

March 24, 2023

Strike Info for CUASA Members

Below is some information that will be useful for CUASA members in the event of a strike by CUPE 4600 members. CUASA members can also read the Association's [Policy and Advice Statement With Respect to Strikes By Members of Another Bargaining Unit](#). Note, some of the information in the policy and advice statement is also included throughout the answers below.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact us at cuasa@cuasa.ca. We thank all CUASA members in supporting our CUPE 4600 colleagues.

If there is a strike, do I still need to report to work?

In the event of a strike, all non-CUPE 4600 teaching staff are expected to continue working. This means that CUASA members will be expected to continue their duties, including reporting to campus for scheduled classes.

Will classes be cancelled?

Should CUPE 4600 Unit 2 strike, classes taught by Contract Instructors will be suspended until the strike is over. However, classes taught by CUASA members will be expected to continue during a strike.

Can I move my classes online?

In an [update issued](#) March 22, Provost Jerry Tomberlin advised that, in the event of a strike by CUPE 4600 members, "In consideration of the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, course instructors may choose to temporarily move their classes online, where possible and at their discretion".

While it is being framed as a safety and wellbeing concern, this suggestion from the Provost can be interpreted as an attempt by the University to undermine possible striking activities. It is a



tactic that could also set a precedent to undermine future labour disruptions from other campus unions, including CUASA.

At the request of our colleagues from CUPE 4600, and in the name of solidarity, we are urging CUASA members to not move your classes online. Please do not weaken the strength of any job action by CUPE 4600 members.

Do I have to cross the picket line? What if I don't want to?

While we recognize that CUASA members may not wish to cross the picket line to show support for CUPE 4600 members, your obligations under the collective agreement do not change during a job action by a fellow union.

CUASA members who do not cross the picket lines to report to work run a risk of disciplinary action by the employer; such disciplinary action usually takes the form of docking of pay. In the event of such discipline, members of the bargaining unit have a right to fair representation from the Association as in any other case.

What if students in my classes refuse to cross the picket line?

There may be cases where students refuse to cross the picket line to attend classes, and this is their right. Such conscientious objection should be respected without prejudice to the individual student. CUASA members should take appropriate measures to accommodate such objections by your students. However, it is up to your students to ensure they complete their coursework and assignments.

In the event of a strike, how difficult will it be to access campus? Will roadway entrances be blocked? How much time should people allow to get onto campus?

Picketers are not permitted to block access to the university. However, you may expect delays entering and exiting the campus, so please allow yourself some extra time and use caution when approaching campus entrances. We kindly ask that all CUASA members be respectful of picketers and their legal right to strike.

For transit users, OC Transpo will most likely not cross the picket lines as a sign of union solidarity.

I want to show my support for CUPE 4600. What's the best way to do that while still accessing campus?

You should respect their picket lines, take leaflets, and listen to their information. Outside of your working hours, you might consider joining the picket lines or engaging in other acts of solidarity.



What about work by TAs assigned to my classes?

Job action can affect procedures and deadlines. If CUPE 4600 Unit 1 (Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants) go on strike, there will likely be delays on items where striking employees' work is normally required. In the event of a Unit 1 strike, any labs or tutorials normally conducted by TAs will be suspended; any grading normally done by TAs will have to wait until the strike is over and those 4600 members return to work.

Can I ask my TAs to submit grades early before they go on strike?

We have been asked by CUPE 4600 to inform our members of the Unit 1 (Teaching Assistants) collective agreement language regarding grading, following reports that some TAs have been asked to submit their grades early in the leadup to a possible strike:

“Marking Deadlines

Employees shall not be required to return marked assignments or otherwise complete marking in less than five (5) working days, from the date they are given marking instructions and access to the material to be marked.”

Please respect the TAs' collective agreement and do not ask them to submit grading early, which could also serve to undermine possible strike activity from 4600. In the event of a strike, any grading normally done by TAs will have to wait until the strike is over and for those members to return to work.

Can I be asked to do the work of 4600 members on strike?

There is no expectation for CUASA members to do the work of another bargaining unit that is on strike. You cannot be asked to teach courses normally taught by contract instructors. You cannot be asked to conduct labs or tutorials normally led by teaching assistants. You cannot be asked to do grading normally done by teaching assistants. Engaging in any of these activities is scabbing and will undermine the strength of CUPE 4600's strike.

If, at any time, CUASA members are asked to perform additional duties outside of their regular responsibilities, in particular duties that you know are traditionally performed by a striking employee, you are asked to contact our Grievance Team for immediate advice at grievance@cuasa.ca.

What if I am ordered to do the work of a CUPE 4600 member?

CUASA members who are ordered, pressured, or compelled in any way by the Employer to do the work of a CUPE 4600 member are in a “work now, grieve later” situation. Any members who experience this are asked to contact our Grievance Team for immediate advice at grievance@cuasa.ca.

