

Hiring Students

Institutional-Specific Rates

Check sponsor guidelines to ensure which institutional rates should be used for your budget. For some Tri-Agency budgets, for example, you must use rates for each institution where Student Research Assistants will be employed; for others, you must use the PI's institutional rates for all students, regardless of where they will be employed. If need be, consult with research offices at other institutions for applicable hourly base wages and benefit rates. The below information is based on Memorial University policies and collective agreements.

Undergraduate Research Assistants (URAs) at Memorial

Undergraduate students who are employed by the University on behalf of a researcher are non-unionized employees whose rates are set by Human Resources. These are usually updated twice a year in the spring and fall. Typically, URAs are not supported by stipends or scholarships to engage in research (there are exceptions); as such they do not have Intellectual Property rights to the research activities they carry out.

To confirm the current base pay rate, consult the [Student Employment Rates](#) webpage. Note: these rates do *not* include vacation or EI & CPP contributions which form part of the gross costs of employment that **MUST** go into your budget.

- To calculate total URA costs, add 4% vacation to the base, then add 14.1% for EI & CPP.
 - Example:** using the April 1, 2023 base rate: \$17.15/hr + 4% (+ c.\$0.69) = \$17.84/hr + 14.1% (+ c.\$2.51) = \$20.35/hr.
- It is encouraged to add 2.5% per six months for inflation when budgeting, as typically the base rate is increased in the spring and fall. *As long as it is justified, you can commence your projections at a different date other than April 1, 2023 if your project will begin later.* This results in the following hourly wages for your grant's budget projections, based on the April 1, 2023 rate (includes vacation and EI/ CPP):

April 1, 2023: \$20.35/hr	Oct. 1, 2025: \$23.03/hr
Oct. 1, 2023: \$20.86/hr	April 1, 2026: \$23.60/hr
April 1, 2024: \$21.38/hr	Oct. 1, 2026: \$24.19/hr
Oct. 1, 2024: \$21.92/hr	April 1, 2027: \$24.80/hr
April 1, 2025: \$22.46/hr	Oct. 1, 2027: \$25.42/hr

- According to the [Student Employment Policy](#), the maximum number of hours a full-time undergraduate student may work in *on-semester* employment is **19 hrs/wk and a semester is 14 weeks long.**
- During *off-semester* employment, a student may work a maximum of 40 hrs/wk.
 - Additional hours beyond 40 hrs/wk are ***billed at an overtime rate of 1.5x the normal pay.*** Vacation and EI & CPP rates are added as well, as per above.

April 1, 2023: \$30.53/hr	Oct. 1, 2024: \$32.87/hr
Oct. 1, 2023: \$31.29/hr	April 1, 2025: \$33.70/hr
April 1, 2024: \$32.07/hr	Oct. 1, 2025: \$34.54/hr

Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) at Memorial

Graduate students who are employed by the University on behalf of a researcher are unionized employees governed by the TAUMUN Collective Agreement. GRAs differ from graduate students supported by stipends (see below for fuller discussion) in key ways – for GRAships, the most important being that they are not working towards their own research objectives, including thesis or dissertation research and do not have Intellectual Property rights to the research activities in which they’re engaged.

If you cannot find a Graduate Student at Memorial with the appropriate qualifications, you can hire a graduate student at another University directly. They will be Memorial employees and paid Memorial rates.

The following rates are only for students hired directly by Memorial to support your research. If you are budgeting for students who will be hired by other institutions from sub-grants or transfers from your Memorial-based funding, you may have to use their home institutional rates for budgeting purposes. Conversely, you can use the following rates to calculate costs for figures needed by non-Memorial researchers who are budgeting to support your research from their funding applications and agreements.

- Memorial GRA rates have changed with a new [TAUMUN Collective Agreements](#); ensure your rates are up-to-date. The new rates are applicable to wages from Sept. 1, 2022 onwards; the agreement expires Aug. 31, 2026.
- The new CA has not yet been published. We have been advised that we can anticipate an approximate 8% wage increase from the last CA rate. **Therefore, we advise to use a projected base rate of \$24.44/hr for 2023, and increase this rate annually by 2.5%.**
- Note that 4% vacation pay is included in the base pay rate, so you only need to add 14.1% for EI & CPP.
 - **Example:** \$24.44 + 14.1% (+ \$3.45) = **\$27.89/hr.**
- Beyond the expiry of the current Collective Agreement, we advise adding 2.5% per year for inflation when budgeting. This would make the rates increase to the following hourly rates for your grant’s budget (rates include EI & CPP):

Sept 1, 2022: \$27.89/hr	Sept 1, 2027: \$31.09/hr
Sept 1, 2023: \$28.44/hr	Sept 1, 2028: \$31.87/hr
Sept 1, 2024: \$29.01/hr	Sept 1, 2029: \$32.67/hr
Sept 1, 2025: \$29.59/hr	Sept 1, 2030: \$33.48/hr
Sept 1, 2026: \$30.33/hr	Sept 1, 2031: \$34.32/hr
- In addition, the TAUMUN Collective Agreement states that, “[a standard GRA shall consist of 60 hours of work within a 14-week semester,](#)” although exceptions can be made.
- Based on the above hourly rates, if a GRA worked 60 hrs/semester (a semester is 14 weeks), you should budget the following totals for a one-semester GRAship:

Sept 1, 2022: \$1,673.16	Sept 1, 2027: \$1,865.46
Sept 1, 2023: \$1,706.63	Sept 1, 2028: \$1,912.10
Sept 1, 2024: \$1,740.76	Sept 1, 2029: \$1,959.90
Sept 1, 2025: \$1,775.57	Sept 1, 2030: \$2,008.90
Sept 1, 2026: \$1,819.96	Sept 1, 2031: \$2,059.12
- At Memorial, [full-time graduate students can be employed no more than 24 hrs in any 1 week period](#) (i.e. part-time work) which ensures that hours do not exceed the maximum number of hours permitted to maintain full-time status as a graduate student ([unless otherwise approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies](#));
 - Note: the numbers of hours per week is *inclusive* of all GRAs & other positions.

- The number of hours that full-time international students may be employed per week is stated on their study permit and varies from student to student. It is usually between 20-24 hrs/wk.
- Graduate students must be noted as “Graduate Research Assistants”, not as “Research Assistants (RA)” which, at Memorial, are non-students. See [Grant Employee Budget Help Doc](#) for more information on non-student employees funded by grants.
- *Part-time* graduate students *can* be employed more than 24 hrs/wk (full-time work)
 - In this case, the student must be hired through a staff position; as above, see [Grant Employee Budget Help Doc](#)

Research Assistants vs Stipends at Memorial

The work a research assistant does for an hourly wage is *not* normally part of their thesis work, course work, internship, etc. ***Employment from research grants or agreements is not the same as stipend support.*** Normally, the question of whether to pay a research assistant as an employee or via a stipend only arises for graduate students. It is also possible, for some research grants, to pay the same individual using both methods. But it is critical to understand the implications of each method as they are distinct in very important ways:

- According to the [Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration](#) a stipend is, “Financial support given to a recipient of a training award, or provided by a grant recipient to a trainee, to support them while they are working on their research thesis and/or gaining research experience.” Therefore, if support a student with a stipend, you are their supervisor (or co-supervisor) and you are training and mentoring them towards the achievement of their graduate degree.
- Based on SSHRC and [Memorial policies](#) and guidelines, deciding on whether a student is employed as a research assistant or funded as a thesis fellowship/stipend student depends *for whom they are doing the work*. *The tasks and activities might be the same - but the purpose of the intellectual endeavour may differ.* If a student is engaged in their own work, they own the Intellectual Property rights associated with that work (see Memorial’s document, [Intellectual Property of Graduate Students](#), 6.1B, and [Intellectual Property](#) policy). Where a stipend supports a student in their own research endeavours, which are often associated with or a sub-set of a larger project funded by a supervisor’s research grant or agreement, students who are employed and paid by hourly wages assist other researchers with the tasks and work associated with the research endeavours of their supervisors.
- Alternatively, Research Assistants do not have Intellectual Property rights; any IP that is a result of the work they do as a GRA belongs to the Principal Investigator.
- In other words, stipends support work that is considered independent in a way that research assistant employment is not. A URA or GRA is an ‘extension’ of another researcher, whereas student funded by a stipend has a degree of autonomy, and the supervisor acts as a mentor, rather than as a ‘manager’.
- See HSS’s Budget Help Doc [Baseline & Stipends Budget Help Doc](#)