your hard work. For more information on these scholarships, please check out the following websites:

[http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/index\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/index_eng.asp)

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Ontario-Graduate-Scholarship.aspx>

Be warned that the deadlines for these applications can be as early as the last week of September, they require lots of time to prepare, and need at least two reference letters.

You can also apply for a range of scholarships and bursaries administered internally by the University of Toronto.

#### 4.4 Teaching Assistant Pay

As part of your guaranteed funding package each student can choose to work 54 hours per term as a Teaching Assistant (TA). TA Positions for Civil Engineering courses are administered by the Department of Civil Engineering and assigned/approved by the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

Unlike scholarships and bursaries, being a TA is extra work and often takes 2-7 hours per week. At over \$40 an hour most students find it tough to pass up and consider TAing the best way to supplement their income while in grad school. Note that you are allowed to work more than the guaranteed 54 hours per year, however this requires permission with the department through your supervisor or graduate chair. While a heavier TA load is a great way to supplement your income, it's important to make sure you can balance the demands of your supervisor against your responsibilities as a TA. It is also important to note that TA responsibilities are often a part of the department-provided funding package for MASc and PhD students, so if you do not TA, you may not be eligible for the full value of the package. Even if you have an external scholarship, TA duties are usually a part of the departmental top-up amount.

#### 4.5 Budgeting for the Year

Budgeting to live on a student salary is tough for a few reasons; you often don't have as much cash as you'd like, tuition is a large annual expense that's hard to pay for without good planning, and if you're on a scholarship or government loan, most of your salary is paid in a lump sum every 4 months.

Managing your cash flow is the first step to a proper budget. Many students find the "two account" method works well for them.

- Set up one bank account for all of your expenses that you'll use on a daily basis (expense account) and another for all of your income (income account). You should not have a debit card for your income account. Typically an expense account is a simple checking account, and an income account is a high-rate savings account.
- Add up all your income for the year, deduct large expenses like tuition, flights home, etc... and divide the remaining income by 12: this is your net monthly salary.
- Set up all your sources of income to deposit into your income account.
- Set up automatic monthly transfers from your income account to your expense account in the amount of your net monthly salary.
- When the time comes to pay for large expenses, withdraw the money from your income account.

- You've now budgeted your yearly salary to ensure your tuition is paid and learned how much money you have to get through each month.

In order to get through the year, you have to make it through each month. The University of Toronto offers monthly budget sheets and some advice on planning your expenses:

<http://www.adm.utoronto.ca/financial-aid/budget-tips/>

One other key to managing your money is to make a budget early, before you arrive in Toronto. It will be that much harder to budget properly if you've already signed a \$1800/month lease on that awesome bachelor pad you like so much.

## 4.6 Choosing a Bank

If you are an international student who does not have a Canadian bank account, it is good to open both a checking and savings account as soon as you arrive.

All major Canadian banks can be found in Toronto. When choosing your bank, note that most charge fees for holding a checking account (\$3-\$10 monthly). However, some of them offer special student rates that can reduce or cancel those fees. Once you have opened a checking account, you will be given a "debit" card. It can be used in shops, restaurants, to withdraw money, and some have the feature to be used online. If you withdraw money from a bank machine other than your bank, a fee ranging from \$1-\$4 will also be charged to your account. You should try to choose a bank located near your home and/or relatively close to campus so you can withdraw money easily and at no extra cost!

Your savings account does not have to be in the same bank as your checking account. For the savings account, you want to have to have the highest savings rate available; some banks that have high interest accounts are Tangerine, ICICI Bank, or HSBC Direct Savings. Those accounts are normally easy to use, relatively convenient, and free.

If you plan to stay in Canada, you will want to build a credit history. Without it, you will not be able to take a loan, lease a car, etc. The best way to do this is to get a credit card (e.g. Visa, MasterCard, or Amex). You can apply for one of these through your bank or at some stores (e.g. PC MasterCard at Loblaws, Canadian Tire MasterCard). You don't have to use it much to build a credit history, but you do need to pay your bills on time!

## 4.7 Health Plans

As a member of the University of Toronto Graduate Student's Union (UTGSU), you pay a fee each year for health insurance that supplements the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). You can also purchase extended coverage for dependants and spouses. The cost, coverage, and limitations of the plan can be found at:

<http://www.utgsu.ca/insurance/>

If you have medical and/or dental coverage through a family member or spouse you can normally opt out of the plans mentioned above. At over \$400 per year for dental and medical benefits it is worth the time it takes to opt out. To opt-out of the UTGSU plans, go to the website listed above, download the opt-out form and submit it to the UTGSU at the beginning of September. If you miss the opt-out deadline you cannot opt out until the next year.

If you hold a Teaching Assistant (TA) position and work more than 50 hours during the year, you are also entitled to the CUPE 3902 Unit 1 Top-Up Plan. This account is managed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3902, Unit 1 (a.k.a CUPE 3902) which is described later in section 5.3. This plan works in conjunction with the UTGSU health plan described above. Any medical expenses will first be submitted to your UTGSU plan, and then the CUPE 3902 plan. Any health expenses remaining (or expenses covered by neither plan) will automatically be covered by the CUPE 3902 Health Care Spending Account. Each student is entitled to \$300 per year from this account. More information regarding the CUPE 3902 Health Plan can be found here:

<http://cupe3902.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CUPE-3902-Unit-1-Benefits-Funds-2015.pdf>

#### 4.8 Income Taxes

Students are entitled to a variety of income tax deductions which should be claimed even if your income is low enough that you won't pay taxes this year. Claiming deductions in the year they are earned makes it easier to redeem them in future years. Both provincial and federal taxes must be filed, and they each have their own set of deductions. For more information on the deductions that you may be eligible to claim as a student, check the Canada Revenue Agency online at:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/students/>

If you graduated from an undergraduate degree without a co-op term (i.e. you haven't ever made much money) you probably have accumulated tax deductions in the form of tuition and living allowances. Keep track of these because they will save you hundreds or thousands of dollars in the future.

When it comes time to file your taxes you'll get a number of tax slips in the mail from the University. All of these should arrive by the end of February. A T4 slip will show how much you earned as a TA. T4A slips show your scholarship income. The T2202A slip proves you were a student and entitles you to the tuition and living allowances. All of these documents except the T2202A will be mailed to you; the T2202A must be printed manually from ROSI and included with your tax return.

If you are new to Canada or have never filed your own taxes, the UTGSU offers tax help throughout the year but mainly during the tax season. For more information please visit:

<http://www.utgsu.ca/services/taxes/>

## 4.9 Expense Reimbursement

During your time at U of T you will likely end up spending money for which you can be reimbursed. The most common items are travel and meal expenses at conferences, but almost anything can be expensed so long as you get permission from your supervisor in advance. At first you may not mind spending \$10 at the hardware store for “the good of the lab” but after a few years you’ll realize that \$10 or \$20 a month adds up fast.

To get reimbursed for an authorized expense download the “Expense Report/Accountable Advance Settlement” form from:

<http://www.finance.utoronto.ca/forms/processing.htm>

Fill out the form, have your supervisor sign it, and submit it to the Business Office (GB 137). For guidelines on how to fill out the form, visit:

<http://www.finance.utoronto.ca/gtfm/travel/policy.htm>

The reimbursement will be deposited directly into your account registered with the department. One very important thing is to make sure that you have a receipt for every expense. By definition a receipt will always show every individual item you purchased as well as calculation of the taxes paid. Debit slips and credit card slips are not receipts and will not be refunded.

## 5.0 Teaching Assistant Positions

If you’re thinking about pursuing a career in academia, wondering what it’s like to teach undergraduates or just looking to make a little extra cash, working as a Teaching Assistant (TA) is a great option for many graduate students.

### 5.1 Overview

Teaching Assistant positions for undergraduate courses in Civil Engineering are widely available for the Fall and Winter terms. MASc students in their first 2 years of study, and PhD students in their first 4 years of study that are enrolled in the Department of Civil Engineering graduate program are all guaranteed approximately 54 hours of TA work. However, taking these positions is not mandatory - it is elective, and you must discuss the TA position with your thesis supervisor before accepting any position. However, keep in mind that if you have a funding package provided by the department or you receive a top-up amount on top of an external scholarship, these packages likely include TA hours as part of the funding arrangement. If you do not TA, you may not be eligible for the full value of the package.

In August, you will have the opportunity to choose up to three courses you would like to TA. Although this does not guarantee you will be selected to TA these courses, you will usually be assigned to courses of similar background (i.e. transportation, structural, geotechnical, water treatment, etc.). Teaching Assistant positions are administered by the Department of Civil Engineering and assigned/approved by the Associate Chair for

Graduate Studies. Any concerns about TA assignments should be directed to the Office of Student Services (GB 105).

## 5.2 Training

All new TAs must attend a mandatory TA training session held by the Teaching Assistants' Training Program (TATP). A session at the beginning of September will be organized by the department, and attendance is mandatory (and in fact it is a part of your TA contract). Look out for those emails.

Along with the mandatory Safety Training course required for all graduate students, all grad students must pass the lab safety course in order to TA in a laboratory.

If you're nervous about TAing for the first time, or would simply like to learn more about how to improve your teaching skills, the TATP offers a free-of-charge peer-training program for all U of T graduate students. The TATP offers a Fall & Winter seminar series, a certificate program, a resource library (print, video and web) and individual consultations. Their mandate is to help prepare graduate students for the realities and demands of teaching, as well as to provide a peer based support network. You can find out more information about the TATP at:

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/>

## 5.3 TA Contracts / CUPE 3902

All TAs must sign a TA contract that can be picked up in the main office (GB105). Watch for the emails and if you get your contract in on time, you will earn brownie points with the front office staff.

When you sign on as a TA, you are automatically signing up to become a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3902, Unit 1 (a.k.a CUPE 3902). This union is the bargaining unit that helps determine our salaries as TAs, and provides us with the extra health and dental insurance that we wouldn't otherwise have, which is all outlined in the Collective Agreement (CA). You can find out more information about CUPE 3902 and the Collective Agreement at:

<http://www.cupe3902.org/>

For a full list of the benefits and funds available to members of CUPE 3902, please refer to the following documents:

<http://cupe3902.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CUPE-3902-Unit-1-Benefits-Funds-2015.pdf>

Each year, the CUPE 3902 bargaining team must renegotiate the Collective Agreement with our employer, the University of Toronto. If bargaining does not proceed successfully, then there is the potential for a strike. CUPE 3902 was recently on strike from February 27, 2014 to March 23, 2014. During this period, students who held TA positions had the choice of picketing or scabbing. Students who chose to picket did not work as a TA during the strike, but instead worked picket shifts for CUPE 3902, earning picket pay. Those who chose to scab, were able to continue working their TA positions without any change in pay. Many students also chose to stop

working as a TA to support the strike, but due to time restrictions with research work, chose not to work picket shifts. In any case, a strike is something that can happen again in the 2015-2016 academic year, so be sure to keep up to date by signing up for the CUPE mailing list by emailing [info@cupe3902.org](mailto:info@cupe3902.org).

## 5.4 Things to Remember as a TA

- It's always a good idea to speak to other grad students to find out the inside information about certain courses. Though some courses may seem appealing to you, other students who have TA'd the course before may know more about the actual job duties and time commitments required.
- As the TA for a course, the course instructor is required to provide you with a copy of the course material (textbook, course notes, etc.) free of charge (though not necessarily to keep).
- Make sure you discuss your duties and responsibilities upfront with the course instructor. Be sure to discuss things like marking schemes, office hours, and overall expectations for the TA role.
- TAing is a fun and rewarding part of the grad school life, but it is also an important responsibility that shouldn't be taken lightly. Even if you've had some terrible TA's from your undergraduate years, it doesn't justify being one yourself! Those undergraduate students are depending on you to be an accurate resource and a fair evaluator.

## 6.0 Your Lab, Office and Home

### 6.1 Phone Lines and Office Space

If you are a MAsc or PhD student, you will be assigned an office space on campus. This will be your home away from home so make sure it has everything you need to be comfortable. A desk and access to a phone will usually be provided, unless you are coming into a new space. In this case, you may need to help your supervisor set things up. Don't forget to get keys for your office— see the quick start guide for details!

### 6.2 Personal Mailbox

In the department of Civil Engineering, every graduate student is entitled to a department mailbox. These mailboxes are lettered A-Z and correspond to the first letter of your last name. They are located in the main office (GB105).

For business mail dealing with your research, you should use the department address as in the example below:

A. Grad Student  
Department of Civil Engineering  
University of Toronto  
35 St. George Street  
Toronto, ON, M5S 1A4

Try to check your mailbox at least once every couple of weeks. The mail will get cleaned out regularly by the front desk staff.

### 6.3 Ordering Supplies and Equipment

Each lab will have a different system set up so ask your labmates to find out the way yours works.

### 6.4 Ordering Computer Software

If you are thinking about purchasing any type of computer software (for yourself or for your research), you should always consider taking a look at the Information Commons Licensed Software Office (LSO) listings at:

<http://sites.utoronto.ca/ic/software/index.html>

The LSO negotiates and administers software license agreements with many vendors in order to decrease overall software costs to students and faculty at U of T.

Their list of software is not terribly extensive, but does range from your basic Microsoft Office Suite to more technical packages such as the SPSS Statistical Package or MATLAB. Depending on the software, you can either purchase it directly at the LSO, located on the first floor of Robarts Library, or purchase it online and pick it up at the LSO.

Licensed Software Office  
Information Commons, Robarts Library,  
1st Floor 130 St. George St., Toronto, ON M5S 3H1  
Monday – Friday 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
(416) 978-4990 [lic.software@utoronto.ca](mailto:lic.software@utoronto.ca)

### 6.5 Housing

For general housing information and help, check out the Student Housing Service online at:

<http://www.housing.utoronto.ca/>

This website includes both off-campus and on-campus housing.

Some other useful websites you can use find housing in Toronto are:

<http://toronto.en.craigslist.ca/>  
[www.viewit.ca](http://www.viewit.ca)  
[www.kijiji.ca](http://www.kijiji.ca)  
[www.myhood.ca](http://www.myhood.ca)

## 7.0 Food, Entertainment & Attractions

### 7.1 Food

There are a number of places to buy groceries near campus. There is a large Metro just west of Spadina on Bloor and another at College Park (College and Bay). There is a No Frills (which is cheaper than Dominion) at

Dufferin Mall (near Dufferin and Bloor). Chinatown has many grocery stores specializing in Asian ingredients and cheap produce particularly near Spadina and Dundas. In addition, there are a number of fruit and vegetable markets, meat shops, bakeries and a Value Mart grocery store in Kensington Market (near the intersections of Baldwin and Augusta and Kensington). If you are looking for an experience head down to the St. Lawrence Market early on a Saturday morning (at Front Street and Jarvis).

Eating on campus is expensive unless you bring your own lunch, but if you have the money to spend and need a quick bite, then all on campus food can be found here:

<http://map.utoronto.ca/food>

However, if you've got a few minutes to spare you can save a few dollars a day on lunch by venturing beyond campus. You'll get better food and an experience to boot.

There are plenty of street vendors on and around campus, typically with either hot dogs, sausages and burgers (also known as street meat) or Chinese food. If eating at a food truck doesn't appeal to you, travel along College to find a handful of restaurants and coffee shops:

#### College & St. George

- College Q - Comfort Food
- Subway
- The Saj - Wraps and Pizza
- Quick Pita - Shawarma and Cheese Steak
- Prenub Pub - Pub Food
- O'Grady's – Pub Food
- Fat Bastard Burritos

#### College & Spadina

- Burger King
- Pizza Nova
- Mr. Sub
- Tim Hortons
- Red Room – Very cheap

#### West of Spadina

- Caplanskys - Best Deli Meat Sandwiches in Town
- Fancy Franks - Gourmet Hot Dogs

Walk a little further south of campus on Beverly or McCaul and you reach one of the more famous food neighbourhoods in Toronto; Baldwin Street. Baldwin is a block restaurant bonanza that spans a wide range of styles and price ranges served within its 17 or so restaurants.

If you want to walk a little further but truly get an experience, travel to Kensington Market. Here you will find unique food at cheap prices:

### Kensington Market

- Le Ti Cobri - French Caribbean Sandwiches
- Big Fat Burrito
- Supermarket - Bar Food
- The Burgernator
- Meat Locker - Meat Sandwiches, fresh from the butcher
- Seven Lives - Best Tacos in Toronto

If you prefer big name chains you'll recognize from home, walk east on College and south on University to the Toronto General Hospital. At about 4 minutes from Galbraith, the hospital food court has the best selection of franchise fast food around.

Every Torontonians will attest to the affordable, authentic food of any nationality available in the city, and neighbourhoods tend to self-organize by nationality. We have included personal favourites above, but it's up to you discover your favourite restaurants and areas!

## 7.2 Entertainment & Attractions

As Canada's largest city there is always lots to do in Toronto. The key is finding events and attractions you can afford on a student budget. Your lab mates are the best resource to find out which pubs and clubs will suit you best, but what about those afternoons where you just need to get out of the lab or weekends when you want to experience the city?

The main sports attractions in town are the Toronto Maple Leafs and Marlies (hockey), Blue Jays (baseball), Raptors (basketball), Toronto FC (soccer) and Rock (lacrosse). You can find home game schedules and ticket prices for these teams online.

If you're feeling more sophisticated, the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Bata Shoe Museum, Ontario Science Centre, and Toronto Aerospace Museum are all great diversions. What's even better, the first 4 museums listed are all within close walking distance of campus.

If you'd prefer a trip to the theatre, Toronto offers great live entertainment at a number of venues. Ticket prices are higher at the better known venues (which also host the big name productions). When searching online for theatre information the best known productions will play at the Princess of Wales, Royal Alexandra, Canon Theatre, Panasonic Theatre, Sony Centre, Four Seasons Opera House, Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre, and Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts. The Canadian Opera Company runs a student program called Opera for a New Age which provides discount tickets for students to see the opera at the Opera House. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra has a similar program called TSOundcheck for discount student tickets to orchestra performances.

There are also lots of year-round and seasonal attractions that are worth a look. Visiting the CN Tower and Ripley's Aquarium is a great trip, as is Exhibition Place (The Ex) when it's hosting an event. The Ex is especially well known for Canadian National Exhibition (CNE), an end of summer carnival that's been put on annually since 1879. Ontario Place is a kid centric theme park that also hosts concerts and a series of amazing fireworks

displays during the summer. Another theme park is Canada's Wonderland: this is the place for all the rollercoaster enthusiasts. The Metro Toronto Convention Centre plays host to a range of annual conventions, including the Canadian International Auto Show, Canada Blooms gardening show, and various sports and life shows. All of these events are open to the public but as always check online for an event schedule and ticket prices.

If you'd like to make an event out of eating out, Winterlicious and Summerlicious are both great ways to eat at awesome Toronto restaurants at a discount. These two programs promote and encourage residents and tourists to enjoy some of the culinary dishes offered by Toronto's top restaurants. For two weeks in early February (Winterlicious) and two weeks in mid-July (Summerlicious), these top-rated restaurants offer a specialized "prix fixe" menu for lunch and dinner, which includes an appetizer, meal and dessert. In general, lunch is priced at either \$15 or \$25, and dinner at \$25 or \$35, depending on the restaurant. Reservations are almost always required in advance, and you must specify that you are reserving for a Winter/Summerlicious meal. The listing of all the participating restaurants can be found by checking the Toronto Special Events website at [http://www.toronto.ca/special\\_events/](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events/). In general, it's a great time to get together with friends and enjoy a great meal together – for half the cost!

Last but not least, Toronto's Festival of Beer and the Toronto Wine and Cheese Show are good for those with a taste for alcohol. Toronto also has two whisky tasting shows, Spirit of Toronto and Whisky Live that will help give perspective on your research. As always, check online for dates and locations. A great resource for the best of Toronto, and upcoming events is [www.blogto.com](http://www.blogto.com).

## 7.3 On-Campus Activities

### 7.3.1 UTGSU Gym

#### Athletics

- Drop in sports available during scheduled times
- Free bookings during off hours
- Volleyball
- Basketball

To view the UTGSU Gym schedule or make a booking, visit <http://www.utgsu.ca/athletics/gsu-gym/>

### 7.3.2 Hart House (HH)

#### Athletics

- Fall and winter membership included in your tuition, use your T-card for access
- Summer membership is an extra opt-in fee
- Towel service is extra
- 25 yard pool
- Indoor track
- Cardio and weight equipment
- Gymnasium

- Drop-in aerobics classes
- Instructional classes (may cost extra)

#### Arts

- Hart House Theatre

#### Clubs

- Hart House Orchestra
- Chess Club
- Debating Club, Photography Club, and more...
- Chapel
- Common rooms
- Debates room
- Library

For more information on all of the Hart House programs and services visit [www.harthouse.utoronto.ca](http://www.harthouse.utoronto.ca)

### 7.3.3 Athletic Centre Warren Stevens Building (WS)

#### Athletics

- Fall and winter membership included in your tuition
- Summer membership is an extra opt-in fee
- Swipe your T-card for access
- Bring your own lock or buy a locker
- Towel service is extra
- 50m Olympic-size pool
- 25yd pool
- 200m indoor track
- Cardio and weight equipment
- Gymnasium, tennis courts, basketball, squash
- Open recreational activities (free drop-in classes)
- Personal Training and Strength Consultations (may cost extra) Instructional classes (everything from yoga to fencing) (may cost extra)
- Skating/Hockey (Varsity Arena, 275 Bloor Street West) (may cost extra)

#### Competition

- Intramurals
- Varsity Athletics

For complete list of activities and schedules at the athletic centre visit [www.physical.utoronto.ca/](http://www.physical.utoronto.ca/)

A full listing of student groups, clubs and faith associations that you may be interested in can be found on the ULife Website: <https://ulife.utoronto.ca/>

In addition the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (the UTGSU) has a program called Grad Escapes which is a program of social, cultural, and recreational events designed for busy graduate students. For more information, watch for their emails, or check out their website:

<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/Student-Resources/Gradlife/Grad-Escapes.htm>

## 7.4 Intermural Athletics

The Intramural Program at the University of Toronto is one of the largest and best in the nation. With an underlying mission of "something for everyone", it offers a wide range of sports to meet the diverse interests of the student population.

In order to be eligible to participate in Intramural activities you must:

- a) Have paid the University of Toronto Athletic Centre membership fee.
- b) Be registered on the official team list for each team for which you play.

Each sporting activity has a set of registered teams based on Faculty, College, or recognized group. The intermural fee associated with these teams is covered by the affiliated group, meaning there is no cost to student athletes. However, this means you can only play an intermural if you are a member of the team. This can become difficult if the team roster is full or you do not meet the skill requirements. Be sure to get in touch with team captains early in the year to ensure you can get a spot on the team. More details on intermurals can be found at: <http://www.uoftintramurals.ca/>

## 8.0 Transportation Tips

### 8.1 Inside Toronto

For most students the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is the best way to get around the city when walking isn't practical. Students commuting from outside the city may also use transit services provided by GO Transit and York Region Transit (YRT, VIVA).

Within Toronto the subway, streetcars, and buses are all part of the same system and only one fare is needed to use any (or all three) so long as you ask for a transfer when you first board the bus/subway/streetcar. See <http://www.ttc.ca> for route maps.

If you won't ride the TTC very often, buying 10 or more tokens at once is your best bet because the price per token drops from \$3.00 (single fare) to \$2.70 (bulk fare). As long as you don't lose the tokens it's a much better value! If you use the TTC daily, a Metropass will give you unlimited travel on the TTC for one month. You can buy a Metropass for \$108, but you will first have to get a Post-secondary TTC Student photo ID at Sherbourne

Station. One note is that at current token prices you need to use the TTC (\$108/\$2.70) 40 times per month to make the Metropass cheaper than bulk tokens.

If you want to save some money and get some exercise, biking is also an excellent method for getting around the city. Bike lanes have become common place on many of Toronto's streets allowing for quick and safe travel. If you choose to own a bike, the University of Toronto offers a free bike repair service called Bikechain. The only catch is all repairs must be done yourself! The service provides all the necessary tools and equipment, has a large new and used parts inventory, and volunteer staff teach you any repair you are not familiar with. Book a service time in advance to ensure a minimal wait time. Visit <http://bikechain.ca/> for more details.

## 8.2 Parking

Parking in Toronto and around campus can be prohibitively expensive. While there are lots for as little as \$6 per day if you arrive before 7:00AM, typical daily maximums are from \$10 to \$14 or more. This is slightly lower on weekends (\$5 to \$8). You can also purchase student monthly parking passes for on campus parking. For more information see the Facilities and Services website at:

<http://www.transportation.utoronto.ca/permits-2/students/>

## 8.3 Outside Toronto

For those of you living outside of the city limits, each region has its own public transit system – York Region, Mississauga, Brampton etc. Fares are typically on the order of \$2.50 one way with most of the various transit authorities offering reduced rates if you buy sets of tokens or monthly passes.

There is also a weekly GTA pass for \$47.00 per week that gives you access to the TTC, York, Mississauga, and Brampton transit. You still may need to give an additional fare for some of the express routes run by these services (e.g. VIVA in the York region). You will need to take more than 17 trips by transit a week on more than one system to make this pass worthwhile.

If you plan on living outside Toronto, GO Transit overlaps the various inner city transit systems and is another way to get to get downtown. GO Transit is Canada's first, and Ontario's only, inter-regional public transit system, linking Toronto with the surrounding regions of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The closest GO Transit stop to U of T is at Union Station.

The price of your GO trip is based on the distance you're traveling and your passenger category (adult, senior, or child). Each GO ticket or pass is valid between two specified points, called fare zones. It doesn't matter whether you take a GO Train, a GO Bus, or a combination of the two on your trip between these two points – you may use the same ticket for travel.

If you travel frequently using GO Transit, it is recommended that you obtain a PRESTO card. PRESTO is a state-of-the-art electronic fare payment system available across 10 transit agencies in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and Ottawa, including GO Transit. PRESTO uses smart-card technology that stores funds in a secure account, replacing the need for tickets, tokens, passes or cash. All GO Transit vehicles accept PRESTO

cards, however the TTC has only rolled out the system at specific subway stations. To register for a PRESTO card visit: <https://www.prestocard.ca/>

If you're interested in learning more about the GO Transit routes, they have a very comprehensive website where you can find service maps, schedules, and up to date fares: <http://www.gotransit.com/>

## 8.4 Provincial, National Travel

The Toronto Coach Terminal is located at 610 Bay Street near the corner of Bay and Dundas. Buses travel to a number of locations both within and outside of Ontario. Here are just a few of the common destinations:

Barrie, Orillia, Casino Rama, Niagara Falls, Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins, Vancouver, New York

For more information on fares and schedules call the coach terminal at 416-393-7911 or see their website:

<http://torontocoachterminal.com/index.html>

A more expensive, but more comfortable way to travel between major cities in Ontario and Quebec is to take the train. VIA Rail provides multiple daily routes between major cities in Canada and is a particularly good way to travel to Montreal, Ottawa or Quebec City. They provide a student rate if you have an ISIC Card (International Student Identity Card), which you can get from the VIA Rail ticket booths at Union Station. To get an ISIC card, you will have to provide proof of registration and a photo. The card is free for U of T students, but you may have to pay for the photo. For more information on VIA Rail routes and prices, see their website at [www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca)