



# Nunavut Teachers' Association

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## Nunavut Teachers' Association Frequently Asked Questions for New NTA Members

## Introduction

As in any educational jurisdiction, educators beginning to work in Nunavut find themselves dealing with new school and classroom environments, procedures, application forms, and unfamiliar situations. This document is intended to address some of the most frequently asked questions from new NTA Members.

This document is in no way intended to replace other sources of information for new Nunavut teachers. The Government of Nunavut has provided an informative website for new NTA Members, <http://www.ntip.gov.nu.ca/>. Your Regional School Operations staff can answer many questions, and there is also perhaps the most important resource of all for new teachers; your colleagues, school administration and community members.

In this document, “NTA” refers to the Nunavut Teachers’ Association.

“Employer” refers to the Government of Nunavut.

“RSO” Refers to a Regional School Operations Office - Qikiqtani School Operations (QSO), Kivalliq School Operations (KivSO), Kitikmeot School Operations (KitSO), or in some cases the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut (CSFN).

Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the NTA Office:

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NTA Office

Iqaluit NU

(867) 979 0750 ext 225

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## ***How do I become an NTA member?***

As per the Nunavut Teachers' Association Act, teachers (along with K - 12 Principals, Vice Principals, Learning/ Literacy Coaches, and Program Consultants) in Nunavut are automatically registered as NTA members when they begin their work as educators in the Nunavut K - 12 system.

On occasion, it takes some time for the names of new teachers and administrators to reach the NTA office from the Employer. New teachers are advised to contact their NTA School Representative or School PD Liaison Officer to pass on their names to the NTA Office in order that new teachers can be entered into the NTA email and PD Database systems as soon as possible.

*From the Nunavut Teachers Association Act:*

*Subject to subsection (2), every teacher who is employed by the Minister responsible for the Education Act is, upon employment, entitled to be registered as a member of the Association and is entitled to continue to be a member until his or her employment ceases or his or membership is terminated in accordance with this Act, the regulations or the by-laws.*

## ***Am I able to have access to an NTA email account, or the Members' Secure area of the NTA website?***

To obtain instructions for access to your NTA email account, please see your NTA School Representative to request an account be created for you. Staff at the NTA Office will create your account and send access instructions to you through your School Representative.

You should also request access to the Professional Development (PD) Database. This system is where you will fill out applications for many PD funding programs.

The Members' Secure area of [www.ntanu.ca](http://www.ntanu.ca) is accessible using a password distributed via the NTA email system. If you are having trouble accessing this area of the website, please email [HCampbell@ntanu.ca](mailto:HCampbell@ntanu.ca) from your NTA email account to obtain a password.

## ***Am I eligible for Professional Development benefits?***

There are a number of different opportunities available for NTA members in the area of teacher - directed Professional Development. The majority of these programs are available as soon as you become an NTA member, and a small number of opportunities are only available after you have spent a certain amount of time teaching in Nunavut. For more information on Professional Development programs and benefits, please see the Professional Development page of the NTA Website: <http://www.ntanu.ca/professional-development/>

Each workplace also has a School Professional Development Liaison Officer who may be able to answer questions about professional development programs, or direct you to someone who has more information.

### *I am interested in being actively involved with NTA, where can I find information?*

Your school staffroom should have some information available about volunteer NTA positions on NTA Committees, and at the School and Regional level.

Each fall a call out is issued via the NTA email system to members to volunteer for various NTA Committees. Each spring, nominations open for elections for NTA positions at the school and regional levels.

From time to time, other opportunities arise to be involved with NTA in a variety of capacities: participating in research initiatives such as surveys by NTA and/ or the Canadian Teachers' Federation, volunteering for ad-hoc committees, or participating in special initiatives. Generally these opportunities are promoted using the NTA email system and NTA website, [www.ntanu.ca](http://www.ntanu.ca).

### *Is NTA affiliated with any other teacher organizations?*

NTA works closely with other teacher organizations across Canada. All members of the Nunavut Teachers' Association are also members of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). CTF's website can be found at [www.ctf-fce.ca](http://www.ctf-fce.ca)

NTA is also affiliated with the Yukon Teachers' Association and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association through the Northern Teachers' Council (NTC).

NTA works with other teachers' organizations in PEI, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as a member of the Council of Atlantic Provinces and Territories Teachers' Organizations (CAPTO)

***I have not received any information about my teaching certificate or salary placement yet, who can I contact to get an update on the status of my application?***

Teachers are responsible for filing an application for Nunavut Teaching certification to the Nunavut Educators Qualification Service Registrar in Arviat. Teachers are given an *initial salary placement* until their certification and salary placement applications have been processed.

**Each new teacher is required to send the following:**

- Application form (available at [www.ntip.gov.nu.ca](http://www.ntip.gov.nu.ca))
- Birth or Citizenship Certificate, Permanent Resident Card or Work/ Visa Permit
- Proof of an administrative/teaching (NTA) position in Nunavut (whether term, indeterminate or substitute)
- \$60 fee payable to the Government of Nunavut (not applicable if you completed Teacher training in Nunavut) \*\*For record keeping purposes, it is advisable to send the fee in the form of a cheque
- Proof of name change (if applicable)
- Previous teaching certificates (if applicable)

**Equally important, each new teacher is required to arrange for the following to be sent directly from issuing institutions to the Registrar:**

- Statements of Experience from all applicable previous employers (this means anywhere you worked as a teacher or administrator in a K - 12 system that required you to be certified)
- Official Post - Secondary transcript(s) from all applicable institutions (including degrees, and any additional training you received university credit for completing)  
**\*\*Note: if you have TRANSFER credits, you will need to obtain a transcript from the original institution from which the credits were granted.**
- Statement of Professional Standing from the first jurisdiction in which you were a certified teacher - usually the jurisdiction where you completed a Bachelor of Education degree (it does not matter whether or not you actually taught in that jurisdiction - the Statement of Professional Standing is still required)
- Statement of Professional Standing from the last jurisdiction in which you were a certified teacher (if you have been certified in more than one jurisdiction)

**\*\*Note: A Statement of Professional Standing is different from a Statement of Experience.**

**These supporting documents will not be accepted if they are sent through you or another third party, they must be sent directly from issuing jurisdictions/ institutions to the registrar.**

**Send all documents via a traceable service (registered mail, email, etc).**

Normal processing time for these applications and supporting documents is two to three weeks after complete packages (including supporting documentation) has been received at the registrar's office. After your certification and salary placement have been completed, the information is then forwarded to your RSO, and following that, your payroll officer. Generally, once your RSO has received your salary placement information, it takes up to two pay cycles for your placement to be reflected in your pay.

Once you know your application package and all supporting documentation has been sent, you can follow up by contacting the registrar directly: [TeacherRegistrar@gov.nu.ca](mailto:TeacherRegistrar@gov.nu.ca). You can copy follow up emails to the NTA Assistant Executive Director: [HCampbell@ntanu.ca](mailto:HCampbell@ntanu.ca).

There is an important deadline for this process on the part of the new teacher or administrator: all application material and supporting documentation must be received by the registrar within 60 days of your first day of work. It is best to start this process as soon as possible after you sign your letter of offer, and to do any follow up communication via email, so you have a traceable record of follow up.

If you meet the 60-day deadline, you will be eligible for any retroactive pay to make up any difference between your *initial salary placement* and your *assessed salary placement*. If you do not meet this deadline, your salary placement may not be retroactive to your start date.

If you receive your salary placement and you disagree with it, you can appeal the assessment of your qualifications and or experience. For more information on the appeal process, contact either the Registrar, or the NTA Assistant Executive Director.

### ***Who should I contact if I don't think my pay is correct, or if I have questions about my pay?***

If you have concerns that your pay is not what it should be, whether you suspect you are being overpaid or underpaid, you should contact your pay and benefits officer at the Department of Finance office for your region. These offices are located in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. To find out which payroll officer is assigned to your school or workplace, you can request their contact information from your supervisor.

### ***How can I obtain information about Pension benefits?***

Government of Nunavut employees are part of the Federal Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP), and can contact the PSPP office for information or answers to questions about pension details; <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/pensions/index-eng.asp>

### ***How can I obtain information about Medical/ Dental benefits?***

Government of Nunavut employees are provided with medical and dental benefits with Great West Life. You can contact your pay and benefits officer at your regional Finance office to ask questions about these benefits.

### ***Do I have access to paid leave days?***

Each NTA member is advanced 15 sick leave credits at the beginning of each school year. After accessing 3 consecutive days of sick leave, or after 9 accumulated days of sick leave in one school year, NTA members must obtain medical documentation certifying illness for any subsequent sick leave. More detail on NTA Sick Leave provisions can be found in Article 14 of the NTA - GN Collective agreement, at <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-documents>

NTA Members earn ½ day of Special Leave credits for each month during which they receive pay. One day a year can be used of special leave at the teacher's discretion, subject to the operational requirements of the school. This discretionary day cannot be attached to a major holiday (such as Christmas Spring or Summer breaks) without the advance permission of your regional Executive Director. Other special leave credits can be used under specific circumstances outlined in Article 13 of the NTA - GN Collective agreement, at <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-documents>

Some other types of leave (including Maternity and Parental leave) are explained in Article 15 of the NTA - GN Collective agreement, at <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-documents>

Most other types of leave can be requested by filling out a leave request form, having it signed by your school administration, and forwarded, by you, to your RSO.

It is the professional responsibility of NTA Members to notify their supervisor and/ or their RSO of any leave requests as early as possible. It is also the professional responsibility of NTA members to ensure that their leave has been approved before taking the leave. If you have made a leave request and have not had a response before you are planning to take the leave, contact your Superintendent to request a response.

### ***What are my expected hours of work?***

Generally, NTA members are expected to report to work no later than 15 minutes before classes begin, and to leave work no earlier than 15 minutes after classes are finished for the day. NTA members have the right to a duty free lunch break of at least one hour. Often, NTA members will be required to participate in staff, team or other meetings after classes have finished for the day.

### ***Are teachers in Nunavut guaranteed preparation (prep) time?***

Like many other jurisdictions in Canada, teachers in Nunavut are not guaranteed any specific amount of preparation time in their schedule, nor any amount of prep time at all. Our Collective Agreement states that every reasonable effort will be made to allocate adequate preparation time to teachers.

### ***Where can I find curriculum and / or resources for my classes?***

There are a number of ways you can get information on planning or resources for your teaching assignment:

- Your school administration may have copies of long range plans from previous years that they are able to provide to you
- Your school’s Literacy or Learning Coach may have resources or suggestions for you in your new role
- Some schools have team planning processes in place, and your colleagues can be excellent sources of information on resources available in your school
- Each region has a number of Program Consultants working at the RSO office. You should be able to obtain contact information for them from your Principal.
- If you are teaching courses that follow Alberta Curriculum (ask your school administration to confirm this), you can find Programs of Study and other information on Alberta Learning’s website: <https://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/>
- The Nunavut Teacher Induction (NTIP) program website, [www.ntip.gov.nu.ca](http://www.ntip.gov.nu.ca) also has a great deal of information and links related to locating curriculum and teaching resources specific to Nunavut.

### ***I think I need assistance with students in my class that may have or require individual plans, are there individual plans in Nunavut?***

For information on referrals for Individual Student Support Plans (ISSP’s), see your school administration, or your Student Support Teacher (SST).

You should also be familiar with the *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* policy for your school.

### ***I interviewed for a specific teaching assignment, and when I arrived in my school, I was told my assignment had changed, is that allowed?***

In the Nunavut K - 12 system, teachers apply for teaching positions, not teaching assignments. You may have applied for a position that had a specific assignment listed with it (such as “Grade 8 generalist,” or “High School Science,” but assignment changes are the prerogative of your administration, and they are permitted to change assignments as school operational requirements necessitate.

In some cases, even SST’s or Learning Coaches may be assigned some classroom duties.

***My Personal Effects (my move) have not arrived in my community, where can I get more information on the status of my move?***

Generally, six weeks from when your personal effects are picked up is an approximate timeline for them to be delivered to your new residence.

Sometimes this process can be slower, especially during busy shipping times for airlines.

If you have not seen your personal effects for more than six weeks, contact your relocation officer at your RSO (the person who arranged your move and airline tickets) to inquire about the status of your personal effects.

***What do I do if I live in staff housing and I am not getting along with my roommate? Or, what do I do if I have some sort of problem with my staff housing unit?***

Staff housing for NTA members is primarily administered by the Nunavut Housing Corporation according to their Staff Housing Policy, which you can locate on the staff housing page of their website, <http://www.nunavuthousing.ca/staffhousing>

It is worth noting that staff housing allocation is not a term and condition of employment, nor is it a right guaranteed by the Collective Agreement. NTA is prohibited from bargaining matters related to staff housing by the Nunavut Public Service Act.

If you are sharing a staff housing unit with one or more of your colleagues, and you are having issues at home, it is best to try to keep those problems from entering your workplace.

Some NTA Members may be living in Public or Private housing as opposed to staff housing. If in Public housing, your Local Housing Authority is where you should first direct any questions or concerns.

Each community has a Staff Housing Agent that deals with day to day property management issues.

Each region has an Accommodations Clerk that handles allocation or move/ reassignment requests.

The Nunavut Department of Justice has a Rental Officer who can provide information on tenant rights, and can act as an ombudsman in the event of disputes between landlords and tenants in Nunavut: [rentaloffice@gov.nu.ca](mailto:rentaloffice@gov.nu.ca)

### ***How long will I be a “probationary” teacher in Nunavut?***

Teachers serve a probationary period of 2 school years. You should expect to go through the performance appraisal (evaluation) process with your supervisor in each of those years.

If you begin teaching after December 23<sup>rd</sup> of a school year, you will have completed one year of your probationary period at the end of the following school year.

### ***Who decides if I am successfully completing my probationary period?***

If you have not completed your probationary period successfully, you will be notified of rejection on probation in writing from your RSO a minimum of 60 days before the end of the school year in your community. While your school administrator(s) will make recommendations on your probationary status, your RSO (the Executive Director for your region) will make the final decision.

### ***Are teachers in Nunavut required to adhere to any particular standards of professionalism or behaviour?***

Like many other jurisdictions in Canada, both the Employer (GN) and the Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA) have provided codes of ethics to guide the way teachers represent themselves at work and in their community.

The NTA Code of Ethics can be found on the NTA website: <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-documents/>

The GN Code of Values and Ethics for Employees can be found on the Department of Finance website: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/information/code-values-and-ethics>

### ***What can I do if I am feeling unsafe or harassed at work?***

There are a number of resources and supports available to teachers experiencing stress or feeling unsafe at school, depending on the reason for those feelings;

- Your school should have a process for reporting incidents involving students, and you should seek advice from your administration on safety issues related to your workplace
- There are protocols for reporting and dealing with workplace conflict, and harassment in the Government of Nunavut Human Resources Manual, available on the Department of Finance’s website: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/information/human-resources-manual>
- The Government of Nunavut has an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). This is a free, confidential service, accessible by telephone, 24 hours a day: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/information/employee-and-family-assistance-program-0>
- Each GN workplace has an Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and safety issues can be reported to that committee. If you don’t know who is on the committee at your school, you can ask your school administrators.
- The NTA Assistant Executive Director can provide advice with difficult situations arising in the workplace for NTA members: (867) 979 0750 x 225
- NTA has a Teacher Safety report you can file to draw attention to an issue, or simply to put an incident on record at the NTA office: <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-documents/>
- The Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission also has resources and information for dealing with safety issues at work on their website: <http://www.wscs.nt.ca/>

### ***In the event of inclement weather or school building issues, who decides whether or not to close the school?***

Each Nunavut community has a District Education Authority (DEA), who, among other responsibilities, decides on policies for school closures, and decides on how to handle the process for specific school closures.

### ***What if I notice other safety issues in my classroom, or in or around the school building?***

Each workplace in Nunavut is legally required to have a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and your school administration should be able to provide you with information on who sits on the committee for your school, and how often they meet. You can report issues to administration, and also to the committee.

### ***Can I be forced to participate in “supervision” duties?***

Teachers can be assigned supervision duties by their school administration. If you have questions about whether a specific supervision assignment is fair and reasonable, please contact the NTA Member Services Administrator for advice.

### ***What if I am accused of inappropriate conduct related to my work?***

You should contact the NTA Assistant Executive Director immediately for guidance and support: (867) 979 0750 ext 225, or [HCampbell@ntanu.ca](mailto:HCampbell@ntanu.ca)

### ***Should I be concerned about online communication or my social media profile(s)?***

Teachers must remember that once they begin teaching, their community will view them as teachers all the time, both when working and on their own time. For this reason, it is important for teachers to remember to be professional when communicating using technology; online, on social media, in text messages, and in emails.

Teachers can be held accountable for anything they post online or communicate digitally by their employer. For guidelines on electronic communication by teachers, please see the Social Media guide for Members on the NTA website: <http://www.ntanu.ca/nta-member-advisories/>

### ***I am teaching students that are part of my family, are there any special considerations I should be aware of in this situation?***

When we are working in a school, even though teachers may have personal connections to students, such as family connections, or connections from sports or extra curricular or community activities, teachers must remember that they are in a position of authority and trust over their students.

It is up to the teacher, the professional, to make sure that they always model appropriate behavior for students, in the school and community, and online. It is also important to note that students, especially young students, may not always know what proper boundaries for teachers and students are, so it is up to the teachers and school staff to remind students of what is appropriate conduct between a teacher and student.

This may mean for some teachers that they have to be very careful about maintaining a professional relationship with students and parents, even if they are related or connected to them personally. School administration will be able to provide guidance and support for questions on this issue.

*I have other, specific questions that have not been addressed in this document.  
Who can I contact for help?*

Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the NTA Office:

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