



Petition

A better contract and fair wage for Teaching Assistants at the Geneva Graduate Institute

Teaching Assistants (TAs) at the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID), who earn 38,220 CHF net per year, are unable to carry out their work without jeopardising their health, the quality of the service they provide - i.e. the support they give to students - or the quality of their doctoral research.

An income of 2,977 CHF per month: TAs fight back!

2,977 CHF net is the sum available each month to the roughly sixty TAs at the IHEID, once their tuition fees have been deducted directly by their employer. This does not allow them to live with dignity in Geneva!

PhD researchers employed as TAs at the IHEID have been demanding an improvement in their working conditions and wages for over a year. Despite three negotiation sessions with the Direction, the latter still refuses to address their demands.

This struggle is not only about meeting their basic needs in one of the most expensive cities in the world. It is also about ensuring better access to social protection, health care, housing and childcare for TAs who are parents. All of this depends on a decent wage.

Working 40 hours a week on a 45% contract!

While the completion of a thesis is a prerequisite for obtaining their contract as TAs and then a condition for maintaining it, the Geneva Graduate Institute does not pay for this research work, contrary to their colleagues employed as Research Assistants (RAs) at the IHEID and to other assistants at Swiss universities and HES.

Their current employment contract includes a salary (for a 45% activity rate devoted to tasks as TAs) and a scholarship (for a 30% activity rate devoted to doctoral research) for a professional activity that, in fact, occupies them at a 100% activity rate.

As social security contributions are only deducted for 45% of their activity, TAs only benefit from social protection for this 45%. Indeed, as the scholarship is not subject to social security contributions, TAs do not benefit from social security protection for the 30% devoted to their doctoral research. Thus, social contributions are only deducted from their wage, which amounts to 22,800 CHF per year, i.e. 1,900 CHF per month. **Consequently, social protection (unemployment, accident, illness, AVS retirement) is very low!**

Comparison with other university assistants in Geneva

TAs at the Geneva Graduate Institute earn 38,220 CHF net per year. Social security contributions are only deducted on an amount of 22,800.- CHF per year.

Quelques estimations :

41,873.- CHF is the net annual salary of RAs at the IHEID employed on SNSF-funded projects (their wage includes time for their doctoral research and their contract is at 100%).

42,337.- CHF is the net annual salary of TAs employed at a 75% activity rate at the University of Geneva for the first year (it rises in subsequent years).

54,594.- CHF is the net annual salary of TAs employed at a 100% activity rate at the University of Geneva for the first year (it rises in subsequent years).

Social security contributions are deducted in each case from the entire gross salary.

Our demands

By the present petition, we, the undersigned, the TAs of the Geneva Graduate Institute, their colleagues and the members of the academic community of Geneva, demand:

To the Grand Conseil of the Republic and Canton of Geneva:

- to increase the resources allocated to the IHEID for TAs in order to improve the remuneration of these assistants and to offer quality support to students as well as quality research
- that the working conditions of the assistants be the subject of precise objectives in the next Conventions d'Objectifs between the State and the Geneva Graduate Institute
- that the social partners be involved in the definition of the objectives and indicators in the agreement

To the Geneva Graduate Institute:

- to address TAs demands for improvement of their working conditions and salary, and to really look for ways to make this possible
- to modify the TAs' contract by:
 - o combining the grant and salary into a single salary so that TAs obtain full social protection!
 - o increasing the activity rate to reflect the reality of their work, i.e. to 100%.
 - o increasing their net salary (currently 38,220 CHF per year) so that it reaches at least the level of the minimum wage in Geneva for a 100% activity rate, i.e. 49,920 CHF gross (12 x 4,160 CHF).
- to reconsider the implementation of the contracts of "ART tutors" so that they turn to be TA contracts again.

While the Institute receives roughly 15 million CHF per year from the State of Geneva and roughly 18 million CHF from the Confederation, the Direction refuses to provide us with information on the precise allocation of these public funds (about 30% of the Geneva Graduate Institute's yearly budget).

According to our estimates, the cost of meeting TAs' demands only represents an increase of roughly 1% in the Geneva Graduate Institute's total budget. **Our demands are not only legitimate and fair but also realistic!**

This petition can be signed by any person from the academic community or the universities (and HES) in Geneva who wishes to support TAs at the Geneva Graduate Institute. It will be addressed to the Grand Council, which finances part of the Institute's budget, as well as to the employer, the Geneva Graduate Institute (the identity of the signatories will not be transmitted to the Administration of the Geneva Graduate Institute).

Petition initiated on 10 May 2023, to be returned, even partially completed, before **15 September 2023** to the following address: Syndicat Interprofessionnel des travailleuses et travailleurs (SIT) - CP 3135 - 1211 Geneva 3,.

For more information: sit-syndicat.ch and ourgisa.com/ada