

CUPE 4207 Unit 1 – Strike Mandate Vote FAQ

1. What is a strike mandate vote?

A strike mandate vote (sometimes called a strike vote) gives your elected bargaining team the authority to call a strike if necessary. It is not a vote to go on strike. It is a tool that strengthens our position at the table and shows the employer that members are united behind achieving a fair contract.

2. Why is CUPE 4207 Unit 1 holding a strike mandate vote now?

Because:

- The employer has not moved on key issues that matter to Unit 1 members.
- Wage offers remain below inflation (a real pay cut).
- The employer has filed for conciliation, which signals an impasse.

A strong mandate gives us the leverage we need heading into conciliation.

3. Is this a vote to go on strike?

No. A strike can only happen after:

- Conciliation fails
- A “No Board Report” is issued
- A 17-day cooling-off period
- Members are consulted again before any job action

The strike mandate vote is simply the first step in that legal process.

4. What happens after the strike mandate vote?

After the vote:

- Bargaining continues with a provincial conciliator.
- If the employer moves, we can reach a deal without any job action.
- If the employer refuses, the bargaining team will assess next steps with the membership.

A strong YES vote increases the likelihood of settling without needing a strike.

5. Why is a strong YES vote important?

Because employers pay attention to numbers. A high turnout and strong YES vote tells them: “Members are united. They won’t accept concessions or a weak deal.”

Without a strong mandate, the employer may feel no pressure to improve their monetary offer.

6. What are the main issues in bargaining for Unit 1?

Key priorities include:

- Fair wage increase that keeps up with inflation
- Reasonable compensation for ‘extra students’ in our contract
- Meaningful increase to the Unit 1 Benefits fund
- Protection from overwork and ensuring sensible workloads

These proposals come directly from member feedback and surveys.

7. What happens if members vote “No”?

A weak or failed vote signals to the employer that:

- Members are not united
- The bargaining team has little leverage
- They can continue offering below-inflation wages and concessions

Without a strong mandate, it becomes significantly harder to win improvements.

8. How will this affect international members?

Participating in a strike mandate vote does not affect your visa or study permit.

If a strike were ever to occur:

- Students cannot be academically penalized for participating (or not participating) in union activity.
- Immigration status is not jeopardized by legal strike activity.
- The union will ensure accommodations and support for members with unique circumstances.

Many CUPE locals across the country have international members who participate safely in job action.

9. What support exists if a strike happens?

If job action becomes necessary (and only after further consultation with members):

- Strike pay is available to members performing picket or strike duties.
- Benefits continue under CUPE's national strike fund.
- Accommodations can be made for members with disabilities, caregiving responsibilities, or other serious barriers.

Again: We only discuss strike logistics to reassure members, not because a strike is imminent.

10. How does this impact our students?

Our goal is to protect the quality of education students receive. Fair wages and benefits, manageable class sizes, and stable working conditions directly improve students' learning experiences. When the employer refuses to address these issues, it puts pressure on both members and students. A strong mandate helps us secure a contract that supports better teaching and better outcomes for students.

If the employer settles fairly, students will not experience disruption at all.

11. When is the presentation? I'm not sure I can attend. How can I learn more?

The Strike Mandate Presentations will be held in person and on Zoom:

Wed. Dec 3rd 10am in WH 204 & Zoom

Thur. Dec 4th at Noon, and at 6pm in GLN A 164 & Zoom.

If you can't attend, you can:

- Read this FAQ package
- Email your questions to your Unit 1 Bargaining Committee:
cupe4207bargaining@gmail.com
- Review bargaining updates posted on our website or social media

We want every member to feel informed and empowered.

12. How do I vote?

Electronic Voting opens after the Strike Mandate presentations on Thursday, December 4th at 8pm, and closes Thursday, December 11th at 8pm.

All current Unit 1 contract holders will be emailed a voting link via the Simply Voting platform.

13. I'm nervous about striking. What should I know?

That's normal. No one wants a strike. But strike mandates are historically the easiest way to avoid job action because they push employers to settle. And remember:

- Members are always consulted again before any strike
- Strike action is the last resort
- The union does not take job action lightly
- You will not lose your job for participating in a legal strike
- CUPE provides strong financial and logistical support

14. Has a strike mandate worked before?

Yes. Most CUPE locals, including many in the postsecondary sector, win better agreements after strong strike mandates. Employers almost always move when they see members are united.