

## WCCFT Members

In recent years, some adjunct colleagues have successfully claimed unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for time periods (usually summer) in which they requested but were unable to secure teaching assignments. Others have inquired about the process. Here is some general guidance based on our members' past experience and research by the WCCFT Adjunct Committee:

1. UI claims are filed with the NY Department of Labor (DoL). See [https://labor.ny.gov/ui/how\\_to\\_file\\_claim.shtm](https://labor.ny.gov/ui/how_to_file_claim.shtm) for filing instructions and FAQs. Applications may be filed by phone or online.
2. Benefits don't begin until the second week after your application is filed, so the sooner you apply the better. Benefits are not applied retroactively.
3. The process generally takes about half an hour. If you are filing online, it is advisable to select the option of printing the application for your records. Members have found that, once submitted, the application cannot be retrieved and reviewed. Printing the application must be done on a page by page basis. The online application takes several page screens, each of which must be printed and submitted before moving on to the next page.
4. Have your NYSUT card handy as it has your union ID number, a necessary piece of information. Contact the WCCFT office at 914-345-8856 if you need help retrieving your number.
5. The amount of your UI benefits is based on your earnings over time, so when applying, you must provide the previous five calendar quarters of financial information.
6. If you do get a summer course at WCC or elsewhere, you must stop claiming UI benefits immediately unless your total load is less than the previous summer, eg if you taught two courses in Summer 2016 but were only offered one in Summer 2017. There are provisions for part-time UI benefits in such a situation, but the amount will be reduced.
7. The question "Why are you not working?" should simply be answered: "Lack of work."
8. Some UI claims have been challenged on the basis that applicants without summer teaching assignments had "reasonable assurance" of re-employment in the Fall. However, DoL administrative law judges considering such cases have, with increasing frequency, ruled in favor of adjuncts who explain that re-employment is not really guaranteed from semester to semester since any offer of work is subject to budget, enrollment, class / program offerings, "bumping" rights, and seniority.

9. Some members report that a technical challenge in completing the application online is that the form has only one answer box / drop-down menu to indicate the place of employment. Many adjuncts teach at multiple colleges. The way colleagues with multiple employers have fully informed DoL of their employment history has been to include in the supporting documentation all pay-stubs and 1099s and an additional letter specifying ALL employers.

Further information is available through the Workers Defense League (212 627 1931) and the WCCFT office at 914-345-8856.