

Job Action Policy

MSVUFA

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Table of Contents

<i>INTENT</i>	2
STRIKE	3
<i>Domains of Labour</i>	3
Strike Pay	5
Payment, Benefits, and Leaves	6
Letters to Verify Strike or Lockout	7
Collective Agreement Timelines	7
Strike Duties	7
Picketing	8
Strike Headquarters and Communication	9
Communication During a Strike or Lockout	9
Campus Access	9
Information Technology	10
<i>LOCKOUT</i>	10
Personal belongings	10
Physical files	11
Digital files	11
Email	11
SOLIDARITY	11

INTENT

The goal of job action is to further progress toward a collective agreement acceptable to the members of the Mount Saint Vincent Faculty Association (MSVUFA). This policy is intended to provide clear information and guidance to members of the MSVUFA (henceforth, members) regarding job action during the Collective Bargaining process.

STRIKE

A strike is a collective withdrawal of services or stoppage of work generally used to apply pressure on an employer to agree to terms and conditions of employment.

For the duration of the strike, members will cease to perform all work considered part of their normal duties and responsibilities at MSVU. It is critical for all members to withdraw their services to ensure an effective job action and to expedite the conclusion of a collective agreement. This includes: labour in domains of research and other scholarly activity; teaching; graduate student supervision; and, all university service. It includes work performed in-person and on-line, off-campus and on-campus.

Information about how members can prepare for a strike has been provided in the [Strike Contingency Planning](#) document on the [MSVUFA website](#).

Domains of Labour

Labour is to be withdrawn from the employer in domains of teaching, research, and service. This includes labour conducted virtually or in-person, by any mode of communication.

Teaching

For the duration of strike action, members will cease to perform all labour considered part of their normal teaching responsibilities at MSVU. Students will not be responsible for completing any course work. Examples of teaching responsibilities to be withheld include, but are not limited to:

- graduate and undergraduate teaching or lab work.
- supervision or assessment of student practicums or co-op work experiences.
- supervision or assessment of Honours or graduate proposals, theses, and projects.
- teaching-related or professional consultation with students.
- maintenance of digital systems (e.g., Moodle) used for teaching or other university functions.

Writing reference letters is not a responsibility outlined under the collective agreement. Therefore, members are permitted to write reference letters for students during job action. Members may choose to provide personal contact information to students in advance of a strike for purposes of coordinating letters of reference.

In cases where part time faculty, who have their own Collective Agreement as members of CUPE, are teaching labs associated with courses taught by MSVUFA members, it is recommended that part-time faculty continue to be present at the classroom or lab as directed by their contract. However, part-time faculty are not to teach content intended for

the MSVUFA member to teach. Part-time faculty may, at their own discretion, remove or waive penalties for students who choose to not attend class.

Asking graduate students to cover an MSVUFA member's teaching duties during job action is considered strikebreaking.

Research

For the duration of strike action, members cease to perform all research and scholarly activities considered part of their normal responsibilities at MSVU.

Procedures for maintaining laboratories and research staffing are as follows:

- Campus access permissions will be granted to members who must attend to biologicals, chemicals, or laboratory equipment, as described under "Access Requests."
- All members who work with chemicals or biologicals will provide a current inventory to the Research Office for emergency response purposes.
- Although members are on strike, their paid research staff may access campus and perform work, provided they can do so independently and without increased health and safety or regulatory concerns.
 - If their work involves laboratory or field research procedures or human participants and their data, the Principal Investigator or Supervisor must contact the AVP, Research to request a review.
 - All active and pending Animal Care Committee (ACC) or Research Ethics Board (REB) files will be paused for the duration of the labour action. To continue research under a previously approved REB or ACC protocol, a change to research study personnel ([REB.FORM.014](#)) request identifying a new research supervisor must be submitted to the Research Office for review by the Research Ethics Coordinator. Researchers should ensure prior to requesting any changes to personnel that the request complies with funding eligibility criteria.
 - Research staff, including student employees, who are employed on contract by members, will be paid their biweekly salary unless the payroll office receives written notice to discontinue payment from the employing member. Such notice must include the names of all affected employees and the effective dates for the suspension of pay. Members are responsible for notifying their research staff of such a change.

Members are discouraged from participating in meetings, conferences, or research funding applications through the strike period. However, some members may be unable to revoke existing commitments in these areas.

- If a member attends meetings or conferences during the strike, they are still considered on strike and will not be paid salary. However, expense claims for such activities will be processed after the strike action.
- Internal and external research grant application deadlines may fall during periods of strike action. Members who plan to submit applications to external grant or award agencies with competition deadlines during a strike should notify the Research Office. Any affected deadlines for internal grants and awards will be extended accordingly.

Service

For the duration of strike action, members will cease to perform all work considered part of their normal service responsibilities at MSVU. Examples of service responsibilities to be withheld include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in MSVU committees.
- Participation in committees where the member is representing MSVU.
- Routine advising of students.
- All professional services (Librarian members).

Members employed at MSVU in another capacity

Members who are employed in another capacity at MSVU will be permitted to cross the picket line upon application to Job Action Committee Chair, Lindsey MacCallum; upon approval, these members will be issued a picket pass. Such members are required to refrain from performing either their own MSVUFA duties or those of another member. In addition, such members are expected to support the strike, and will be required to complete regular strike duties in order to receive strike pay.

Questions about whether certain activities are acceptable should be directed to Lindsey MacCallum at lindsey.maccallum@msvufa.ca.

Strike Pay

MSVUFA is a member of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and a member of CAUT Defence Fund. The Fund provides benefits to an academic staff association while its members engage in strike action or are locked out. The Fund provides benefits to member unions for distribution among members.

MSVUFA follows CAUT Defence Fund strike pay policies.

In order to qualify for strike pay, members are required to perform strike service up to 20 hours per week. Although strike service will occur only on weekdays (see Strike Duties,

below), strike pay will be issued for both weekdays and weekends. Members performing strike service will receive tax-free strike pay of \$100 per day for the first 14 days. Pay will increase in the event of a third week to \$125 per day and then to \$150 per day during the fourth week. The first payment date will be Friday, February 23, 2024.

Members not performing strike service will not receive strike pay.

- If a member chooses to take a vacation and doesn't do any work to support a strike action, that member will not receive strike pay.
- Strike pay will not be provided to any member who crosses the picket line, except for reasons, listed under Campus Access, related to maintaining laboratories, dropping off or picking up children at the Child Study Centre, or accessing the Health Clinic at Assisi Hall.
- Strike pay will not be provided to any member who accepts remuneration from the Employer for bargaining-unit work during the strike period.

Payment, Benefits, and Leaves

The following benefits will be continued during strike action, according to the employer's [Strike Protocols](#):

- Pregnancy and parental leaves.
- Long term disability (LTD) coverage for those who are on LTD prior to the start of the strike.

The following benefits will continue for up to 31 days, billed to the MSVUFA, after which continued payment would require renegotiation with the employer:

- Health and dental benefits.
- Life insurance and accidental death & dismemberment insurance.

As per Strike Protocols, payment of the following will be discontinued for the duration of the job action:

- Salaries.
- Sick leave.
- Vacation leave.
- Stipends.
- Allowances.
- Contributions to the MSVU group retirement plan.
- Statutory and MSVU proclaimed holidays will also be discontinued.

As per Strike Protocols, MSVUFA members currently on sabbatical are not considered to be on a leave of absence and will be considered on strike. Members on sabbatical whose

research activities and/or location prevent their participation in strike action should contact the Vice President, Academic and Provost to request an exception.

Note: the MSVUFA disagrees with and has filed a grievance on behalf of all members, in particular those on sick or sabbatical leave, regarding discontinuation of sabbatical leave and sick leave during strike action.

Letters to Verify Strike or Lockout

Mortgage lenders will often approve alternative payment schedules in case of strike or lockout, as will some credit-card companies and landlords.

Collective Agreement Timelines

Timelines under the expired collective agreement, including those related to Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure, and Grievance will be suspended during the strike. Required adjustments will be addressed after the strike has ended.

Strike Duties

Strike work will be scheduled in two-hour shifts on the picket line or four-hour shifts in strike headquarters. Shifts will occur between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Strike duty schedules are issued based on the information members have provided on the Strike Activities document and the Strike Shifts, Carpooling, and Furniture Donations document. Members who need to update their availabilities should no longer use these documents but should contact the Picket Line Coordinator Nicole Slipp at Nicole.Slipp@msvufa.ca.

Strike work will normally take the form of picketing. Accommodations will be made for members who are unable to picket due to circumstances, including the following:

- Members who are unable to picket because of a medical condition, disability, or other exceptional circumstances.
- Members who are unable to complete their scheduled hours of strike work due to illness. In this case, the member should immediately notify their Picket Captain to avoid loss of strike pay.
- Members who are required to be physically away from Halifax during the strike.

In all cases, members will be assigned alternate duties, which may include on-line duties (e.g., scheduling, budgeting, thank-you notes). However, these tasks will be

prioritized for MSVUFA members who can't be on the picket line due to health concerns.

Picketing

Picketing is extremely important in any job action and is a protected activity. It is a visible and historical job action that communicates fair labour disruption.

Picketing will occur in front of MSVU on the Bedford Highway, in areas that do not interfere with bus stops or vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Picketing will not be permitted on campus. However, according to Strike Protocols, members participating in strike action will be permitted to access porta-potties located in the parking lot in front of EMF.

There are rules governing picketing that protect both the rights of picketers and the freedoms of the public. These include:

- Picketers have the right to picket, to inform the public, and to attempt to dissuade people from crossing a picket line.
- Picketers do not have the right to trespass on private property.
- No one may intimidate picketers, nor may picketers intimidate anyone.
- Picketers must not engage in violent behaviour.
- Picketers must not engage in any activity that undermines the purpose of the strike.
- The public has the right to cross the picket line.
- MSVUFA members have the legal right to cross the picket line, although they forfeit the right to strike pay in doing so. Crossing the picket line typically produces substantial morale deterioration within the bargaining unit and is discouraged.

Picket Line Captains are members who will manage picket line shifts, while Picket Line Coordinators are members who will manage Picket Captains. Members must sign in at the beginning of their picketing shifts; attendance sheets will be available with Picket Line Captains on the picket line. Members may go to Strike Headquarters (see below) at the beginning of their shifts and then be shuttled to the picket line. Those who live nearby may wish to proceed directly to the picket line on the Bedford Highway. Note that members are not permitted to park on campus.

Picket Line Captains are expected to monitor behaviour on picket lines to ensure compliance with the above guidelines and to safeguard the wellbeing of picketers. Safety concerns or other issues that arise on the picket line must be reported promptly to the Picket Captain, who will report to the Picket Coordinator.

The Job Action Committee is responsible for communications between pickets and headquarters, and for organizing rides to picket lines and to strike headquarters for members and for out-of-town visitors.

The Job Action Committee will perform services on or near the picket lines, including ensuring a steady supply of food and refreshments in strike headquarters, and providing first aid kits to be carried by picket captains.

Strike Headquarters and Communication

MSVUFA's strike headquarters is located at 70 Lacewood Drive in the Halifax Buy & Sell unit. Strike headquarters will be open to all members during normal picket schedule hours. Basic essential services, coordination of transportation, and wireless internet services to support communication will be provided through strike headquarters.

Communication During a Strike or Lockout

Your MSVUFA email address will remain available during a strike or a lockout (see information about lockouts, below). If you have not accessed your MSVUFA email before, or you have forgotten your login information, please contact Verona Leslie at admin@msvufa.ca to get into your account. The MSVUFA emails will be where all official communication from the MSVUFA will be sent in the case of a strike or lockout.

Members are also responsible for providing an alternative personal email address (distinct from both MSVU and MSVUFA addresses) and phone number using the [Personal Contact Information form](#).

Members-at-Large are responsible for representing and responding to questions and concerns of members, both during a strike and in general. These members of the MSVUFA Executive function as liaisons between MSVUFA members and MSVUFA leadership. Members can identify their Members-at-Large by visiting the [Executive Committee page](#) of the MSVUFA Association website.

Campus Access

As per the Strike Protocols, striking members will be prohibited access to the following buildings and areas:

- All parking areas on campus.
- Academic and administrative buildings (including the library).
- Dining halls and cafes.
- Rosaria Student Centre (including the bookstore and athletic facilities).
- Student residences.

Striking members will be granted access to the following buildings and areas:

- Health clinic in Assisi Hall.
- Child Study Centre (for drop off and pick up of children only).

[Access Requests](#)

For animal care purposes and for all other requests for laboratory access, procedures outlined in [ACC.SOP.011](#) (Animal Research during Labour Action) are to be followed. Affected members are urged to carefully read both the Strike Protocols and ACC.SOP.011. In cases where permission to access laboratories is granted, written proof of permission to access University Facilities is to be kept with members while they are on campus. A list of members with approved access will be provided to the MSVUFA President and updated weekly.

Note that ACC.SOP.011, Article 4, states that “All research that can be suspended without undue harm to the animals involved will cease as soon as reasonably possible. This includes research conducted by students and other lab personnel.” In contrast, Articles 15 and 16 of the Strike Protocols outline how research staff and student employees employed by members on contract may continue their work. In this case, Articles 15 and 16 of the Strike Protocols take precedence over Article 4 of ACC.SOP.011.

[Information Technology](#)

As per the Strike Protocols, some access to information technology will be maintained throughout a strike.

- Access to MSVU email and Microsoft 365 accounts will continue during the strike.
- Access to Help Desk will be only via email or phone, not in person.

LOCKOUT

However, if the Employer chooses to lockout MSVUFA members, members will be prevented from accessing campus. Moreover, although the employer has agreed not to deny access to email and campus servers during a strike, they could still do so in the event of a lockout. For this reason, we recommend that members:

- Save their essential files outside MSVU servers.
- Set up email forwarding of the MSVU email accounts.

Instructions for downloading online files, emails, and Outlook calendars, and for email forwarding, are provided in the [Strike Contingency Planning Document](#).

In case of lockout, the Employer will be required to provide 48-hour advance notice to the Labour Minister. Ordinary strike provisions will continue to apply.

[Personal belongings](#)

As during a strike, during a lockout, MSVUFA members will not have access to offices or other campus spaces. Members should remove any personal belongings to which they may need access during a lockout from campus.

Physical files

As during a strike, in the event of a lockout, MSVUFA members will not have access to physical files stored on or by the university. Members should remove any physical files, forms, papers, etc. to which they may need access during a lockout from campus.

Digital files

MSVUFA members may not have access to digital files stored on OneDrive or on local drives (e.g. the N drive) or networks during a lockout. To prepare for a lockout, save a copy of digital files you may need to an alternate location such as an external hard drive. Please remember to adhere to research ethics protocols when considering if it's necessary to save documents outside local servers.

Email

During a lockout, msvu.ca email inboxes may not be accessible. Members should be prepared to use msvufa.ca email addresses or another personal account to communicate by email during this time. Members may wish to copy important email addresses into a personal address book and forward copies of emails they may need to reference to a personal email address.

SOLIDARITY

Thanks to the CAUT Defence Fund's Flying Picket Program, the MSVUFA will host support pickets from across Canada.

Written expressions of solidarity will be posted on MSVUFA website as appropriate. Donations will be pooled in a separate fund to help defray the costs of job action.

Please share your own solidarity letters, stories, photos, etc. to socialmedia@msvufa.ca.