QUFA ALERT!
Queen's University Faculty Association Bargaining Alert

BARGAINING ALERT 8 • 21 August 2026

QUFA Ratification Process

Now that a tentative agreement has been reached between QUFA and the Administration, the next step is to decide whether to accept (i.e., "ratify") it as the new Collective Agreement

By Jordan Morelli
Chief Negotiator, QUFA

Following QUFA's policy, "QUFA Protocol Regarding Authority and Processes for Negotiating Collective Agreements,"[1] when the Bargaining Team signs a tentative agreement with the employer, all three governance bodies of the union are involved in deciding whether a vote of the whole Bargaining Unit (BU)[2] will be called to decide whether to accept (i.e., "ratify") the new agreement.

First, the QUFA Executive and the Council of Representatives separately consider the terms of the tentative agreement, and vote whether to call a Ratification Meeting for Members to review the terms. If either of those bodies votes in favour of calling a Ratification Meeting, then one is called.

At a Ratification Meeting, to which all Members of the BU are invited, the Bargaining Team presents the tentative agreement, and the Members present at the meeting vote on whether to call a Ratification Vote of the whole BU.

If a Ratification Vote is called, it will be run in a manner similar to the Strike Vote:

- an online ballot will be issued through SimplyVoting;
- ballots will be sent to all current Members of the BU;
- a simple majority of those who vote is required to ratify or defeat the motion.

If the ratification vote is positive, then QUFA assents to adopt the terms of a renewed CA that the parties negotiated. Queen's Board of Trustees must also vote to ratify these terms for a renewed CA to come into being.

If QUFA BU Members do not ratify the tentative agreement, it is often interpreted as a sign that they are dissatisfied with the work of the Bargaining Team. In that case, the Executive may appoint a different Chief Negotiator and Bargaining Team to resume negotiations.

If one or the other party (QUFA or Queen's) does not ratify the tentative agreement, then negotiations *may* resume. In the case that only one party fails to ratify, the other party would generally seek to move to the next stage of the process. In our current situation, that would mean asking the provincial Conciliator to file for a "No Board" report so that the parties can move to being legally able to strike (in the case of the union) or lockout (in the case of the employer).

Once in that position, if the union rejected the tentative agreement, the employer may hold what's called a "Final Offer Vote" where they put a tentative agreement before the

Ratification Process in Brief

1. QUFA Executive and Council separately consider the terms of the tentative agreement and decide whether to call a Ratification Meeting. If one or both agree, a Ratification Meeting is scheduled.
2. At the Ratification Meeting, the Bargaining Team presents the terms of the tentative agreement to the Bargaining Unit. The Bargaining Unit then decides whether to call for a Ratification Vote.
3. In the Ratification Vote, Members of the Bargaining Unit vote online to accept or reject the tentative agreement. A simple majority is required to ratify or defeat the motion.
4. If the Bargaining Unit votes to accept the tentative agreement, QUFA will adopt it as the new Collective Agreement. The Board of Trustees must also vote to accept the tentative agreement.

   If the Bargaining Unit votes to reject the tentative agreement, negotiations with the Administration may resume. The QUFA Executive may appoint a new Chief Negotiator and/or Bargaining Team.
5. If either party votes to reject the tentative agreement, the provincial Conciliator will be asked to file for a "No Board" Report to move the parties into a legal strike or lockout position.
6. If QUFA was the party that rejected the tentative agreement, the employer may decide to hold a "Final Offer Vote," and/or to lockout Members until a new agreement is negotiated.

   If the Board of Trustees was the party that rejected the tentative agreement, QUFA may decide to go on strike to force the Board to accept the terms of the tentative agreement.

Members of the QUFA BU for consideration. They can only do this once and it's risky, but if they think Members will agree to their terms, it's worth a try. Also, once in a legal job-action (strike or lockout) position, the employer can impose its own terms of employment until a new contract is mutually agreed upon.[3]

If the Queen's Board did not ratify the tentative agreement but QUFA BU Members did, we could ask for the "No Board" report to be filed and then strike to force the Board to accept the bargained terms.

These last procedural steps to ratify the terms recommended by the party's Bargaining Teams ensure that both teams operated within the mandate they were given, by Members in QUFA's case and by the Board in Queen's case.

What You Can Expect

The QUFA Executive is meeting on 26 August 2026 and arrangements are being made to hold a special meeting of Council shortly thereafter. If either or both vote to hold a Ratification Meeting, all Members will be notified, and we will begin to organize Town Halls and information bulletins to explain, in detail, the terms being recommended by the Bargaining Team. This will be in preparation for a Ratification Meeting where those who attend vote to send the tentative agreement to a Ratification Vote. We will keep you updated via e-mail, social media, and the QUFA Web site (qufa.ca/bargaining) as the process unfolds. If you have any questions, please reach out to QUFA at any time.

QUFA Bargaining Team

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Notes

[1]https://qufa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025_11-QUFA-Policies-Protocols.pdf

[2]The BU includes all Members currently employed by Queen's to do work covered by the QUFA Collective Agreement (CA). You do not need to become a Member of the Association to attend and vote in a meeting of the BU.

[3]For the duration of bargaining, until we are in a legal lockout or strike position, the terms of the prior CA are presumed to be in place. This is referred to as the "freeze provisions" of labour law.

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