

SESSIONAL FACULTY STRIKE FAQ

From your local
CUPE 3906



WHY ARE SESSIONALS PREPARING TO STRIKE?

Here's how McMaster wages for sessional instructors currently measure up:



McMaster is a core member of the U15, an association of top research universities in Canada. Despite this, **the base rate that McMaster pays sessional faculty is much less than other U15 universities in Ontario.** Additionally, sessional faculty at McMaster have poor job security and even those who have taught the same class for years have **no guarantee of ongoing employment.** The disruption caused by a strike will **force McMaster to improve wages and job security.**

WHAT IS A STRIKE?

A strike is when workers **stop working** in order to push their employer to improve their working conditions, such as wages, job security, benefits, more time off etc. Workers take actions, such as setting up picket lines against their employer to disrupt business as usual at their workplace to increase their leverage in negotiations.

DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO STRIKE?

In **Canada, striking is a legally protected right** under section 2(d), the freedom of association, of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as ruled by the Supreme Court in Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan in 2015. This right also applies to immigrant workers. Participating in a strike does not affect your student or work visa.



WHO IS ORGANIZING THIS STRIKE?

A strike is organized by a local's Strike Committee in tandem with the Bargaining Team. This committee decides what actions a union will take against their employer during a strike. **Any member of our union can join the Strike Committee** and help make decisions. Strike Committees usually meet weekly during a strike but other meetings can be called as needed. Members of the Bargaining Team are elected from the sessional faculty who are unionized with CUPE Local 3906.

WHEN WAS A STRIKE DECIDED ON?

The employer filed for conciliation in November, escalating the bargaining process toward a strike. A strike vote was conducted among unionized sessional faculty in December 2024. **83% of votes were in favour**, signifying a strong desire to strike if talks break down at the bargaining table

WHAT DO I DO WHEN THE STRIKE IS CALLED?

When a strike begins the most important thing for you to do is **STOP WORKING**. Do not perform any of your normal job duties for the entire duration of the strike. Continuing to work during a strike weakens our leverage and makes it easier for the employer to refuse our demands. If you do nothing else during a strike, at minimum you should stop working. Workers who continue to work or do the work of others during a strike are called "scabs". Scabbing only slows the negotiating process during a strike and makes a strike last much longer than if everyone withdraws their labour.

Do. Not. Be. A. Scab.

WHAT IF I HAVE ANOTHER JOB AT MCMASTER?

Only unionized sessional faculty are currently contemplating striking. You are not crossing the picket line by working another job that you may have at McMaster.

WILL I BE PAID DURING A STRIKE?

Although you will not receive regular wages while striking, **you will be paid for performing strike duties** as compensation for lost wages. Strike pay is \$17.50/hour for approved and verified strike duties. Strike duties include walking a picket line, strike office work, making calls, and all other duties approved by the local Strike Committee.

The Strike Committee has also voted to set up a hardship fund to supplement members experiencing particular financial hardship while on strike.

WHAT CAN I DO IN THE MEANTIME?

The most important thing to do at this moment is to sign up for picket duties at this QR code:



To join the Strike Committee or ask any other questions, email: president@cupe3906.org