

## Picket Line Protocols for Undergraduate Students at Queen's University

### For the labour strike of PSAC901 Unit 1 beginning March 10th 2025 at 12:01am.

Instructions for undergraduate students during the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Local 901, Unit 1 strike of Teaching Assistants (TAs), Teaching Fellows (TFs), and Research Assistants (RAs).

### **Who is PSAC 901 Unit 1?**

- We are the graduate student workers who run your tutorials, teach your classes, run your labs, mark your assignments, and assist with professors' research. PSAC 901 is our union, which we share with Postdoctoral Scholars at Queen's. Right now, *we are struggling*. Our income is below the poverty line, food and housing insecurity are major problems, and we are working in unsafe working conditions.

### **Why a Strike?**

- Queen's University—NOT your TAs, RAs, and TFs—are responsible for this strike. We are striking because Queen's refuses to give us a fair and equitable contract. The message is clear: by neglecting graduate workers, they are neglecting YOU, the undergraduate students who pay high tuition fees to attend this university.
- Did you know that a full-time minimum wage worker in Ontario makes just over \$36,000 a year? Even though we teach your classes and run your labs, we often make half—and less than half—than that amount. We cannot focus on giving you the education you deserve if we are struggling to afford to keep a roof over our heads and put food on our plates.

### **What will the strike look like?**

- While on strike, PSAC 901 members will not be marking assignments, answering emails, running tutorials or labs, teaching lectures, marking/proctoring exams, or holding office hours. As such, you likely will not have your work marked or grades inputted.
- The reality is that while PSAC members are on strike, **the operations of this university and your education will be impacted. Graduation dates could also be affected if the university does not offer a fair and equitable deal.**
- In order to help prevent this from happening, ask your professors, departments, and faculty to tell the Queen's administration to support a fair deal! Tell them you know how valuable graduate student work is and that we deserve a fair and equitable contract.

# PSAC 901

## **What can you do to help?**

- The most important thing you can do is minimize “crossing the line,” which includes entering Queen's buildings and participating in university classes and events. Participating in these activities allows the university to act like it is business as usual, which harms our effort.
- Any time you are able, refuse to cross the picket line. This can be tough, but everytime you refuse, it helps us show the university that the community supports us! If you see a group of people picketing, remember, it will be more helpful to join the line than to cross it. Looking for a quiet place to study? Head to the Kingston Public Library!
- **Help avert a strike by signing [PSAC's Solidarity Petition](#)**
- **In the event of a strike, *show up*. The more people that show up, the more we can put pressure on Queen's to do the right thing.**

## **Want more information? Read on!**

### ***What is picketing?***

Picketing is a form of protest outside a workplace to **impede access and disrupt** an employer's day-to-day operations. Picketing also allows workers the opportunity to **inform the public about the workplace concerns for which they are fighting**. In this case, a strike that will be legally allowed to begin **March 10th**.

### ***What is crossing a picket line?***

The phrase “crossing a picket line” can mean physically entering a campus building, but it can also include attending virtual events, meetings, or classes. Every time someone crosses the picket line, it weakens the impact of the protest and prolongs strike action. It also signals that the community doesn't value the labour of striking workers.

### ***How else to support picket lines?***

- Refuse to enter any unsafe buildings. This may include buildings with “high risk laboratories,” which contain radioactive, biohazardous, or hazardous chemical materials, or where there is the presence of equipment that poses a significant risk of injury (e.g. woodworking tools, cranes/hoists) or where there are regulations requiring oversight (e.g. X-Rays, lasers, etc.). According to Queen's last-minute contingency planning documents,

# PSAC 901

these buildings will likely be unsafe because graduate-student workers are not maintaining them during a strike.

- Do not go to events on campus during a strike. Request that organizers cancel their events.
- Email your professors and encourage them to withhold labour and cancel classes in solidarity with PSAC members.
- Find creative ways to put pressure on Queen's.
  - For example, submit assignments and then follow up regularly with your professor and/or department head about their return. CC the Principal and Provost at [principal@queensu.ca](mailto:principal@queensu.ca), [provost@queensu.ca](mailto:provost@queensu.ca) (it's largely their fault).
- Attend an undergraduate info session or, in the event of a strike, join us on the line to show your support!
- Direct any emails normally sent to TAs to your professors to help make them aware of the workload normally done by TAs.
- Write to Principal Patrick Deane and the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Matthew Evans [principal@queensu.ca](mailto:principal@queensu.ca), [provost@queensu.ca](mailto:provost@queensu.ca) (it's largely their fault). to request that they give us a fair and equitable deal and remind them of their role in the disruption.
- Ask your parents/guardians to forward concerns to Principal Patrick Deane and the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Matthew Evans, and put pressure on Queen's to reach a fair and equitable deal with PSAC members. *Please remember to direct frustrations to the University, not to graduate student-workers who are being forced by Queen's to fight for basic necessities.*
- **Remember that your support strengthens our cause and assists us in the crucial fight for fair wages, and equitable and safe work.**

With love and solidarity,

PSAC 901