



Marking For Education not Administration Frequently Asked Questions

July 21, 2015

This document covers frequently asked questions surrounding the marking for education, not administration job action. If other questions arise, members should contact:

TSSU office: 778-782-4735

TSSU Helpline: 604-652-6202

Email: tssu@tssu.ca

The Background: Why do we need to increase the pressure now?

TSSU has been without a collective agreement for over 15 months. SFU Administration has shown no willingness to negotiate on our core issues, despite our previous job action. We know from bargaining the 2010-2014 collective agreement that SFU Administration is very unlikely to bargain with us in a serious way and address our core issues until they feel significant pressure from the TSSU membership and the campus community as a whole. Following our job action in November 2012, a member of SFU's Senior Administration with the authority to make changes to the collective agreement attended bargaining for the first time that round. We negotiated the majority of our agreement in the subsequent 48 hours. Similarly, while performing job action earlier in this round of bargaining, we likewise began to see minor but positive changes in bargaining.

Recently, UBC Administration negotiated a deal with their TAs in a span of *only* 3 months, from beginning to end. At the onset of this round of bargaining our committee was optimistic that, unlike recent bargaining between TSSU and Administration, negotiations would proceed in an expeditious manner, similar to that of UBC. This has obviously not been the case, and it is clear that once again we need to take collective action to bargain a collective agreement that improves our working conditions sooner rather than later.

The TSSU is fighting for:

- Seniority for experienced Sessional Instructors
- Access to SFU's standard benefit package for Continuing Language Instructors in the ELC/ITP program
- Protection from overwork/underpay for TA/TMs and improved access to TA/TM work for grad students
- A fix to the childcare bursary to get money into the hands of parents
- Compliance with BC law, on issues such as Health and Safety and payment of wages

Why is withholding the marks from Administration a good option?

Our greatest strength as workers is that our labour is essential to the operation of the University, and we have complete control of withdrawing that labour. Withholding marks generates pressure on the administration, but has a lower impact on students than the cancellation of classes that would result



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from a picket line. This job action also ensures that members continue to be paid while putting significant pressure on the Administration.

While withholding marks, teaching work will continue, students will learn, feedback will be provided, and the student-teacher relationship can actually be strengthened due to increased interaction. We recognize that this may cause more work for our members, but this extra work results in no lost wages unlike a picket line.

Can I be fired for withholding grades as part of a strike?

No. Under the BC Labour Code, TSSU members cannot suffer retribution, intimidation or any discipline for participating in an official job action. The Strike Committee has declared that all members must withhold grades, so all members are now protected by the law. In the past, a limited number of TSSU members experienced intimidation and coercion from bosses and managers. Please immediately report any such behaviour to TSSU so we can put a stop to it.

Will I still be paid if we're withholding grades?

Since you are still completing your work, you must continue to be paid. In the event TSSU members choose to withdraw services (e.g. set up a picket line) then SFU Administration is allowed to deduct money from your pay.

Why are we doing this during the summer semester?

Unlike most universities, SFU has about 60% of a fall/spring course load running in the summer. TSSU members teach a larger percentage of the courses in the summer and so we still have substantial effect by refusing to enter grades. We have been without an agreement for over a year and TSSU's Strike Committee feels that pressure is necessary now to finally come to an agreement.

Why don't we just ask the Administration to be more reasonable?

The Contract and Strike Committees have made multiple requests for the SFU Administration to come to the table to address our core issues and bargain a Collective Agreement. In response, SFU Administration has repeated that they will not address any of these issues in this round of bargaining, despite their repeated requests for a deal that takes us to 2019. It is clear from the behaviour of SFU Administration and our experience in 2012 that significant pressure is required to get them to bargain on our core issues. In 2012, it took several picket lines and over a month of Marking for Education not Administration to get a senior VP to attend bargaining. An agreement was then reached within 48 hours.

What about marking that is supposed to be done online?

You must not enter grades into any electronic system that is available for access by employees of SFU who are not TSSU members. You may enter feedback (e.g. comments, hints, alternative ways to



approach the problem, etc) onto an electronic system, but numeric and letter grades must not be entered. For unusual circumstances, please contact TSSU via the means listed above.

What about a set of assignments I received and commenced marking before July 22nd?

If you received assignments before the start of grade withholding and commenced marking then you should continue to mark all of them as normal.

What if a student handed in a late assignment after July 21nd but I've marked all of the other assignments?

Any assignments due before 11:59pm, July 21st, should be marked. This includes late assignments and extensions. Any exams which are to be group marked after July 21st are subject to this job action.

What if a student handed in an early assignment before July 22nd but the assignment was due later after July 21st and I wasn't specifically instructed to mark the assignments before they were due?

This means you were scheduled to mark the assignments after withholding of grades started. You must withhold grades.

What if the midterm or assignment was completed previously but we're scheduled to group mark after July 21st

Since your marking was scheduled to begin after the start of withholding grades, you must withhold grades.

What if we're halfway through group-marking a midterm when grade withholding starts on July 22?

Any marks recorded on the page can remain. The remainder of the exam questions to be marked will be withheld. As a result the exam grade will also be withheld. See the "group marking" instructions for further information.

What if my class involves participation marks or "i-clickers" and I have concerns about withholding grades under those conditions?

Please contact tssu@tssu.ca for specific assistance with these problems or call 778-782-4735 or 604-652-6202.