

General Job Action Information

Update as of Oct. 6, 2021

At a Special General Meeting (SGM) scheduled for October 6, UMFA's Executive Council will ask you to vote in favour of a motion to call a secret-ballot strike vote. If the motion carries, the strike vote will take place electronically from Oct 16-18.

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What is a strike vote?

A strike vote is a legally mandated secret-ballot vote open to everyone in a bargaining unit. A 'yes' vote by a majority of those who vote gives the Executive Council the power to call a strike should one be needed.

A 'yes' vote doesn't necessarily mean there will be a strike. A strong vote on its own might see the administration start to take bargaining seriously, where up until now they've made no significant moves at the bargaining table.

At Wednesday's SGM there will be a vote of Regular Members on whether or not to call a strike vote. It is not the strike vote itself.

Being “locked out” means the Employer has decided to stop negotiating and cancel classes, which would result in job action as described below.

What does it mean to be “locked out” vs. “on strike”?

To be “on strike” means withdrawing your labour and participating in strike duties. You must cease all teaching, supervision, advising, library, service, and administrative duties.

Everyone is also required to contribute to job action (3 hours each day, Monday through Friday) in order to receive strike benefits (\$200/shift, or \$1400/week if you complete 5 shifts in a week). Strike benefits are tax-free. For most, this will mean joining the picket lines.

What are picket lines for, and what do they look like?

Being on strike means not only withdrawing your labour, but getting your message out. Walking a picket line means being visible so you can communicate your demands to the employer and the public. This includes carrying a picket sign, handing out flyers, singing or chanting, and anything else that will help get your message to the public. It often means delaying access to the University to ensure people have time to read your sign, receive a picket-flier, or hear your song. UMFA pickets tend to be placed at designated cross-walks at the perimeter of each campus.

Picketing also means gathering at the legislature and other strategic locations from time-to-time so as to reach as many people as possible.

If the vote goes ahead, you’ll receive a survey that will ask what picket shifts and locations will work best for you. It will also ask if you are unable to picket because of health issues, or need special accommodations to join the picket lines.

Members will be required to be fully vaccinated to join picket lines and other in-person activity, and to enter our off-campus headquarters. Members will also be required to complete contact tracing forms each day. Those who cannot be vaccinated, have children or dependents who cannot be vaccinated, and those with immunocompromised loved ones in their “bubble” will be provided alternate strike duties.

What would job action look like if the pandemic worsens?

UMFA takes the safety of Members seriously, and will abide by public health orders, and amend job-action duties as required. If pandemic conditions worsen, activities will include...

- Small Picket Clusters of picketers, in accord with public health guidelines, at strategic locations to get our message out to decision-makers and stakeholders.
- Socially-distanced Mass Rallies such as car rallies (honk-a-thons) on campus and at strategic off-campus locations like the Manitoba Legislature.
- Each member contributing to an active social media presence: advocating our position on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TIK TOK, thereby making your message accessible to the broadest audience possible.

I am unable to walk the picket line due to a medical condition. Does this mean I can sign up for another activity?

Yes. There will be several different job-action activities for Members who need accommodations.

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

Yes. UMFA will pay the cost of maintaining health benefits. Your life insurance will continue to be in effect. UMFA will also offer to pay both the Employer-side and employee-side of your pension contributions. However, the Employer has refused to let UMFA pay those costs in the past, and thus, it is likely that 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, but you'll be welcomed warmly if you decide to join a rally or a 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!

Should I continue my research during a strike?

Yes. We are only withholding teaching, administrative, professional, and service duties. Members with research activities underway that have time constraints or laboratory responsibilities will be provided with passes to cross picket lines. However, the administration may try to limit your access to your research facilities. Details will be worked out in the event that there is a strike.

Will I still have access to my research funds for time-sensitive research, payment for the cost of travel, per diems, etc.?

No. In the past the UM has said it will only release research funds for emergency expenditures, like feeding animals. You will also not have access to your travel and expense funds, etc., until a strike or lockout comes to an end.

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.