

# General Job Action Information

Updated as of Oct. 31, 2021

## What does it mean to go on strike?

With a bargaining deadline of 11:59 PM on October 31st, UMFA is poised to potentially begin a strike on November 2, 2021. If the university administration will not offer you a fair deal, we must make them uncomfortable enough that they decide to offer one. This means you must impede the function of the university as much as it is safe and ethical to do so.

## What do I have to do?

Everyone is required to contribute to job action (3 hours each day, Monday through Friday) in order to receive strike benefits (\$200/day which is \$1400/week). Strike benefits are tax-free. For most, this will mean joining the picket lines.

Should UMFA be on strike beginning Tuesday November 2nd, striking members will be responsible to:

**1. Withdraw your labour from the University of Manitoba.** This includes teaching, service to the university, regular job duties (like paperwork or the supervision of employees), and as much peripheral research activity as possible.

It is key to withdraw as much of our labour as possible from the university in order to motivate the administration to come to the bargaining table and make a deal. If a task associated with your work or research is ethically required (for example, it involves a time-sensitive support to a vulnerable community, or animal care) or is time sensitive and does not exert pressure on the University (for example, an experiment or paper deadline required to keep your personal research project viable), please contact the Job Action Committee at [capachereitano@gmail.com](mailto:capachereitano@gmail.com) to arrange for a picket pass.

For details on the agreement the Association has made regarding access to campus

during the strike, see below.

**2. Participate in assigned picket duties, 3 hours/day, Monday-Friday.** Picket duties are designed to connect all of us and to demonstrate our resolve and unity. Attending your assigned picket shift is crucial. Picket duties will be assigned by Monday November 1st, or sooner, as the Job Action Committee is working around the clock to get them out as soon as possible. If you cannot make your assigned picket shift, or require a change in picket duties, please contact your picket captain or the Job Action Committee at [capachereitano@gmail.com](mailto:capachereitano@gmail.com) as soon as possible to determine alternate arrangements.

If you indicated you require a virtual picket assignment, that will be accommodated without question.

Though picket duties are Monday-Friday, your strike benefit of \$200/day is for each day of the strike, including weekends. This \$1,400/week is tax-free. To be eligible for this strike benefit you must sign in for your picket duties every weekday.

**3. Make all teaching materials inaccessible to students, remove them from UM Learn, or close UM Learn course access, prior to the beginning of the strike.**

Allowing students to continue in their courses as if nothing is happening undermines the strike and fails to put pressure on the university administration to come to the table and make a deal. Details on how to hide your course materials are included below, and in the event of a strike this must be done by the end of day Monday November 1st.

**4. Set your university email Out of Office message to indicate you are participating in the strike and will not be answering emails or work-related calls until the satisfactory resolution of bargaining.** Our strike is made more effective with every annoyed email and phone call the government and university administration receives about the strike. By highlighting the cause in your away message, you provide more opportunities for those calls to happen. Invite your students to share their displeasure

about the strike with the government and the university administration.

**5. To join in-person picket lines or enter the off-campus headquarters, you must be fully vaccinated to join picket lines and other in-person activities.** You will be required to complete contact tracing forms each day. For those who cannot, or are not comfortable with, in-person activities virtual picket duties are available and include online and phone activities.

## Out of Office Message Template:

I am a member of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association and am on legal strike as of Tuesday November 2nd, 2021. I will not be answering emails, working, teaching, or attending meetings outside of union activities until we have received a fair and reasonable contract.

Please contact the following individuals to voice your support for a fair deal for UMFA, an end to government interference in the University of Manitoba, and an end to the strike:

- Minister Scott Fielding 204-945-3952
- Minister Wayne Ewasko 204-945-8480
- University of Manitoba President Michael Benarroch 204-474-9345
- The Office of the Premier of Manitoba 204-945-3714

## How to make your teaching materials inaccessible to students in UM Learn:

1. From the course home page, click on the **Course Admin tab**.
2. Click on **Manage Dates**, which might be found in the Site Resources section. This will take you to a page that shows your course dates at the top (don't touch these) and below that, **a chart that lists each piece of course material** that you've uploaded. Ensure that the tool filter is set to **All**.

3. Beside **Bulk Edit Dates** - **check the box**, and then click **Bulk Edit Dates**.
  1. Scroll down to **End Dates**, **check the box**, and set the visibility deadline to the desired date. **Save it**.
  2. To remove this end date, follow the same steps, instead clicking **Remove**, and then saving.

This will allow you to leave material online but have it accessible only when students are required to access it.

Please note that the bulk edit may not work if:

- You have entries in the Due Date column. You may have to delete these entries before you can bulk edit the materials. Once you make the course material visible again, you can add the due dates back in.
- There is an error with a start date that is already entered in the chart. If you set the start date to “now” when you bulk edit the end date, this should solve the problem.

You can also hide each item of course materials from view individually, by clicking the little eye icon or changing the status of the item to draft.

### **What if my research would be significantly harmed if I stopped doing it during the strike?**

This is your university. We are on strike to put pressure on the administration to come to a fair settlement. That pressure comes from withdrawing from teaching and service duties. UMFA is not on strike against its Members. As a scholar, it's likely you'll want to continue pursuing your research, and sometimes research can't take a hiatus. Mice and bacteria die, crucial relationships need to be attended to, obligations with research partners or participants need to be met.

If you need to come onto campus, striking Members with research activities underway that

have time constraints, or that involve laboratory responsibilities will be provided with passes to cross the picket line in order to maintain the viability of laboratories, care for animals, or carry out other duties necessary to prevent the loss of data and assure the resumption of normal research activities after the strike. Where emergency situations arise for Members such as those who are working in Dental Clinics or have Counseling responsibilities, passes will also be provided as necessary. Contact the job action committee via [capachereitano@gmail.com](mailto:capachereitano@gmail.com) if you may require a pass.

**Should I advise/communicate with students using personal contact info during a strike?**

No. Advising and communicating with students is part of your regular work and should cease for the duration of a strike or lockout.

**Can I hold workshops/rehearsals/office hours from home or another location during the strike?**

No. Advising and communicating with students is part of your regular work and should cease for the duration of a strike or lockout.

**What is the proper etiquette when walking on the picket line? Do we stop cars and people from entering?**

Your picket captain will give you directions on etiquette and picketing procedure, and you should follow that direction. At all times, remain professional, courteous and non-confrontational. UMFA Members have the right to walk the picket line, and the public has the right to cross it. Members can try to dissuade people from crossing the picket line by sharing information about why UMFA is on strike and what the issues at hand are. If there are any problems, the picket captain should be notified.

**Do I need to withdraw my services from bodies like the U of M Research Ethics Boards, Senate, or any other department or faculty committees in the event of a strike?**

Yes, withdrawal of services during a strike means to withdraw all services including participating on committees. However, if Senate meets during a strike it may be important that Senators who are UMFA members participate in Senate meetings where discussions that will affect the operations of the University are discussed.

**Will students be protected from reprisal if they refuse to cross the picket line to attend classes run by non-strike members and non-UMFA instructors?**

The University Secretary has confirmed that a motion to protect students from reprisal for respecting the picket lines is being prepared for discussion at Senate. Students may be required to keep up with assignments in courses taught by non-UMFA members, even if they are not attending lectures in solidarity with UMFA. This will be updated as soon as this motion has been brought forward.

**Can I use campus facilities, like the gym or the library?**

As long as you are not working, you can use facilities that are located on campus.

**What has UMFA negotiated with the university in terms of access to email, Members on leave, access to research funds, grant submissions, TAs, RAs, etc?**

UMFA has negotiated the following terms:

- Access to University of Manitoba email addresses or other online platforms essential to research and/or creative activities will continue.
- No leaves will be interrupted – this includes approved research study leaves (RSL), sick leaves, maternity and parental leaves, and long term disability (LTD). In particular, you will continue to receive maternity/parental leave top-up or disability payments. If the period of leave or disability should expire during the strike, it will be assumed that you are then on strike. At the administration's insistence and against our objections, Members on RSL will have to declare to the administration that they are continuing their planned leave activities to continue to receive their

salary. Members on RSL will need to contact UMFA for next steps if their RSL ends while the strike is ongoing.

- The administration will not impede the progress of grant applications submitted through the University, including but not limited to grant applications made to tri-council agencies.
- Access to funds for research expenses will continue in order to ensure that non-UMFA staff salaries, monthly costs for animal services, and other necessities will continue to be paid. Maintenance, repairs, reordering of supplies and equipment, etc., will also continue.
- The administration will process reimbursement claims for expenses incurred prior to the start of a strike.
- Capital purchases on pre-negotiated terms/quotes associated with research projects can move forward.

The administration has also agreed that it will not impede any other activity which, if left uncompleted, would result in harm to research and/or other projects currently undertaken by an UMFA member.

## How will the strike affect my life and health?

### How will I pay my mortgage or rent? (Is there a strike benefit?)

Members who are on strike, and who are helping to maintain the strike through some form of duty (picketing, primarily) receive a strike benefit of \$200/day, seven days per week, while we are on strike. This benefit is exempt from tax and other deductions, so you will take home \$1400 per seven days. Additionally, UMFA has a hardship loan fund for those who may require additional compensation to cover normal living expenses during this time. Contact the UMFA office at [faum@umfa.ca](mailto:faum@umfa.ca) to inquire.

### How will I receive the strike benefit?

By cheque in the mail once a week, upon confirmation that you have participated in picket duties. In special situations, cheques will be available at strike headquarters.

### Will my health benefits continue if I'm on strike/locked out?

Yes. UMFA will pay the cost of maintaining all of your regular health benefits. Pension contributions will not continue because the university will not permit UMFA to pay the contributions, and your pensionable service will be reduced by the amount of time that the

job action lasts.

**If I'm on Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Sick Leave, or Long Term Disability, will my salary/benefits continue to be paid by the University?**

Yes. If you are currently on leave for the above reasons you will continue to be paid and have access to your benefits. You will not be expected to participate in demonstrations or rallies, nor will you be eligible for strike benefits. If you are fully vaccinated, you will be welcomed warmly if you decide to join a rally or an in-person picket line!

**If I am on research/study leave, will I be on strike/locked-out if a strike/lockout occurs?**

No. UMFA Members are only withdrawing their teaching and service labour, and will continue to be paid by the University while on leave. But you'll always be welcome to show your support on the picket line! Against our objections, the university administration is requiring that members on Research Study Leaves fill out a form indicating they are continuing their leave and will not be participating in the strike.

**If I am on research/study leave, should I complete the university's "Notification of Intention to Continue all Normal Duties" form?**

Yes. The University administration is requiring you to complete a "Notification of Intention to Continue all Normal Duties" form in order to continue receiving salary during a strike. In the view of UMFA's Executive, this should not be necessary. We expressed this with the administration yet they remained insistent. You are continuing a leave you are entitled to and have already begun. You are not strike-breaking. Because the administration is requiring it of you, you must fill out the form to continue to receive your pay and benefits.

**Can I be fired for going on strike?**

No. This is illegal in Canada.

**What measures are in place to ensure the safety of all those participating in picketing?**

Pickets should not be a dangerous place. It should be orderly and disciplined. Sometimes, people who are being delayed at a picket will shout abuse or get angry. Picket captains are trained and equipped to deal with any incidents that might occur on the picket lines. They have a phone with a direct dial to police and to strike headquarters. If you maintain an orderly picket under the direction of your picket captain, that will maximize everybody's safety.

**What kind of assistance is available from UMFA in terms of childcare during the strike?**

UMFA is not in a position to provide childcare. Please choose your preferred strike duties according to your already-existing childcare arrangements. However, if you are asked to gather outside of the hours of your regular childcare arrangements, UMFA will compensate you for reasonable childcare expenses incurred as a result of your attendance.

**If I am on a reduced appointment, do I receive the full strike benefit or half that amount?**

For all UMFA Members who participate in strike duties 3 hours/day, Monday-Friday, you will receive the full \$200/day and \$1400/week if you picket for 5 days in a week.

**A medical or familial situation has arisen in my family involving medical appointments or caregiving obligations. Should I just attend to these issues as they arise and participate on the picket line as is possible?**

UMFA needs to know that you are participating in strike duties regularly in order to provide strike benefits. If this is proving to be difficult due to unforeseen issues at the time of the strike, please let the job action committee and your picket captain know so we can work out an alternate arrangement.

**Will my students who are paid RAs or TAs still be paid during the strike? Will my direct reports continue to be paid?**

Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and other employees are members of other unions on campus. As such, they are obliged to continue working. They will continue to be paid, and it is the responsibility of the university administration to ensure they are paid.

**How would a strike affect UMFA members who coach Bison sports?**

UMFA Members with Coaching responsibilities will not teach any coursework or carry out any service responsibilities, e.g. sitting on UM committees, liaison with external parties (e.g. UM rep. on provincial sport associations) but can continue to coach their teams and participate in scheduled conference games. Other activities might have to be considered on an individual basis. Coaches will be expected to get passes to cross picket lines.

**Comments, Questions, or Concerns? Contact the Office -- [faum@umfa.ca](mailto:faum@umfa.ca) / 474.8272**