

PSAC IN THE ACADEMIC SECTOR

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) represents more than 200,000 workers in every province and territory in Canada and in locations around the world.



PSAC members also work for museums, arts and granting agencies, healthcare and community services agencies, Indigenous communities, municipal and public sector and more.

Our members in the Academic Sector are in many employment groups, including:

- Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants
- Research Assistants, Research Associates
- Sessional Instructors
- Teaching Fellows
- Non-academic administrative and technical professionals
- Postdoctoral Fellows
- Exam Invigilators
- Floor-Fellows
- Peer Counselors, and more.

Most recently, PSAC welcomed 400 Teaching Assistants at Wilfrid Laurier University, who won representation in the fall of 2019.



**Public Service
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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What are the advantages of joining PSAC?

A: Some of the advantages include:

- **Collective Bargaining**
Dedicated National Negotiators and Researchers specializing in the academic sector are assigned to provide expert support to Local Unions through collective bargaining. Education and mobilization support are also available to support contract campaigns.
- **Legal representation**
PSAC employs lawyers and analysts who support Locals to enforce their collective agreements. Local Unions have access to legal counsel and experts in every region to represent them in grievance handling, arbitrations and other hearings to uphold the rights of union members.
- **Union Education Programs and Grievance Handling**
PSAC's Education Program has a mandate to build "an active, united, democratic, inclusive union, through member education". Elected leaders and members can access union education, so that the Local Union builds their capacity over time. Grievance Handling, a core course in PSAC's suite of union education programming, helps locals develop grievance handling and problem-solving skills to create an in-house skills network. Locals are empowered to resolve member grievances from step one with the support of their PSAC staff representative.

Q: What services does PSAC provide to their Locals?

A: PSAC has created flexibility in its structure to accommodate newly organized groups. Directly Chartered Locals (DCL) are Locals which affiliate directly to PSAC rather than to one of its components.

As the bargaining agent, PSAC provides DCLs with:

Local Development and Capacity Building: Education Programs for Stewards, Elected Officers and the broader membership;

- A negotiator and research support during negotiations; Union training is available to all members of the Local;
- Local-specific training will be available during the transition to PSAC;
- Arbitration of referred grievances is provided by PSAC Grievance and Adjudication Officers at no additional cost to the Local;
- Health and safety expertise and training;
- Human rights expertise and training;
- Advice and input on Local operations.

Q: How will union dues work?

A: All dues rates are democratically decided.

University sector dues rates average 1.6%. PSAC dues rate is 0.9557%, and local dues rate and Service Agreements account for the difference. Percentage rates are applied against the first step salary of the classification. Dues are not applied against overtime, bonuses or retroactive pay.

ORGANIZING

- 40,000 members have chosen to join PSAC over the past 15 years
- Even in the context of Ford government's attacks on unionized workers, Wilfrid Laurier University TAs organized a union and selected PSAC
- Committed organizing staff who support new groups to organize, this provides a foundation for a contract campaign
- Commitment to organize throughout the sector – recent campaigns have welcomed Invigilators, Post Doctoral Scholars and Research Assistants to unionize

PSAC VICTORIES

Recent Breakthroughs in the Academic Sector:

- Childcare benefit of \$2,000/child annually at Queen's University
- Annually increasing professional development fund at Carleton University
- Paid sick leave at Dalhousie University
- Employer paid Care Fund at with subsidies for childcare, family care, vision care at Memorial University
- Salary top ups to 100% for 26 weeks of parental leave at Dalhousie University
- Protection from unduly short appointments at University of Saskatchewan
- Whistle blower protections at Queen's University
- Protection of Intellectual Property rights at Queen's university, University of Saskatchewan, and University of Winnipeg

- Stronger protection from Discrimination and Harassment and stronger commitments to equity at Memorial University, UOIT, University of Saskatchewan, Carleton University, and Université Laval
- We were one of the first unions to negotiate paid maternity leave, launching a decades-long effort that brought about the parental benefits nearly all Canadian workers enjoy today
- We were the first union to get benefits for same-sex couples recognized, and collective agreements paving the way for equal treatment a decade before the legal recognition of same-sex marriage in Canada.
- We won the right for our disabled members to receive life insurance coverage and continue to fight for the rights of people with disabilities.
- PSAC also triumphed in a 15-year battle with the Government of Canada, correcting pay equity issues for 50,000 federal clerks, ultimately resulting in retroactive pay awarded to 320,000 workers.

These were gains for all Canadians, and we score victories for our members every day. From job security to work-life balance, retirement security and fair wages, PSAC works tirelessly to keep you healthy and happy in your job and to defend equal rights and public services for all.

There is always a storm to be weathered; anti-labour forces want to erode our basic rights, public services, paid sick leave, child care, and even health and safety standards. Rooted in nearly five decades of solidarity, PSAC will always rise to meet these challenges whatever the winds may bring.



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