

Labour Update: Student Information

No-Board Report – Mediation – Labour Action

The College Employer Council (who represent the 24 Ontario Public Colleges), and OPSEU CAAT-A bargaining team (who represent full-time and partial-load professors, instructors, librarians, and counsellors) have been in negotiations since July 2024. The parties are commonly referred to as CEC and CAAT-A/ Union.

Negotiations on employment contracts occur every few years between the Colleges and its employees. Both sides put proposals on the table for the betterment of the Colleges. Sometimes the parties have difficulty reaching an agreement or compromise and require third-party assistance. Currently, the CEC and CAAT-A teams are in non-binding mediation with a mutually agreed upon mediator to try and find a path forward. They are scheduled to resume mediation January 6-7, 2025.

On December 12, CAAT-A asked the Ministry of Labour for a “no-board report”. The report was issued on December 18, 2024. This means that by January 4, 2025, the Union will be in a position to engage in labour action, such as a strike, if they choose. There is also a possibility for the mediation to continue or alternative forms of negotiations such as binding arbitration to occur.

We remain hopeful that an agreement will be reached with the CAAT-A bargaining team to provide stability for students, employees, and the greater College community.

FAQ

Q) Will there be a strike in the winter semester?

- We hope there will be no strike. Only the union control whether it will call for a strike. The CEC (bargaining agent for the Colleges) remains committed to finding a solution to negotiations that will not impact students.
- We want to avoid any interruption to student learning.

Q) If there is a strike what will happen and how long will it last?

- There is the potential a semester could be interrupted.
- A strike could result in an extended semester or delayed exams or convocation.
- However, if the semester is impacted, Colleges will do everything possible to ensure that all students have the opportunity to complete the semester.
- Historically, no semester has been lost to a strike. Students have always been provided opportunities to complete classes and graduate.
- If a strike occurs and if it runs for a few weeks, then the end date / and subsequent starting date of the affected semesters might change. This would be communicated to you by your college.
- Visit your College website for updates on the impacts to your semester.

Q) What is required for a strike?

- Before a strike can occur, 5 requirements must be met. Not all requirements have been met at this time.

Requirements	Status
The union bargaining team needs a strike mandate.	Received on October 18, 2024.
The parties need to enter/attend conciliation.	Entered conciliation October 9, 2024 Completed November 5, 2024
Conciliation must fail with either party requesting a no-board report.	The union bargaining team requested a no-board report on December 12
Once a no-board report is issued, 16 calendar days must pass.	This deadline will occur on January 4, 2025.
The union must provide the Colleges with 5 days' notice.	This has not happened yet. If it does, your College will provide you with notice.

Q) What are the other/ alternative types of negotiation?

- An example is binding interest arbitration where an agreed upon neutral third-party arbitrator makes decisions if the parties can't come up with a compromise.
- Interest arbitration has been used in the past two academic rounds of negotiations.

Q) When will I find out about a strike?

- If the Union decides to take its members on a strike, they must first provide the Colleges with 5 days' notice.
- Once the Colleges receive notice, they will then communicate to students, employees, and the greater College community.
- Notice will be available on your College website.

Q) What is no-board report?

- A no board report recognizes that the parties are at an impasse (which means negotiations are not working) and that a conciliator could not help.
- Requesting a no-board report is a step in the negotiations process.
- 16 days after a no board report is issued, the previous collective agreement (The agreement with between the Colleges and the faculty union) is no longer binding.
- This means that the Union could give notice of labour action and engage in a strike.
- The CEC can also choose to change terms of the existing collective agreement or lock-out employees (Colleges have never locked employees out).

Q) What is a strike?

- At the Colleges, strikes are peaceful forms of protest
- Picket lines are formed by striking employees and people can be delayed from entering campus.
- 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 college 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 faculty members choose to apply pressure by slowing down, disrupting or stopping work, these actions lead to varying degrees of negative impact on the academic delivery.

Q) Does labour action mean a strike?

- Labour action does mean a 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 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) 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).
- The College will not lock the faculty out (which means the employer will not force a work stoppage.)

Q) How long will a strike last?

- They can last for a day or for an extended period of time.
- 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.
- When picket lines occur, picketers cannot prevent access to those looking to enter campus (however, as mentioned above, they can rightfully delay access for up to 10 minutes.).
- 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) If a strike occurs, 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) 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](#).