



Student Information FAQ

The College Employer Council (CEC) and the Union OPSEU CAAT-A bargaining team (representing full-time and partial-load professors, instructors, librarians, and counsellors) are currently negotiating a collective agreement.

Formal negotiations between the parties started in July 2021. After many months of bargaining, mediation, and conciliation, the parties remain apart on key issues.

Currently, CAAT-A union membership are taking part in work-to-rule strike action. The below FAQ was created to help answer student questions about the ongoing labour dispute.

To review a glossary of terms, [click here](#).

Q: What is a strike?

- A strike may take different forms. In general, it is a refusal to work in the normal way that is designed to slow down, disrupt, or stop operations. A strike is organized by a Union as a form of protest typically in an attempt to force the employer to agree to their demands.
- Unfortunately, in the Colleges, when a faculty member chooses to apply pressure by slowing down, disrupting or stopping work, these actions lead to varying degrees of negative impact on students.

Q: What are the different forms of strike?

- Work-to-rule, partial walk-out, rotating strike, and full walk-out are all forms of strike.
- In work-to-rule, employees perform only the duties that have been assigned, strictly adhering to policy and contract obligations.
- In a partial walk-out, employees refuse to perform some of their assigned duties.
- In a rotating strike, employees walk out entirely for short periods of time at different institutions.
- In a full walk-out strike, employees withdraw all their services and choose to walk the picket line.

Q: Does labour action mean a strike?

- Labour action does mean strike. Strike action can take various forms, which include: work-to-rule, partial walk-out, rotating strike, all the way up to a full walk out.
- Only the Union can determine what forms of strike action will occur and when.

Q: What is work-to-rule?

- In work-to-rule, employees perform only the duties that have been assigned, strictly adhering to policy and contract obligations.

Q: Will classes still run during work-to-rule?

- In work-to-rule, teachers continue to teach their classes and perform duties as assigned.



Q: What are the key issues the CEC and the Union disagree on?

- The CEC and the Union are in agreement on the importance of working groups for Equity Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI), Indigeneity, and workload. The parties disagree on how recommendations from the working groups should be implemented.
- Union demands on workload exceed limitations currently imposed by law ([Bill 124](#)) within the province of Ontario.
- Additionally, the parties disagree on ownership of intellectual property and the Colleges' right to assign work across employee groups.
- A comparison chart between the proposals is available [here](#).

Q: What is “introducing terms and conditions”?

- Introducing terms and conditions means the Colleges make changes to the employment contracts of the bargaining unit members.
- As of Monday December 13, the CEC has introduced terms and conditions to give employees raises, improve benefits, and initiate other improvements in working conditions.
- This does not affect the delivery of your program or your classes, lock anyone out of the College, or mean that negotiations cannot continue.

Q: Will introducing terms and conditions affect my classes?

- No.
- Introducing terms and conditions does not affect the ability of full-time and partial-load professors and instructors to teach. Nor will it affect the way in which classes are delivered.

Q: Will work-to-rule affect my classes?

- Work-to-rule should not affect your classes.
- Work-to-rule means employees continue to do their job performing duties they have been assigned such as teaching and grading.

Q: Will the Colleges force faculty to go on a full walk-out strike?

- The Colleges cannot force faculty to go on strike.
- Only the Union team can determine what form of strike action it engages in (work-to-rule, partial walk-out, rotating strikes, walk-out).

Q: How long will a strike last?

- They can last for a day or for an extended period of time.
- Currently, the Union has been engaged in strike action since December 18, 2021.
- In 2017, the Union engaged in a full walk-out strike that lasted for more than 5 weeks. Students were still able to complete their semester.



Q: Can I access campus if there is a full walk-out strike?

- Yes, campuses will remain open subject to pandemic restrictions.
- When picket lines occur, picketers cannot prevent access to those looking to enter campus.
- In the event of a full walk-out which includes picket lines, information will be provided by your College on how to safely access campus.

Q: How could strike action impact the Winter 2022 Semester?

- There is the potential the Winter 2022 semester could be interrupted and/or extended.
- The current strike action could escalate further. However, if the semester is impacted, Colleges will do everything possible to ensure that all students have the opportunity to complete the semester.

Q: If the strike escalates, what should I do?

- Go to your College website for updates on the labour dispute.
- If you plan to visit campus, leave extra time for travelling to the college as picket lines may be set up at campus entrances and limit traffic flow.
- If there is a full walk-out strike and you take transit to campus, be aware that transit buses will drop students off outside of the campus to respect picket lines.

Q: Why don't the Colleges agree to voluntary binding interest arbitration if that's what happens after a strike anyways?

- The Colleges do not want there to be a strike.
- The Colleges have made multiple offers in attempts to resolve all issues.
- Voluntary binding interest arbitration is not the answer to concluding negotiations nor is it always what happens after a strike.
- The parties have the responsibility to bargain and negotiate a settlement that both parties can live with. The Union has proposed to delegate its obligation to a third party and have an agreement imposed.
- Throughout the ongoing collective agreement negotiations, the CEC has been clear with the Union bargaining team about areas that still show room for common ground and which unreasonable and unlawful demands we cannot agree to.
- The CEC is not prepared to have an arbitrator "split the difference" on key issues.

Q: Why did the CEC propose Final Offer Selection?

- In response to the union's request for voluntary binding arbitration, the CEC had proposed final offer selection which built in the opportunity for mediation and if an agreement could not be reached the selection of one proposal in its entirety.
- The CEC believes its offer is fair and reasonably addresses the issues presented by the Union.



Q: The Faculty have said this isn't about money, is it?

- The Union demands do cost money and go against Bill 124.
- The Union's demands affect the number of courses professors can teach in a semester. This will increase the overall cost to deliver college programs across the system.

Q: Why did the CEC walk away from the table?

- The CEC has not walked away from the table.
- The CEC remains engaged in the negotiation process and, once again, advanced a revised proposal on November 23 which the Union has yet to acknowledge or respond to.
- We have offered through the conciliator to meet with the Union once they remove the unreasonable and unlawful demands from their proposal.

Q: Where can I learn more about negotiations and strike action?

- The CEC website contains information on the bargaining process and an ongoing archive of proposals from both parties.
- Additionally, all news updates are published across CEC social media channels and the website.
- Please visit www.CollegeEmployerCouncil.ca or follow the CEC on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [YouTube](#).