



# QUFA ALERT!

Queen's University Faculty Association Bargaining Alert

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## We Have a Tentative Collective Agreement!

The New Collective Agreement (CA), if ratified, will offer numerous pension conversion offsets and other improvements for QUFA Members

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On 11 December 2018, QUFA and the university reached a tentative agreement on terms for a renewed collective agreement (CA). It includes offsets for costs to QUFA Members of conversion of the Queen's Pension Plan (QPP) to the new, jointly sponsored University Pension Plan (UPP). The tentative agreement is contingent on QUFA's consent on behalf of its Members to the conversion to the UPP. (The elements that offset pension conversion are also contingent upon the formation of the UPP, which, in addition to requiring the consent of the plan Members from all the merging pensions plans, is subject to a final stage of regulatory scrutiny.) Because all elements of the agreement are contingent on QUFA's consent regarding the pension conversion, QUFA Members who are also contributing members of the QPP will be asked to vote on a single question that combines ratification of the agreement and instruction to QUFA to consent to pension conversion.

So, what did we get? Below is a short digest. The full signed memoranda of agreement are on the QUFA Web site's bargaining page.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Members can consult more detailed explanations of some of the pension elements on the pension information page of the QUFA Web site.<sup>2</sup> The electronic vote to ratify these changes begins at **12.00 noon on 9 February 2019**.

### Pension Conversion Offsets

- **Unreduced early retirement at age 60** for Members with at least 20 years of service. Unreduced early retirement is a feature of the UPP. Upon inception of the UPP, it will become a feature of the QPP as well, so it will be available to all current plan members.
- **Phased retirement program** that permits Members to reduce their responsibilities and pay in the last three years of employment, but receive full pension credit and a bonus of 75% of salary, which is payable in various ways to allow Members to choose the most effective method of sheltering it from taxation.
- **1.5% salary increase to base** at the inception of the UPP to offset increased pension contributions.
- **A change of CA end date to 30 June 2022**, which will put QUFA in a stronger bargaining position, insofar as any future negotiations that are moving towards a strike or lockout situation will be doing

so on a timetable advantageous to QUFA.

### Terms for Renewal of the CA

- **A three-year agreement with across-the-board salary increases** of 1.6, 1.6, and 1.9 percent, with all monetary elements of the CA (e.g., professional expense reimbursement, minimum stipends for adjuncts) increasing by these amounts.
- **The maintenance of modest funding** (\$20K per annum) in each of the anomalies side table and the principal's anomaly fund, and \$5K per annum in the librarians anomalies account.
- **Agreement between the parties to change the language of the CA** to address certain normative issues with respect to:
  - **Article 9:** Non-discrimination and accommodation;
  - **Article 18:** Personal and intimate relations with students;
  - **Articles 20 and 21:** QUFA's access to investigation reports;
  - **Article 29 and Appendix:** Changes to reflect the adoption of the Queen's Survey of Student Experience of Teaching (QSSET) should the parties agree to that adoption;

- **Article 30:** Clarification with regard to renewal, tenure, and promotion processes;
- **Article 33:** Review of language relating to personal, childcare, and court-related leaves, which gives expression to or requires coordination with statutory obligations or benefits;
- **Article 37:** Installation in the CA of the workload standards review as part of the process for establishing unit workload standards;
- **Articles 28 and 42:** Review of the biennial merit assessment, including the consideration of adding 11 and 13 as permissible merit ratings.

In addition to these items, the renewed CA will provide that:

- Continuing adjuncts who are promoted to associate professor and receive external research funding within three years of the promotion will receive a 0.5 course release.
- Effective 1 July 1 2019, the “normal retirement date” for the QPP will be the last day of the month in which the Member turns age 65, a change from the current provisions that require Members to wait until 30 June after their 65th birthday.

These two items represent substantive gains for QUFA, bargained under the aegis of “offset” but are not contingent on the actual formation of the UPP. They are, as all items in the tentative agreement are, contingent upon QUFA’s consent to pension conversion.

QUFA is now embarked on an extensive campaign to inform Members about these proposed changes. This campaign includes:

- Unit visits
- Information sessions for Members at different career stages:
  - **24 Jan. 2019:** Late-Career
  - **30 Jan. 2019:** Mid-Career
  - **31 Jan. 2019:** Early-Career
- Pension information bulletins
- A presentation from Cameron Hunter, an actuary from Ecklers that QUFA has retained. He will explain the proposed pension change and take questions. That meeting is open to all Members and will take place on **4 Feb. 2019 at 3.00 p.m.** in Grant Hall.

In the event that Members do not ratify the agreements and/or instruct QUFA to consent to the pension conversion, QUFA will give notice to bargain and begin the process of negotiating a new CA. We will be doing this under much less favourable conditions than we enjoyed in December. If QUFA’s failure to consent blocks the conversion of the QPP to the UPP, then the University would be facing the ongoing burden of solvency payments as well as the impact of the Ford government’s just-announced 10% reduction in tuition fees. This financial state of affairs would surely lead to an ugly, concessionary round of bargaining.

The conversion to the UPP could occur without QUFA’s consent if plan members in USW, CUPE, and the unrepresented employees of the university consent to conversion. In that event, QUFA Members would lose the offsets that QUFA has bargained and all other features of the tentative agreement, including the ATB increases, but the University would be relieved of the solvency payments. As well, the features of the

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QPP that some Members are concerned about giving up would also disappear, but without the balance of new, advantageous features of the UPP as described above.

QUFA feels strongly that, in view of the current political climate, the proposed CA and UPP represent a win for our Members. Along with significant improvements in the proposed CA, the UPP will afford unassailable protection to defined-benefit pensions for the university sector.

Both QUFA executive and QUFA council have voted to recommend that Members ratify conversion of the pension to the UPP and the new terms negotiated for the 2019-2022 CA.

If you have any questions, please contact QUFA, at [qufa@queensu.ca](mailto:qufa@queensu.ca).

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup><https://www.qufa.ca/bargaining/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.qufa.ca/member-services/pension-information/>

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