



AUAFA Faculty Handbook

Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association

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Board of Governors

Our Collective Agreement is between the AUArts Board of Governors and AUAFA. While most of the Governors are external, two voting members are part of the Faculty Association.

- External Governors (10)
- President and CEO (of AUArts)
- General Faculties Council Representative (voting Faculty member elected by General Faculties Council)
- AUAFA Board of Governors' Representative (voting Faculty member elected by AUAFA)
- Non-Academic Staff Representative (elected by AUPE)
- Student Representatives (2) (elected by AUASA)
- University Secretary

Management Exempt

Sometimes referred to as “the Administration”, these are authorized staff acting as the employer on behalf of the Board of Governors. Note that School Directors are members of AUAFA and are not included in this list.

- President
- Vice-President
- Directors / Executive Directors
- Deans (even if they have teaching appointments)
- Registrar

- Student Recruitment Operations Coordinator
- Academic Administration Coordinator – Academic Affairs
- Accounting Coordinator
- Accounts Payable Coordinator
- Audio Visual Technician
- Library Technical Services Coordinator
- Public Services Coordinator – Library
- Reference + Learning Services Specialist
- Indigenous Coordinator
- Accounting Clerk/ Cashier – Bookstore
- Cashier/ Accounting Assistant - Finance
- Receiving/ Distribution Clerk
- Program Assistant – Continuing Education
- Student Affairs Assistant
- Library Assistant
- Bookstore Cashier
- Receptionist

Non-unionized AUArts Employees and Community Members

General

- Continuing Education or Non-Credit Instructors
- Visiting Artists, Designers, and Lecturers (not to be confused with Visiting Faculty)
- Teaching and Research Assistants

Who is AUAFA?

The Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association (AUAFA) is the union representing more than 100 faculty or academic staff members at AUArts. The Association was formed in 1985 as ACAFA (Alberta College of Art Faculty Association), and subsequently as ACADFA (Alberta College of Art & Design Faculty Association) with the mandate of protecting the rights and improving the working conditions of its members. It continues today as the sole bargaining agent for its members and as their channel in the complaint process.

The Faculty Association is supported by an Executive Board that is elected by the membership and is assisted by an Office Manager. The Executive Board's activities are guided by our [Constitution and Bylaws](#) and our [Policies and Procedures](#).

AUAFA is recognized and mandated by the [Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act](#) (PSLA) as an academic staff association:

Academic staff associations

85(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall by order establish an academic staff association for each public post-secondary institution other than the Banff Centre.

(2) Each academic staff association is a corporation with the name given to it by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and consists of the academic staff members of the public post-secondary institution.

Find information at <https://auafa.ca>. The Resources and FAQ pages are especially helpful.

Who at AUArts is part of the Faculty Association?

Faculty or Academic Staff

Faculty Appointments are in one of the following categories and in one of the following classifications:

- Categories of Employment
 - Permanent Faculty
 - Limited Term Appointment (LTA) Faculty
 - Sessional Faculty
- Classifications
 - Teaching Faculty
 - Non-teaching Faculty (Counsellor(s), Librarian(s), Curator(s))
 - Visiting Faculty (not to be confused with Visiting Artists, Designers, and Lecturers)

See Article 8 of the [Collective Agreement](#) for more information.

Each year, there are approximately 100-110 Faculty members. The head count for Sessionals is usually greater than 50% of the total membership but the number of courses taught by Sessionals is 40% or less. See Article 8.02 c) of the [Collective Agreement](#).

Teaching Faculty may be employed in the following Schools which support the following degrees and concentrations:

Appendix A: Who at AUArts is *not* part of the Faculty Association?

Non-Academic Staff are unionized under the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE)

- Strategic Lead - Alumni Engagement
- Program Developer - Continuing Education
- Curriculum Specialist – Continuing Education
- Assistant Registrar
- Community Engagement Strategist
- Educational Art Technicians – Ceramics; Digital, Electronic, Fabrication; Fibre; Fine Arts; Exhibitions Preparator; Glass; Jewellery; Print Media; Sculpture
- Information + Business Analyst
- Woodshop Technician
- Audio Visual Resources Technician Lead
- Business Process Analyst
- Computer Technician Media Arts
- Computer Technician
- Digital Media Technician – IOLAB
- Digital Media Technician – Web
- Exhibition + Programs Coordinator
- Financial Aid + Student Awards Advisor
- Gifts Administrator
- Recruitment + Admissions Officer
- Intermediate Accountant
- Student Academic Advisor

Association. AUAFA has wide latitude to determine whether a grievance is warranted, and once submitted, whether to continue pursuing it. However, it is our duty to investigate and to act in good faith in making our decisions.

Bachelor of Arts – Creative Industries (forthcoming)

School of Critical and Creative Studies
Concentration in Game Design (forthcoming)
Minor in Critical and Creative Studies

Bachelor of Fine Arts

School of Craft and Emerging Media
Concentrations in Ceramics, Fibre, Glass, Jewellery + Metals,
Media Arts, Object Design + Fabrication

School of Visual Arts
Concentrations in Drawing, Painting, Print Media, Sculpture

Bachelor of Design

School of Visual Communication
Concentrations in Animation (BFA); Photography; Visual
Communication Design
Subjects: Character Design; Illustration; Graphic Design;
Advertising
Minors in Animation; Visual Communication Design

Master of Fine Arts in Craft Media

Ceramics, Fibre, Glass, Jewellery + Metals

Teaching Faculty report to the Dean, Academic Programs. Non-Teaching Faculty generally report to supervisors outside of Academics (e.g., Dean of Innovation, Learning, and Development for Librarians; Dean of Student Services for Counsellors).

Who at AUArts is *not* part of the Faculty Association?

See Appendix A of this Handbook.

What Does AUAFA Do?

AUAFA Represents its members in a variety of ways:

1. AUAFA negotiates a [Collective Agreement](#) (CA) with the University's Board of Governors. The CA governs the terms and conditions of employment for all Faculty at AUArts.
2. AUAFA monitors the Administration's compliance with the Collective Agreement and may file grievances on behalf of individual members, groups of members, or itself when it believes that the University has violated the Collective Agreement or any relevant policy or legislation.
3. AUAFA represents and advocates for members navigating a variety of other workplace issues such as finding relevant policies and procedures, making or responding to Respectful Workplace complaints, or other employment issues at AUArts.
4. AUAFA works with the [Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association](#) (ACIFA), the [Canadian Association of University Teachers](#) (CAUT) and other allies to advocate for issues affecting the post-secondary sector at the provincial and national levels.

Complaints and Grievances

Discrimination and Harassment

Harassment and discrimination are not Collective Agreement issues per se, so AUAFA cannot directly represent you. The channel for reporting discrimination and harassment is through a Respectful Workplace Complaint. You can find both the [policy](#) and the [procedure](#) on the AUArts website (About AUArts > Policies and procedures > R). You can also find a link to it at the bottom of the [auafa.ca > Resources](#) page. However, we can offer advice and guidance as you negotiate these procedures.

If you have had a Respectful Workplace Complaint filed against you, AUAFA will accompany you to a meeting where Human Resources communicates the allegations that are being brought forward, to any investigative meetings, and to meetings where the results of such investigations are communicated. We can also provide advice and support at each of these stages and act as your advocate in cases of discipline. Human Resources will likely recommend that you bring a Faculty Association representative as soon as they inform you of the complaint.

Grievances

If you believe that the employer is violating the Collective Agreement or other piece of relevant legislation, bring your concern to AUAFA. AUAFA may file an individual grievance on your behalf, a group grievance on behalf of a group of members, or a policy grievance. Note that the grievance process is directed by the Faculty

Promotion

The University and the Faculty Association are committed to a review of the [Faculty Assignment, Promotion, and Appeal of Academic Rank Procedure](#) beginning in the 2025-26 academic year. Please refer to the above link in the meantime.

Academic ranks are Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor.

Permanent faculty members are eligible for promotion in rank when:

- They have served a minimum of five (5) academic years at the previous rank at AUArts, unless otherwise stipulated in the employment offer. Note, application process may begin in the Fall of year 5, but may not become effective until 5 years have been successfully completed;
- They have successfully passed the probationary period.

The Collective Agreement

AUAFA’s [Collective Agreement](#) (CA) establishes the terms and conditions of your employment at the University. If you believe that the conditions of your appointment violate the CA, please reach out to us for a consultation.

The [Collective Agreement](#) is a densely written 83-page document. Reading it from beginning to end can be daunting. Searching for key words on a particular topic (CMD-F on Mac, CTRL-F on Windows) is often a more productive approach.

Sessional Faculty

Sessional Appointments are intended to augment and supplement instruction and programming and/or the pedagogical and/or research needs of the University beyond that which is provided by permanent faculty appointments. See 8.02 c) of the [Collective Agreement](#). In 2024-25, 55 of AUArts’ 103 Faculty members were Sessional Faculty.

Many Sessional Instructors’ teaching loads and year-over-year employment resembles Permanent Faculty’s, but they lack job security, paid research time, paid summer vacations, and access to other opportunities.

In the 2024 round of bargaining, AUAFA negotiated Letter of Understanding #8, Sessional Course Assignment:

Courses are considered available to be taught by sessional faculty members only when they are not used to make up Permanent or LTA faculty course assignments.

Sessional faculty members who ...

- a. are employed as sessional faculty members in the current Academic Year;
and
- b. have a record of effective teaching in the Program or School in which the course is timetabled; and
- c. have the qualifications and have expressed interest and availability to continue to teach in the Program or School

will be given first consideration for course assignments. This consideration does not mean that the University is under the obligation to assign courses to sessional faculty members but does mean they will be considered before the hiring of an individual not currently employed by the University to teach courses instead.

Salary and Salary Grids

Permanent and LTA Faculty are paid a salary. Sessional Faculty are paid per course. When hired, they are placed at a particular step on a salary grid based on their education, experience, budget, and market factors. See the salary grids in the [Collective Agreement](#) pp. 65-68:

- Salary Schedule A – Lecturer + Limited Term Appointments, Assistant Professor + Counsellor, Associate Professor, Professor
- Salary Schedule A1 – Librarians
- Salary Schedule B – Sessional Instruction

Prior to being hired, prospective faculty can negotiate their step. Subject to satisfactory Performance Reviews, permanent and LTA faculty's salary is increased by one increment each year up to the

Evaluation and Promotion

Performance Reviews

Performance Reviews are conducted yearly for all Faculty. Requirements and deadlines differ for Sessional Faculty vs. Probationary, Permanent, and LTA Faculty.

	Probationary, Permanent and LTA Faculty	Sessional Faculty
Requirements	• Annual Report • Current CV templates available on SharePoint > Faculty Resources > Performance Review Promotion > Permanent LTA Performance Review	• Course syllabi and a sample course assignment • Student course assessments (not submitted by the Faculty member)
Deadline	June 1	End of the last term you teach in an academic year (end of fall term, winter term, or spring term)

See Article 9 of the [Collective Agreement](#) as well as the AUArts [Performance Review Procedure](#).

To do this, you will need to download LAPP's [*Service Record \(Actuarial Reserve-based Cost Application\) form*](#). Fill in Section I and request that Human Resources complete the rest and submit it to LAPP. Please contact your Faculty Association if you have any questions or problems.

Probation

For Permanent and LTA faculty, there is typically a four-year probationary period. While it is currently not stated in any policy document, the specific duration ought to be outlined in each faculty member's letter of appointment. Unlike some other universities, the end of the probationary period is separate from promotion. If performance reviews are satisfactory during the probationary period, probation simply ends.

Note that the [*Faculty Assignment, Promotion, and Appeal of Academic Rank*](#) Procedure will be reviewed beginning this academic year, so this may affect probation.

maximum step on their respective Salary Schedule. Part-time and Sessional Faculty members move up one step on the salary grid upon completing the equivalent of a full-time course load (6 courses). See Articles 22.01 and 22.03 d) of the [*Collective Agreement*](#).

Letters of Engagement and Contracts – Sessional Faculty Only

A *Letter of Engagement* is not a contract or guarantee of courses. Letters of Engagement were put in place in the mid 20-teens to reduce the administrative labour associated with having to re-hire Sessional Faculty every year. While many faculty at the time were relieved not to have to re-apply (and sometimes re-interview) each year, the Letter of Engagement now creates confusion due to its similarity to a contract. All it means is that you are eligible to be assigned courses, should the need arise. While the Hiring Guidelines say that Letters of Engagement are to be for one, three, or five years, in practice, the maximum is now three. The Administration says this is because curricular need is difficult to assess beyond that.

See SharePoint > Human Resources > Manager Resources > Position Requests & Hiring > [AUArts Hiring Guidelines – Faculty](#).

Renewing your Sessional Letter of Engagement

If there is continued need for a Sessional Faculty member to teach, Sessional Engagement Letters are automatically renewed (unlike in the past when Sessional Faculty had to reapply). Faculty may receive an email from Human Resources confirming their interest in continuing to teach. Responding to these is important. Faculty interested in expanding the range of courses they teach have sometimes met informally with the Dean, Undergraduate Studies and provided their CV as a supporting document.

Money you can get

Professional Expense Reimbursement Allowance (PERA)

Permanent and LTA Faculty are entitled to \$1650 per year to spend on expenses that support them in performing their professional duties. The same amount is allocated pro-rata to Sessional Faculty based on the number of courses taught to a maximum of six per year. Information on PERA can be found on SharePoint (Faculty Resources > Research > Professional Development > PERA / FPAF Information/Resources).

Faculty Professional Affairs Fund (FPAF)

This fund is intended to support faculty professional activities in addition to PERA. Unlike PERA, faculty must apply for this funding. Applications are reviewed by the Faculty Professional Affairs Committee (FPAC). Of the six FPAC members, four are faculty members elected by the Faculty Association. See Article 16 of the [Collective Agreement](#).

Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) buy-back

If you are hired to a permanent position, you will be enrolled in [LAPP](#). The pension you receive upon retirement will be based on your salary and years of service. A little-known fact is that your years of service as a Sessional Faculty member can be [bought back](#). Even though you were not eligible for LAPP as a Sessional, it is possible to have that service count towards your pension.

Normally there is no provision for teaching faculty to take vacation time in the fall, winter, or spring semesters. See Article 12.01 of the [Collective Agreement](#) for exceptions.

Non-teaching faculty with contracts greater than 12 months also earn 45 days of vacation per year but can take it at times agreed upon with their supervisor.

Discretionary Leave

10 days of discretionary leave is available for unplanned and unforeseen circumstances such as bereavement, family illness, emergencies, and other personal reasons. See Article 13.01 a) of the [Collective Agreement](#).

Professional Leave may be granted for research, exhibition installation, participation at conferences, adjudication committees, external funding agency obligations, design contracts, etc. See Article 13.01 b).

Court Leave, Maternity, and Parental Leave

See Article 13.02 - 13.06 of the [Collective Agreement](#).

What are Sessionals actually being paid for?

According to the Collective Agreement, Sessional Faculty's workload includes *all* responsibilities as described in Article 10.01 (Teaching, Service, and Professional/Creative/Research responsibilities), although Article 10.01 says that Faculty's responsibilities will include *any or all* of these three. In practice, whether a Sessional Faculty member performs service depends on many factors, including the number of courses they are teaching, their desire to be involved in decision making within their departments, Schools, or in the institution.

Generally speaking, it is the Faculty Association's position that Sessional Faculty should be wary of doing service work in the hope that it may lead to better opportunities within the institution. Such a trend contributes to the continued exploitation of Sessional Faculty as a whole.

Benefits

Benefit information for Sessional Faculty can be found on SharePoint (SharePoint > Human Resources > Payroll & Benefits > Group Benefits (Sun Life) & Pension (LAPP) > [Sessional Faculty – Benefits Summary](#)).

Eligibility for coverage – Sessional Instructors must have an active course load in the benefit period and have taught at minimum three (3) courses in the previous academic year. Coverage will commence September 1st or January 1st and will terminate at the end of the teaching semester.

Injuries at Work

If you get injured at work, report it to your immediate supervisor (Dean, Undergraduate Studies) *or* to Human Resources within 24 hours (definitely within 72 hours). If you are required to leave following the injury, you will not lose pay for that day.

Reporting the injury ensures that you will be eligible for Workers Compensation should the injury develop into something that requires it. See Article 13.08 of the [Collective Agreement](#) for more information on the Workers Compensation Supplement.

Time Off

What to do if you are sick

As soon as you are aware that you won't be able to teach / attend to your duties:

1. Send an email to your immediate supervisor (Dean, Undergraduate Studies) providing the following information:
 - a. that you are ill
 - b. which class(es) needs to be cancelled (e.g., DRWF 110 C)
 - c. the room in which you meet
 - d. cc the appropriate subject area Technician on the email (if applicable)

2. Email your students letting them know you are sick, and that class is cancelled. If you are well enough, you may want to tell them what to work on.

You may be required to provide proof of illness.

Your Rights

see Article 13.07 of the [Collective Agreement](#).

- 10 days with pay per academic year of Casual Illness Leave (3 consecutive days or less)
- General Illness Leave (4 or more consecutive days)
 - Days with pay vary depending on years of service up to a maximum of 80
 - See Article 13.07 c) iii. of the [Collective Agreement](#) for details
- Long Term Disability (beyond 80 consecutive days)
 - By application
 - See *Benefits* section above for eligibility

Vacation

Permanent Faculty and LTA Faculty with contracts greater than 12 months earn 45 days of Annual Vacation Leave over the course of a year. For Teaching Faculty, vacation is typically taken beginning June 15th every year. Sessional and LTA (Limited Term Appointment) faculty with terms of appointment of twelve (12) months or less receive an addition of 6% of base salary each pay period in lieu of earned vacation.