



QUFA ALERT!

Queen's University Faculty Association Bargaining Alert

BARGAINING ALERT 4 • 9 July 2026

Job Action FAQ

Answers to some frequently asked questions about job action

By Amanda Ross-White
Chair, Job Action Committee, QUFA

What is Job Action?

Job Action can mean two things: a strike or a lockout. The difference is which side, the union or the employer, takes the action. In many cases, they look the same, because the other side responds to the job action in kind. For example, in August 2025, Dalhousie University administration locked out the faculty, so the union responded in kind, by picketing. In January of this year, Laurentian University Faculty Association went on strike, and the administration responded by locking faculty out of their e-mail and offices. From the perspective of the job action, whether it is initiated by the employer or the union, the preparations look the same. We need to be organized and ready.

Does this mean we're going on strike?

No. It means we are making important preparations should it be necessary. Being prepared for the worst is a normal part of bargaining, just like having an up-to-date will and power of attorney is an important preparation for end-of-life care. QUFA has put forward reasonable proposals for a fair and equitable Collective Agreement (CA). We continue to negotiate because we need to address workload concerns, to protect and enhance job security and compensation for contingent faculty, and to safeguard our academic freedom. Should the administration no longer bargain in good faith, or should the talks break down, we will be ready.

What has to happen before a strike or lockout takes place?

In Ontario, labour laws require certain things to happen before there is a strike or lockout. Right now, we are in bargaining, which means that both sides are actively talking and exchanging proposals for changes to the CA back and forth. Should that change and either side does not believe we are making progress, or the demands are unreasonable, we can file for conciliation. It is also normal to call on the services of a conciliation officer before the parties reach impasse, as the conciliation officer can be helpful in assisting the parties to reach compromises more quickly. It typically takes several

weeks for a conciliation officer to be appointed and have scheduling availability, so QUFA intends to file for conciliation near the end of July with the expectation that bargaining would be facilitated by a conciliation officer before the end of August.

In conciliation, a conciliation officer is appointed by the Ministry of Labour to meet with both sides. Should the negotiations facilitated by the conciliation officer fail to lead to mutual agreement, QUFA will consider calling for a strike vote. All QUFA Members will be given the opportunity to vote, which gives the QUFA Executive the support to strike if necessary. Should conciliation fail, either the university administration or QUFA can file what is called a "No Board Report."

When this happens, there is a cooling-off period of seventeen days. While talks can continue during this time, and an agreement can still be reached, you cannot strike or lock out the employees during these seventeen days. More information on this process can be found on the Ministry of Labour Web site.¹

What happens if there is a strike?

In the case of a strike, all QUFA Members are expected to withdraw their labour for the university. This means no teaching, but also no mentoring of students, no applying for grants, no research, no committee work, no reviewing of grants or papers, etc. The administration can direct IT to prevent faculty from logging into Queen's resources, including library resources, onQ, or even e-mail. Fob access to Queen's buildings may be disabled. Withdrawing our labour is how we put pressure on the administration because, without faculty, there is no university! Because workload is one of the major issues we want to raise, there is no better way to show the administration how much we do than to not do it.

Picketing is a visible way to show your support for a strike, but it is separate from the withdrawal of labour. We expect everyone who is able to do so to show their support by picketing.

What if I'm on leave?

This depends on your type of leave. If you are on parental leave or sick leave, we trust that you are not serving on committees or in other ways working for the university, because otherwise you are proving our point about unsustainable workloads! If you are on sabbatical leave, you

should withdraw your labour for the duration of the strike. We would not, however, expect you to picket if you are overseas.

I have a disability that makes it hard for me to walk a picket line. Do I need to picket?

Picketing is just one activity we do during a strike to provide a visible expression of our support for the strike. However, the picket lines will need people behind the scenes to support their actions, from people making phone calls, driving food and other supplies to and from the lines, carpooling, managing strike pay, taking photographs and helping with the social-media campaign, and more. Should we get closer to strike action we will have more information about alternative strike support duties for those who require it. However, we hope that all people who are able to engage in picket duty will do so, because a strong show of support ensures the strike ends quickly.

What are the next steps?

Our Bargaining Team continues to work to get us the best possible CA. Behind the scenes, the Job Action Committee is preparing for potential job action by searching for a possible

QUFA Bargaining Team

Jordan Morelli	(Chief Negotiator), Physics
Francine Berish	Library
Megan Edgelow	School of Rehabilitation Therapy
James Stotz	Physics
Ayca Tomac	Global Development Studies
Bradley Weinberg	Employment Relations Studies
Micheline Waring	QUFA Labour Relations Officer

strike headquarters, planning our strike budget, developing a campus map for strike locations, and doing other logistical work. You can support your Bargaining Team by following these *QUFA Alert!* updates.

At any time, please reach out to your council representative or a QUFA Executive member.

Note

¹<https://www.ontario.ca/page/collective-bargaining>

Amanda Ross-White can be reached at amanda.ross-white@queensu.ca.