

3. FAQ: Strikes and research, scholarly activity, conferences & campus access & commitments

Will I have to cease all scholarly activity during a strike?

Members may be concerned over the implications for research, access to labs, and scholarly activity. The StFXAUT executive cannot guarantee how the employer will behave, but the StFXAUT executive does not expect members to abandon their off-campus scholarly activity and research, nor do we wish to prevent access to campus for members who must carry out essential functions in their labs to protect their research.

In the event of a strike, the AUT executive will ask its members to withdraw their labour from the employer, meaning teaching, supervision and administrative duties. However, the AUT executive does not expect members to abandon scholarly activity, contract work, or research, nor do we wish to prevent our members from carrying out essential functions in their labs to protect their research.

StFXAUT has tabled protocol language to protect work of a contractual nature with non-academic partners, continuation of research grants, and the flow of research funds. However, the University has not agreed to the protocol and StFXAUT does not know how they will behave in the event of a strike or lock-out.

The Collective Agreement includes protection for lab facilities, non-repeatable research and animal holdings in *Article 1.19: 1.0 Animal Holding, Culture Collection and Liquid Nitrogen Facilities*.

In the event of a strike or lock-out, employees shall be allowed access to certain University facilities in order to prevent irreparable damage to ongoing research and/or materials for teaching such as damage to plant and animal life, loss of live and/or decomposable materials, damage to equipment or supplies, or loss of non-repeatable research in progress. Facilities shall include but are not limited to the Animal Holding Facility, the Culture Collection, and the Liquid Nitrogen Facility. Employees needing access shall indicate their access requirements with justification in writing to the Association and the Academic Vice President in advance of or at the time of any strike or lock-out. The parties shall meet in a timely manner to review and approve such requests. The AUT executive urges members to postpone or re-arrange research-related travel commitments wherever possible, especially in the first two weeks of a strike or lock-out; strong visible support by members early on is crucial to the short duration of a strike or lock-out. However, we understand that some members will not be able to make alternative arrangements. As much as possible, we wish to accommodate the needs and circumstances of members. A member will be able to contact the Strike Support Committee to explain his or her case, providing documentation if possible.

The AUT executive is committed to minimizing disruptions to members' research and the scholarly sacrifices they will have to make in the event of a strike or lock-out. We will encourage members to remove their research from campus where possible. But we also

expect that some constraints will be unavoidable, including access to the library and other research resources.

I know that I can't teach, but can I get into my office or lab during a strike?

In general, no. Participating in a strike means removing yourself from campus. Most members can continue research off-campus. For those who require access to labs to continue research, the StFXAUT will issue strike passes to members who fulfil their strike duty. The StFXAUT will also honour *Article 1.19: 1.0 Animal Holding, Culture Collection and Liquid Nitrogen Facilities* of the current Collective Agreement; this provides access to protect the integrity of lab-based research and scholarly activity, and the Strike Support Committee will issue strike passes without any pre-conditions.

The StFXAUT has tabled language to protect work of a contractual nature with non-academic partners, continuation of research grants, and the flow of research funds. To gain access to campus, it will be necessary for members to seek authorization from the StFXAUT. The Strike Support Committee will issue a strike pass and arrange access with the employer.

Will I have access to StFX email?

We do not know if the Administration will deny access to email and campus servers during a strike. We strongly encourage you to get an alternative email. Even if the employer allows access to campus email, the StFXAUT will not use the StFX email system during a strike. Before a strike begins, send your alternative email address and phone number to stfxaut@gmail.com or Avon Brophy (abrophy@stfx.ca).

If I am a department or program chair do I have to go on strike?

Yes, all members of StFXAUT are expected to honour the strike.

Will I be expected, or able, to carry on with my clinical work with patients during a strike or lockout?

If your clinical work is part of your employment with StFX you are expected to withhold your work during a strike.

If I attend a conference during the strike, do I still get strike pay?

You only receive strike pay if you participate in the strike duty. As much as possible, we wish to accommodate the circumstances of our members. If you have made prior commitments for conference attendance or presentations contact the StFXAUT Strike Committee to make alternative arrangements for strike duty.

If I go to the conference anyway, can I get a travel grant or reimbursed expenses after we return to work?

That depends on the source of the funding for the travel grant. In general, the StFXAUT is committed to recovering research expenses incurred by members during the course of a strike or lock out. Consult the StFXAUT Strike Committee for clarification of your situation.

If I split my time between two different universities, can I just increase the time I allocate to the other university and continue my research?

Active engagement in the strike increases the chances of success. You will contribute to the strength of the strike and the likelihood of an early settlement by participating in strike duty rather than increasing your research time elsewhere.

If we incur expenses for research during the strike, will the Administration be likely to reimburse us for these expenses after we return to work?

This will be negotiated as part of the return to work protocol at the end of a strike.

Can my students continue research in my absence?

The StFXAUT has no objection to the students continuing to research, as long as there are no safety concerns. At this time we do not know if Administration will prohibit them from continuing.

What impact will a strike or lock-out have on my access to conference travel grants, research funds, institutional signatures for grant proposals, and access to printers?

At the start of negotiations StFXAUT tabled strike protocol language that would allow members to continue contractual work with non-academic partners, allow access to computers and printers necessary to continue contractual work, protect the flow of research funds for projects in progress that cannot be delayed or disrupted and honour travel grants. The Administration did not agree to the strike protocol and we do not know what they will allow during a strike.

My research funds support the work of research employees, but they are not part of union. If I am on strike will the university continue paying their wages?

If StFXAUT members are on strike or locked out, the only employment contract which is directly affected is the collective agreement. This means that the individual employment contracts for research employees are not affected by a strike or lockout. Since they are not StFXAUT members, and are not on strike or locked-out, the university is legally obliged to continue paying research employees, unless their individual contracts allow the university to lay them off in the event of a strike by their faculty supervisor.

I have research materials in my office and would like to use the library during a strike. How do I access these materials?

Where possible we advise members to remove their research materials from their offices or labs before the commencement of a strike or lock-out. It may not be possible to use the StFX library and it is unavoidable that most members will experience some constraints on their research.

How will losing time teaching and research during a strike affect my chances for promotion, renewal or permanency? What about lost wages during a strike?

Time lost for promotion, renewal and permanency procedures, as well as the recovery of lost wages during a strike will be part of a return to work protocol.

While on strike, may I supervise honours or graduate students, set exams for my students, write letters of recommendation, or do other things that don't involve actually offering classroom instruction?

It is impossible to answer every query that comes up in this regard, but common sense can help in addressing such questions. If teaching stops, so does supervision of students. Ask yourself if the service for the student can be postponed without causing great damage. A letter recommending a student for graduate school or a scholarship has to be submitted by the deadline. Writing it does not mean you have to appear on campus. In this case, failing to write the letter would cause the student serious hardship. Likewise, there may also be cases where it is necessary to maintain momentum on graduate research projects. On the other hand, if you are supervising an honours or graduate thesis/research, it would probably not be a major hardship if you didn't meet for a week or two, or if you set aside supervision of course and curricular activity for a couple of weeks. Can the work be delayed for a short period? Is it absolutely necessary while you are on strike? Just asking yourself questions like this should give you the right answer.