

The Direction canceled the negotiation meeting with the TA representatives

Today, 8th November, 2022 at 14:00 the representatives of the Teaching Assistant (TA) community were set to meet with the Direction to start long-awaited negotiations on TAs' contractual conditions. TA representatives are:

- The union officer (*secrétaire syndicale*) of the Syndicat Interprofessionnel des Travailleuses et Travailleurs (SIT). SIT was mandated by the TAs to negotiate alongside the Association des Assistants (ADA) on 29th April, 3rd June, and 4th November and is representative of the TAs;
- The three elected ADA representatives (Andrea Biswas Tortajada, Edouard Zeller, and Massimiliano Masini);
- Other TAs elected in assistants' General Assemblies to participate in the negotiations (the delegates).

The response to a call for negotiations: a more precarious contract

In the minutes of the first meeting between the TA representatives and the Direction held on 1st June, 2022, both parties agreed to work on building a joint solution to the issue of TA precarity by first establishing a meeting calendar. The following 15th June, the Direction announced the unilateral reduction of the activity rate in TA contracts beginning in September 2022 from 100% to 45%, further exacerbating the precarity the negotiations seek to address.

Procedural concerns: their rationale to cancel the meeting

Between June and October, TA representatives exchanged several emails with the Direction to set such a calendar for the Fall semester. The Direction repeatedly responded with proposals for a sole meeting. On 29th September, a date was set for 8th November at 14:00. In the two days leading to it, logistical details regarding room preferences and participants from the TA side were exchanged. Shortly before the reunion was meant to start (47 minutes), the Direction decided to call the meeting off. The reasons provided were:

1. The unilateral involvement of a third party, the Departement de l'Instruction Publique (DIP, "Department of Public Instruction, Training and Youth");
2. The "lack of formal information on the process of election and identity of recently-elected Ada Board members (...) besides first names";
3. The "possible presence of PhD representatives, who have no statutory role in this discussion."

These last two procedural concerns would have been very easily resolved had they been raised via email beforehand. Indeed, TA representatives listed as attendees ADA's board, SIT, and the TA delegates. There was never any mention of PhD representatives in the email exchanges.

Communicating with the DIP: a common practice

On 26th September 2022, TA representatives sent a letter to Mrs Anne Emery-Torracinta, DIP's State Counsel. It is common practice for trade unions like SIT and workers' associations to contact public dependencies financing employers to discuss working conditions. The letter shared concerns over TAs' contractual conditions and informed of the upcoming meeting with the IHEID's Direction and the wait for additional negotiation dates.

Refusal to negotiate with the workers' representatives

The Direction stated it was engaging in a discussion with the DIP until early December after which it will assess how to move the discussion forward. This is not a reason to refuse to negotiate with workers' representatives. Discussions with both the DIP and TA representatives together or in parallel would be beneficial and are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, refusing to negotiate with SIT, a union that has been mandated by the TAs,

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In addition to the three TA approved resolutions in different workers' general assemblies, a petition reiterating support for the negotiation has already been signed by 50 out of 68 TAs. This is a clear sign that the TA community stands united in demanding the contractual conditions we deserve.

TA representatives



Association des Assistant (ADA)

TAs demand contractual conditions to exit precarity

Teaching assistants (TAs) are a central component of our community and an important asset in delivering the Geneva Graduate Institute's mission to produce and share academic knowledge that can drive positive transformation. In particular, our work plays a crucial role in supporting faculty for training Master's students.

We stand with our negotiating delegation in reaching contractual conditions that are fair and address the precarity of TAs in a timely fashion. Therefore, we urge the Direction to meet our reasonable demands and ensure the well-being of all Institute workers by engaging in prompt and open negotiations with our delegation.

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