

SWF Questions and Answers

Winter Standard Work Forms (SWFs) are on their way. Will you be able to determine whether or not yours is in compliance with the Collective Agreement? Every semester faculty find out, too late, that they have signed off on a SWF that warranted further discussion with their Associate Deans or should have been referred to the Workload Monitoring Group (WMG). Below is a handy guide to help you catch potential errors in your SWF and answer questions you might have before you sign off on your winter workload.

The Collective Agreement: Your Best Protection

Always keep your contract handy. While not available at the moment, the Collective Agreement for 2014-2017 will eventually be available online. There will be no hard copies. In the meantime, the most recent [Collective Agreement](#) will provide you with the information you need to decipher your SWF for the coming semester. **Article 11: Workload** covers all aspects of your teaching workload. Take the time to read Article 11, and any clouds of mystery surrounding the SWF will soon dissipate! However, let's start with the basics.

What is a SWF?

The SWF is used to calculate each teacher's workload. Article 11 of the Collective Agreement explains the formula and its application in detail.

Who gets a SWF?

Only full-time professors and full-time instructors are issued SWFs. Full-time counselors and librarians who are assigned teaching hours receive letters detailing how their teaching hours are calculated. In any case, all workloads should adhere to the provisions of Article 11 [11.01 A].

Although sessional, partial-load and part-time faculty members are paid on an hourly basis and are not issued SWFs, their workloads should meet the provisions and not be unreasonable [11.05].

When are SWFs issued?

SWFs are to be issued not later than six (6) weeks prior to the beginning of the period covered by the timetable, excluding holidays and vacations [11.02 A 1 (a)].

The supervisor must discuss the SWF with the teacher before it is issued [11.02 A 1 (a)].

How much time do I have to review my SWF?

You have five (5) working days from the date of receipt of your SWF to examine, sign, and submit it to your supervisor.

You may discuss your SWF with anyone you choose, including your colleagues, stewards, or members of the WMG. This type of discussion can be particularly useful in determining if you are being treated equitably in comparison to others in your work area.

What should I look for?

To determine if your current workload is truly reflected on your SWF, take a careful look at your latest SWF and consider the following questions:

a) Examine the section dealing with assigned teaching hours.

- Does it reflect the number of courses and sections you are actually teaching?
- Does the number of students listed under class size reflect the number of students actually registered in your class?
- Is there anything unusual about your workload that might merit/require special consideration under Article 11.01 G 2 which deals with “atypical circumstances”?

b) Examine the section dealing with complementary functions.

- Does it reflect all your additional work, including, mentoring, serving as course lead, attending regularly-scheduled faculty and committee meetings?

c) If you answered “no” to any of these questions and want some help in recalculating your SWF, contact your steward. *Please consider “Referral to the WMG” the default position when you’re not sure if your SWF is legal.*

How is a SWF calculated?

Your workload is calculated on the following factors [11.01 B 1]:

- teaching contact hours [11.01 B 2 and C]
- attributed hours for preparation [11.01 D 1 and D 2]
- attributed hours for evaluation and feedback [11.01E 1 and E 2]
- attributed hours for complementary functions. [11.01 F]
- atypical circumstances [11.01 G 2]

How do I calculate teaching contact hours?

Your SWF should accurately reflect your teaching load. Each course and section should be listed separately. Prior to the contract ratified on September 23, 2014, your course preparation numbers were limited to no more than four (4) different courses or six (6) different sections in a given week. The new agreement removes the cap on the number of sections, but check carefully, regardless, to see that the section numbers don’t put you in an overtime position. Your supervisor must ask for your consent before assigning you to do any work in excess of these limits [11.01 D 2].

The maximum contact hours per week for a teacher in a post-secondary program is eighteen (18). For a teacher not in a post-secondary program, twenty (20) is the limit [11.01 I].

How do I calculate attributed preparation time?

Multiply your assigned teaching contact hours by the preparation factor [11.01 D 1 and 11.01 D 3 (i) to (ix)].

How do I determine the preparation factor?

Each course you teach is classified according to your experience in teaching it, whether it is an additional section of the course you are teaching concurrently, or whether it is a continuous-intake program.

“New” – 1:1.10

A “New” course is the first section of a course you have never taught before, or are teaching for the first time since a major revision.

“Established A” – 1:0.85

An “Established A” course is the first section of a course you have taught before, but not in the previous three years.

“Established B” – 1:0.60

An “Established B” course is the first section of a course you have taught within the last three years.

“Repeat A” – 1:0.45

A “Repeat A” course is any of the subsequent sections of a course you are teaching in the same semester, taught to students in a different year or in a different program. If the students in your section are not all from the same year and same program, Repeat A is to be used.

“Repeat B” – 1:0.35

A “Repeat B” course is any of the subsequent sections of a course you are teaching in the same semester, taught to students in the same year and program.

“Special A” and “Special B”

“Special A” and “Special B” courses are continuous-intake courses or courses in which the objectives describe the students’ application of knowledge in actual work settings. See the Collective Agreement for the ratios [11.01 D 3 (vii) and (viii)].

How do I calculate the attributed hours for evaluation and feedback?

Multiply the assigned teaching contact hours by the class size and the evaluation factor [11.01 E 1].

How do I determine the evaluation factor?

Hours for evaluation and feedback are based on the method of evaluation being used. Three types are identified in the workload formula, but it is also possible to have a blended evaluation factor if more than one type is used.

“Essay or project” (Ratio: 1:0.030 per student)

“Essay or project” Involves marking essays, essay-type assignments or tests, projects, or student performance based on behavioral assessments [11.01 E 2 (i)]. Students’ performance based on behavioural assessment includes such techniques as presentations in class which the professor then further assesses after the class.

“Routine or assisted” (Ratio: 1:0.015 per student)

Involves the grading of short answer tests or the use of mechanical marking assistance or marking assistants [11.01 E 2 (ii)].

“In-process” (Ratio: 1:0.0092 per student)

Means that the evaluation is performed entirely within the teaching contact hour [11.01 E 2 (iii)].

What is the factor if I do a combination of evaluation types?

The Collective Agreement allows for mixed evaluation types. When you discuss this with your supervisor, make sure that the mixed factor gives you enough time to do all the marking. For example, if you do essay marking and decide to add on some Scantron tests without reducing the amount of essay marking, do not accept a mixed evaluation type [11.01 E 2 (iv)].

What do I do if my attributed hours for preparation and evaluation do not reflect the actual amount of time I spend on these activities?

Talk to your colleagues. They may have a similar problem. Talk to your supervisor about the extra work and request additional time on your SWF, which falls under Article 11.01 G2 (atypical circumstances), or a reduction of your workload. If your supervisor does not agree, log your workload (such as marking and meetings) for the semester. Write down how much time you actually spend marking, performing committee work, and so on. Later in the same semester or the following semester, you will have actual figures with which to argue your case before your supervisor and possibly before the Workload Monitoring Group.

What are the various limits to my workload?

The maximum limits to your workload are:

- 10-month academic year [11.03]
- 12 consecutive months of teaching in a continuous-intake program, followed by at least one month’s vacation [15]
- 36 teaching weeks / academic year for post-secondary faculty [11.01 B 1]
- 38 teaching weeks / academic year for non-post-secondary faculty [11.01 B 1]
- 18 TCH (Teaching Contact Hours) / week for post-secondary faculty (648 TCH / academic year) [11.01 I]
- 20 TCH / week for non-post-secondary faculty (760 TCH / Academic year) [11.01 I]
- 180 contact days / academic year (10 months) for post-secondary faculty [11.01 K 1]
- 190 contact days / academic year (10 months) for non-post-secondary faculty [11.01 K 1]
- 44 hours / week for total workload [11.01 B1]
- 8 hour teaching day [11.01 L 1]
- You may exceed no more than one TCH / week; or three (3) total workload hours / week. In other words, you may not be assigned more than 47 hours total workload / week (i.e. 44 hours maximum + 3 hours maximum overtime = 47 hours).
- Overtime is voluntary, not obligatory. [11.01J 1]
- The College cannot assign overtime to probationary professors.

The minimum limits to your workload are:

- 4 hours for routine out-of-class assistance to individual students and 2 hours for normal administrative tasks
 - These two limits are minimums; if your workload requires more than this minimum amount, ask for more. [11.01 F]
- 12 hours between end of one work day and start of next [11.01L 3], wherever possible
- 10 days of professional development, including at least five uninterrupted days.
 - These PD days must fit in the 10-month academic year, along with your teaching workload.

I really don't want any overtime. What can I do?

Article 11.01J1 indicates that all overtime work “shall be voluntary.” Therefore, if you really don't want any overtime work, you can indicate in a memo to your supervisor that until such time as you indicate otherwise, you do not wish any overtime work. You should mention your wish to refuse overtime at your meeting with your supervisor to discuss your workload for the coming term. Also, each time you are issued a SWF, sign and return it to your supervisor with a note in the section “*Faculty Member's Comments*” saying, “*I do not wish to receive any overtime work in this period.*”

By clarifying your wishes regarding overtime before the start of the teaching term, you are far less likely to fall victim to the manager who habitually lists unrealistic class sizes in your initial SWF, then overloads your classes during registration, and finally issues you a revised SWF, 10 days into the term, whose ‘real’ numbers take you into unwanted overtime. Of course, your manager may choose to ignore your request, but you can then take your complaint to the Workload Monitoring Group.

What are complementary functions?

Each full-time teacher is given a **minimum** of six (6) hours for routine out-of-class assistance to individual students and normal administrative tasks. You decide how and where you will use this time [11.01 F].

The college may assign any other functions appropriate to the professional role of the teacher. These can include attending regular meetings, working on committees, doing curriculum development, or performing coordinating duties, or even specialized tasks like setting up a lab or working with special-needs students. If your supervisor asks you to do something, it should appear on your SWF.

Can I be asked to have office hours?

Office hours are not obligatory unless they appear on your SWF as an additional complementary function on an hour-for-hour basis. They are not part of the minimum six complementary hours.

What should I do if I disagree with my workload assignment?

First, sign your SWF, making appropriate comments in the space marked “*Faculty Member's Comments*”, and placing a check mark in the box labelled “*Proposed Workload Referred to*

the Workload Monitoring Group” [11.02 A 3 & 4]. (If you need more space for comments, attach a separate sheet.) Your steward can assist you with the wording. Be brief. Submit this document to your supervisor within 5 working days of receipt of the SWF.

What do I do if I have signed my SWF but during the semester find that the SWF does not adequately reflect my workload?

Discuss the SWF with your supervisor. If you present your arguments clearly, you may be able to convince your supervisor to make changes [11.02A 6 (a)]. The discussion should take place within 14 days of your becoming aware of the unacceptable circumstances. (The “circumstances” could be the SWF you have received or a change in your workload such that your SWF no longer reflects your actual workload.) Your supervisor must provide a response to your complaint within 7 days of your discussion.

If your supervisor does not settle the matter to your satisfaction and issue a new SWF containing the appropriate changes, refer the unsatisfactory SWF to the Workload Monitoring Group, in writing, within 7 days of your supervisor’s response.

What happens if I don’t sign my SWF?

If you do not sign your SWF, it is assumed you are in agreement with your assigned workload. It will only go the Workload Monitoring Group if you check the box labelled: “Proposed Workload Referred to the Workload Monitoring Group” [11.02 A 4] or if a member of the WMG requests it. It’s a good idea to send all your SWFs to the WMG “for review.” Your union reps may spot anomalies that you overlooked.

What happens after I check off the box marked “Proposed Workload Referred to the Workload Monitoring Group”?

Your SWF will be sent to the Workload Monitoring Group. The WMG will meet “where feasible” within one (1) week of the receipt of your complaint to discuss your SWF [11.02 D 1]. You may back up your complaint with a written argument of your position and/or the WMG may call upon you to present your position in person. When the WMG reaches an agreement, its decision is binding [11.02D 5].

What happens if the Workload Monitoring Group can’t reach an agreement?

If the WMG can’t settle the matter, you will be contacted. You may then refer your SWF to the Workload Resolution Arbitrator [11.02 E 1]. A meeting will be set up within two (2) weeks of the referral [11.01 F 5], and the WRA has ten (10) working days to issue a written award [11.01 F 6]. (In reality, a backlog of referrals and a lack of available arbitrators may result in a delay in the hearing of your case.) The WRA’s decision is final [11.01 F 8].

What do I do during my non-teaching periods?

These periods are reserved for complementary functions and professional development [11.01 B 1]. You and your supervisor will agree on the activities. The agreement is not recorded in writing or scheduled, “subject to the requirement to meet appropriate deadlines established by the College.” [11.01G1] Anything you do during this time is by mutual consent [11.08].

Do I have to do my work on campus?

No. As long as you conduct your classes and meet appropriate deadlines, you decide where you will work [11.01 G 1].

Questions and Comments

Please speak with your steward or one of the Local Executive officers, or email the Local at opseu240@gmail.com if you have any questions about your workload or SWF.

As well, let us know if there are any other questions you'd like to see answered in this document.

- ✓ *Many thanks to OPSEU Locals 125 (Lambton College union local) and Local 560 (Seneca College union local) for preparing the information in this document.*