

Protocol: Handling of Grievance Inquiries by QUFA Council of Representatives

Approved by QUFA Council November 17, 2010

1. All matters of grievance shall be kept strictly confidential. Any information about a member's issues or concerns should not be shared with co-workers, superiors, friends, or spouses. Bear in mind that when someone talks to you about an issue or a problem, it will not always immediately present itself as a "grievance" per se. Minor problems may turn out to be grievable issues, so it is prudent to refer all matters of concern to QUFA staff.
2. Because the Collective Agreement is bilateral, Council Representatives are not in a position to provide an authoritative interpretation of the terms of the Agreement. QUFA and Queen's Administration may have discussed a vague or ambiguous provision, for example, and have arrived at a mutually agreed upon interpretation that has not yet been incorporated into the wording of the Collective Agreement. Council members should not interpret the Collective Agreement for their colleagues. Instead, Council Representatives should refer their constituents to the Grievance-related documents on the QUFA website and to QUFA staff for clarification about the meaning or scope of the provisions of the Collective Agreement.
4. Members must contact QUFA personally if they wish further assistance. It is up to the member and not the Councilor, QUFA staff, or anyone else to make the decision about whether the member pursues a matter with QUFA's assistance or not. The Councilor who brought the matter to the attention of QUFA staff will not be informed of the member's decisions or actions as contact by the member moves the matter into the realm of confidential proceedings.
5. QUFA staff enters all inquiries from members or Councilors into a confidential database. (See Queen's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Guidelines, 1999 at <http://www.queensu.ca/accessandprivacy/resources/FIPPAguidelines.pdf>.) Confidentiality allows QUFA staff to consult with each other without explicitly informing the member so that they can take advantage of the various sorts of expertise and knowledge they have about University matters. This is done in the member's best interests and QUFA staff will not discuss or take the matter any further without the member's consent.
7. A member's wishes to remain anonymous and to determine whether QUFA intervenes must be respected. However, QUFA appreciates receiving timely indications from Councilors of individual or multiple instances (whether a member's name is provided or not) where violations of the Collective Agreement may have occurred in their unit.
8. The Grievance Officer will contact the inquirer to gather and record as much information as possible from him/her. If there is a potentially grievable issue, the inquirer will be asked to submit a brief written account of the events in question to the Grievance Officer and/or to the QUFA office so that the query will be followed up with an accurate account of the individual's concern.

