

Frequently Asked Questions: UAW strike planning

Which workers may strike? Workers represented by the four bargaining units comprised of academic appointees represented by the United Auto Workers union (“UAW”): (1) Academic Student Employees (TAs/Readers/Tutors); (2) Postdoctoral Scholars; (3) Academic Researchers (Specialists/Project Scientists/Professional Researchers/Coordinators of Public Programs), and (4) Graduate Student Researchers (including some on training grants and external fellowships).

Can I ask any of these workers about their intention to strike? No. Do not discuss the potential strike action or solicit any individual worker’s intention. This can be perceived as pressuring them and may potentially violate their employee rights. Assume that all workers will strike.

What impacts are anticipated? At least a brief, and possibly extended, period where these workers will not fulfill their job duties. This includes but is not limited to: teaching lectures, labs, and discussion sections; grading submitted work and entering/maintaining grades; tutoring; supplemental instruction; research; outreach; program administration; and other duties assigned to these workers.

What should an instructor of record do at this time? If you currently supervise one or more ASEs (TAs/Readers/Tutors) in an instructional setting, please plan ahead for the possibility of a strike. Students will look to you to be the authority on how the course will proceed. The specific actions you take will depend on circumstance, but may include the following:

- Notify your students of the possibility of a strike, how they could be impacted, and steps you will take in the event of a strike. Classes should not be cancelled because of the strike.
- Maintain clear and frequent communication with your students. Remind them that you will be the main point of contact during the strike, and ensure they know how to reach you.
- If you anticipate an increase in emails, ask students to use a common subject line (such as the course prefix and number) and set up a rule to filter your inbox. Alternatively, set up discussion forums / chats with different topics and ask them to submit questions there for your review.
- Identify the most important aspects of the course and focus on maintaining their continuity. Among these priorities should be maintaining each student’s access to the course and materials.
- Identify any aspects of the course that may be postponed, abbreviated, or omitted, and revise your lesson planning and grading rubric accordingly. Consider engaging your students in making these revisions, and be transparent and reasonable with your new expectations.
- Examine the work currently being done by each ASE to understand its stage, how it might be disrupted, and the specific steps you can take to mitigate disruption if it happens.

- Ensure you have access to ASE lesson plans, student grades, graded materials, and submitted work that has not yet been graded.
- If grading will be delayed, ask students to maintain copies of submitted work and post timely sample solutions for them to review.
- Consider temporarily shifting to remote instruction if it helps you manage a larger workload or reach students for whom instruction has become more difficult to access (such as by recording and posting lectures/discussions; or holding online office hours to accommodate more people).
- Within the limits of the ASE appointment letters, consider reassigning work among ASEs if some choose to work during the strike while others do not.

What about graduate courses? Graduate classes also should not be cancelled because of the strike. Graduate students are students regardless of their employment status with the university, and may continue to participate in university activities during the strike. Graduate classes and the evaluation of graduate student work for grades and credit should continue as normal.

What should other supervisors of these workers (including PIs) do at this time? Refer to the list above for suggestions that apply outside of instructional settings. Consider the possibility that progress on research projects may be delayed, and notify anyone who may be affected (e.g., funding agencies anticipating reports).