

Short Term Employees (FAQs)

Question 1: What is the new Short-Term Employee (STE) category?

This new employee category was negotiated in the 2019 round of bargaining with Unifor Unit 1 and is effective for new appointments starting May 2nd, 2021 forward.

A Short-Term Employee means an Employee who works in a position, commencing on or after May 2, 2021, with a duration of at least 6 months and no more than 12 months, performing work that would fall within the Unifor Unit 1 Bargaining Unit.

Question 2: How does the Short-Term Employee (STE) category integrate with other types of employee appointments?

There are a range of appointment types that may be considered when hiring a new employee who may fall into either the temporary or Unifor Unit 1 employee groups. The following definitions may help determine the appropriate type of appointment to use:

Casual Employee is an employee who works in a position having no specified schedule and that may be of indefinite duration. These employees generally work varied hours, on an as needed basis. These employees remain excluded from the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit.

Temporary Employee is an employee who works in a position, commencing on or after May 2, 2021, with a duration of less than 6 months. These employees remain excluded from the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit.

New! Short-Term Employee is an Employee who works in a position, commencing on or after May 2, 2021, with a duration of at least 6 months and no more than 12 months. These employees are now included in the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit, with specific collective agreement provisions that apply to their appointments (See Appendix V of the Unifor Unit 1 Collective Agreement).

Limited Term Employee is an Employee who is either full-time or part-time employed in a position where an end date has been determined such that the total appointment, including any extensions, is for a minimum of greater than 12 months but no longer than 36 months (effective May 2, 2021). These employees continue to be included in the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit.

Continuing Employee an employee who is full or part time that is not limited term. These employees continue to be included in the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit.

Reference: Unifor Local 5555 Collective agreement Section 3.02-Types of Employees, pg. 7

[UNIFOR-Unit-1-CBA-2019-2022-1.pdf \(mcmaster.ca\)](#)

Question 3: Are there any positions or appointments that are excluded from the Unifor Unit 1 Bargaining Unit?

Certain individuals remain excluded from the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit and therefore remain excluded from the STE category.

A full listing of exclusions can be found in the [Unifor Unit 1 and McMaster University Collective Agreement](#). *Article 2.01 – Recognition pg.4*. Exclusions include:

- Full-time McMaster students
- Individuals hired into positions that are created specifically for recruitment of graduate students, co-operative education placements, internships, and similar experiential learning placements.
- Positions located in specific offices, invigilators, standardized patients,
- Employees that are hired to do work that would fall into other bargaining units and employee groups terms and conditions as outlined in their collective agreement or employment contracts.

Question 4: What is the Hiring Process for new STE appointments?

The hiring approach for Short Term Employees is designed to maintain flexibility given the varied nature of these types of roles. Departments can choose to use the full Unifor Unit 1 competitive process for an STE position; however, they may also hire without competition if an expeditious hire is needed.

Question 5: Is there a quick check for me to know if the position I am hiring for is an STE appointment?

When considering posting for a new position, you can ask yourself 2 questions to help determine if the position is a Unifor STE role:

- 1) What is the duration of the assignment – is the position at least 6 months but not greater than 12 months?
- 2) Role – is this work captured within the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit?

You can also reach out to your HR Representative for support! HR contacts can be found on the HR website here: [Our People - Human Resources \(mcmaster.ca\)](#)

Question 6: What job description do I use to hire for STE appointments?

An applicable Unifor Unit 1 job description must be used for staffing STE positions. There are many Unifor Unit 1 job descriptions and job postings available online for quick use: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/managers/job-design-job-evaluation/unifor-unit-1-job-descriptions-and-job-postings/>.

If you need a job description developed, please contact your HR Representative who can support you in engaging the Total Rewards team in this work. HR contacts can be found on the HR website here: [Our People - Human Resources \(mcmaster.ca\)](#). If you require a new job description, please plan for a 2-to-4-week lead time to have the job evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee.

Question 7: Who will create the offer letter / employment contract for STE appointments?

To preserve flexibility, departments will continue to create and issue letters for employees being hired up to and including 12-months, this includes the STE category. A template offer letter has been developed in support of assisting departments with their hiring processes (see Question 8).

When employees are extended and become benefit eligible (for example, become limited term employees beyond 12 months) materials will continue to be prepared by the HR Representative to support the benefit and pension enrolment and completion of associated forms.

Question 8: What materials are available to help me with hiring for STE appointments?

We are excited to confirm that a new STE resource section has been added online. All resource documents, including available templates have been added to the [Hiring & Recruitment - Human Resources \(mcmaster.ca\)](#) website. Materials will continue to be updated as we move forward to May 2, 2021 and beyond.

We invite you to connect with us if you have any suggestions for additional material or resources that will be helpful to you as we move ahead (please email us at hr.mcmaster@mcmaster.ca)

Question 9: When is a job opening required for STE, LTE, Casual positions?

A job opening is required for all new positions at the point of hire. If an extension occurs from temporary to STE or STE to limited term, a new job opening will not be required. A new /existing Unifor Unit 1 position number does need to be established and should be entered into the Short-Term Employee Segment of the Contract Extension eForm, along with the employee's New Wage Rate when they transition to STE. Please reach out to your HR Representative to support you with any hiring process questions

Question 10: How do I know if someone is a full-time McMaster student? How do I identify this?

Hiring Leaders are encouraged to have a conversation with the prospective employee to use the appropriate offer letter for the circumstances. If a full-time McMaster student is being hired, the department will use the Temporary / Casual letter. If the individual is NOT a full-time McMaster student, the department will use the STE template.

The Employee contact and Information form has been updated to include an indicator for Full Time McMaster students.

Question 11: What terms of the Collective Agreement apply to STE Appointments?

A full list of STE entitlements can be found in [Appendix V](#) (page 75) of the Unifor Unit 1 collective agreement.

Question 12: What is the process for extending an employee from Temporary to STE status?

You will need:

- A position number for the Unifor STE position. If you do not have a position number, please request a new one in Mosaic via the Request New Position eForm.
- Prepare the extension letter using the Temporary STE Offer Letter Template
- STE letter templates can be found here – <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/managers/hiring-recruitment/>
- Submit a Contract Extension eForm for the employee – a Short Term Employee Segment will appear on the eForm when the New Expected Contract End Date is populated; the Position Number when the employee moves to Unifor STE, and the New Wage Rate, will need to be provided.

Question 13: What happens if an employee is initially hired for less than 6 months but an extension is required?

If a Temporary employees' position is extended beyond 6 months and less than 12 months and 1 day, they will become a STE at the time they reach 6-months in the position. The service worked during the temporary contract in the same position is credited towards the 6-month mark.

Example: Employee is hired on a 4-month temporary assignment on June 1st - September 31st. They receive an extension for an additional 4 months (October 1st- February 28th) This employee would move to STE status effective December 1st which is 6 months from the date of the initial appointment.

If the employee is extended to greater than 12 months (12months plus 1 day), up to 36 months - they become a Limited Term Employee

Example: Employee is hired on a 4-month temporary assignment on June 1st – September 31st. They receive an extension for an additional 10 months (October 1st2021 –July31st2022). This employee would move to STE status effective December 1st2021 which is 6 months from the date of the initial appointment. This employee would then move to Limited Term status effective June 1st2022 which is greater than 12 months (12 months plus 1 day) from the date of the initial appointment.

Question 14: Is a waiver of competition required to move employees from temporary status into STE or limited term status

A waiver of competition is no longer required to extend an employee from temporary to STE status, or from STE to limited term status. An employee will be eligible for the applicable collective agreement entitlements in accordance with their status. For example, a Short-Term Employee extended greater than 12 months, shall convert to Limited-Term status effective the first day following the 12-month period. See examples outlined in Question 13 for details.

Question 15: Are STEs considered internal applicants?

All current active Unifor Unit 1 employees are considered internal for Unifor Unit 1 job competitions. STE employees are considered members of the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit when applying to Unifor Unit 1 positions.

Question 16: What wage rate do I use for new STE positions?

The collective agreement has a new minimum rate for STE appointments. Hiring leaders can also choose to pay any step on the wage grid, subject to Faculty / Department budget considerations and hiring protocols.

The wage grid can be found here: [New-Wage-Grid-with-STE-Hire-Rate March-30-2021.pdf](#)

Grade	Minimum Rate (Short Term Employees Only)	Step 0	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10

Question 17: My employee is being extended into an STE appointment and currently makes higher than step 10 or lower than the Minimum Rate for STE – what hourly rate do I use?

Employees moving into the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining unit must be placed at an appropriate Step on the Wage Grid for the relevant Grade of the position. Please reach out to your HR or ELR representative to discuss any specific situations.

Question 18: What information resources exist to support me as a hiring manager to budget for STE benefit costs?

Short Term Employees are subject to Unifor Unit 1 surcharges and are included in the Unifor Unit 1 benefit rate tables. These [benefit rate tables available on the Financial Affairs website](#). These tables are used in the Hyperion system to budget for all Unifor Unit 1 employees as a group and are therefore based on the average benefit rates across the employee group to estimate budget in total and do not calculate benefit rates for individual employees. In order to have a budget estimate for an individual's benefit rates, hiring managers will need to adjust to account for the differences in benefits eligibility, for example, STE are not entitled to pension, health, dental and group life insurance, etc. For the STE group include CPP, EI, EHT, WSIB, and Social Justice/PEL.

Question 19: How does vacation accrual and usage work for Short Term Employees? What happens if an employee is unable to use their vacation time?

Vacation accrual follows the same vacation year as the rest of the university. Vacation is accrued from July 1st of one year to June 30th of the following. Vacation is taken during the calendar year January – December. Depending on an employees' contract date, they may not have earned vacation days to take immediately and there may also be operational needs that Hiring Leaders must consider before approving vacation time Processes for requesting vacation time are outlined in Article 16 and are identified as part of onboarding into the Department where an employee is hired.

If an employee is unable to use some of their accrued vacation time, it will be paid out at the end of the contract.

Question 20: Do STEs need to be on a schedule?

Yes, STE's (and all Unifor appointments) require a schedule of days and hours of work to be included in the Mosaic system. Part-time employees can be provided a schedule set to their minimum expected hours, and the addition of hours to part-time schedules will be administered in accordance with Article 15.08.

Short-term Employees will otherwise be provided as much notice as reasonably possible for temporary changes to their hours, relative to the terms of their appointment upon hire, or 2-weeks' notice of ongoing changes to their hours of work.

If there is no minimum number of hours required to work (will be called 'as needed') or significantly varied work expectations through the contract, this may qualify as a 'casual' appointment (no specified schedule). Please speak with your HR contact if you have questions about which appointment type is appropriate.

Question 21: What is the probationary period for STEs? What happens if they transfer to Limited Term?

Short Term Employees do not have a probationary period as the appointment is short in nature.

Employees who are hired into a Limited Term or Continuing roles prior to a temporary or STE appointment in the same position with the same supervisor, will have a 4-month probationary period, in recognition of their time already working in the role.

Employees who are newly hired into the Unifor Unit 1 bargaining Unit otherwise have an 8-month probationary period.

Question 22: What role does the resume screening tool play when hiring Short-Term Employees? What are the requirements for informing candidates for Short Term Employee positions about their success/not successful application status?

Article 18 -Appointments and Promotions does not apply to Short Term Employees. As a recruitment best practice, we would recommend all competitive processes have scoring guides associated with screening resumes for an interview for the records of the competitive process.

Question 23: Is it an option to make ALL possible Job descriptions (JDs) available? Currently I believe there are limited JDs on the HR website.

The Job Descriptions available on the [HR website](#) represent the most common, generic job descriptions used today and will be periodically refreshed. If you are unable to locate an appropriate JD, please partner with your HR Advisor or HR Business Partner who can assist in locating a comparable job or support you in drafting a new job to submit for evaluation by the Job Evaluation Committee. Please note this process can take approximately 2-4 weeks. The JE Committee schedule and submission deadlines can be found [here](#).

Question 24: Who changes the employee status within Mosaic when an employee moves from Temporary to STE? And which documentation initiates this change?

Human Resources will change the employee's status to STE in Mosaic based on the information provided by the hiring manager in the Contract Extension eForm. The eForm will identify whether the conditions are met to transition the employee from Temporary to STE status; the Position Number when the employee moves to Unifor STE, and the New Wage Rate, will need to be provided.

Question 25: When an employee moves from Temporary to Short-Term Employee or Short-Term Employee to Limited Term Employee, are the entitlements retroactive to Day 1, or do they start at the point where the employment group changes?

Entitlements of the respective employee type are achieved at the point that the employee obtains the new employment status. There is no retroactive application of these entitlements.

Question 26: Are post-doctoral fellows excluded from STE status?

Yes, post-doctoral fellows as well as other fellowships like Clinical Scholars, Clinical Fellows, Research Fellows, Teaching Fellows are excluded from Unifor Unit 1.

Question 27: Would a part-time (0.8 FTE / 4 days a week) employee also fall under STE status or is this employment category just for full time employees?

A part-time **appointment** with a set schedule, and a contract duration of **6-12 months** is considered Short-Term employment status.

Question 28: As an Employer, what are the financial impacts I need to consider for a Short-Term Employee

Hiring managers should refer to the [benefit rate table](#) which has been updated to include the cost of the STE group.

An employee with Short-Term Employee status will,

- start to pay union dues of 1.5% of wages
- accrue vacation in accordance with article 16 of the collective agreement. Given the short-term nature of STE it is possible the employee may not be able to use their vacation time during their contract period. In this case it will be paid out at the end of the contract based on an annual entitlement of 3 weeks, which is equivalent to 6% of their wages.

The employee can reach out to Unifor if they have questions about additional supports the union can offer them now that they are a member.

Question 29: Are employees with STE status entitled to the paid Civic Holiday (in August) compared with Temporary employees who follow entitlement to paid holidays, as per the Employment Standard Act (ESA)?

Article 16.05 applies to STE and therefore STE are entitled to both those holidays noted in the Employment Standards Act (ESA) as well as any additional paid holidays listed (including the Civic Holiday).