

## The Workload Dispute:

### One Trick to Reducing Workload That Departments Should Love

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When you realize that you have too much to do, more than ever, and excess caffeine and skipping meals (we do not recommend skipping meals!) are not helping, what is to be done?

Invoke a workload dispute! Embedded in the [Collective Agreement](#), this right is available to teaching (Article 8.8) and non-teaching Department members (Article 8.9).

A dispute may be started by one member, or a group of Department members. A dispute follows a chain of ever-increasing formality:

- Write to your Department colleagues, invoking the Article.
- Your Department responds in writing.
- If unsatisfied, write to the Dean or Director, who must provide a written response with recommendations.
- If this does not satisfy you, a panel is formed, made up of union and management appointees who will respond and copy the Department, its related manager, and the relevant BCIT Vice President. The Department and related manager must explain how the findings will be implemented or problems remedied.

The entire process may be completed in less than a month.

This is a process driven by FSA members, the FSA staff cannot invoke these dispute mechanisms but we are available to provide advice. Each Department should be reviewing and, if necessary, using these dispute mechanisms during their regular cycle of planning (see [Article 1.4.2](#) for what is including in that planning process).

### Preparing a Workload Dispute

1. Use [Article 1.4.6](#) for Guiding Principles

It is understood that the assignments ... are subject to the provisions of the Collective Agreement, and shall be made:

- in a reasonable and equitable fashion .... and
- in a manner consistent with the position of Faculty, Assistant Instructor and Technical Staff as professional educators, as professionals in their respective fields, and as members of their Department; and
- based on the criteria of fairness, equitability and reasonableness.

Refer to these principles directly in your dispute submission.

2. Do a Gap Analysis. What changed to make the workload increase to the point of unfairness or being inequitable?
3. Demonstrate how this change has affected workload. Have you got a record of the hours you have put in? If not, show a schedule that demonstrates obligations and duties. What does a typical week or month look like now and why is it excessive?

4. If you are teaching faculty, review this non-exhaustive list of factors in [Article 8.8.1](#), which the Department considers when apportioning workload:
  - number of students per instructional grouping
  - nature of courses
  - number of different courses
  - marking requirements
  - need for, and availability of, instructional support
  - concurrent instructional activities
  - assigned administrative and other non-instructional responsibilities
  - office hours
  - whether the Employee is teaching the course for the first time
  - variation or changes in curriculum
  - specific instructional needs of students
  - assigned Prior Learning Assessment activities
  
5. Talk to your colleagues. What have they seen regarding workload? What can each of you share? What strategies can you build together to demonstrate a workload issue? You may even reach out to other Departments that may have already dealt with similar issues.

### Potential Outcomes of a Workload Dispute

Results of a workload dispute are not prescribed. The [Collective Agreement](#) though may not be violated and the strategic objectives set by managers (see Article 14.1) are not to be transgressed.

Rebalancing workload among team members is one potential result. Departments may give extra weight to certain tasks; for example, a member has never run a report off of a new computer system and needs extra time to accomplish it. Or a Department might agree to shift vacation or month-free-of-teaching calendars to help balance workload and breaks.

Disputing workload encourages managers to dialogue and consider ideas they may otherwise reject. Reallocating budget, for example, could result in posting a temporary job to alleviate a transitory increase in work. In the final analysis invoking the workload dispute mechanism will not guarantee change, but it will guarantee you a collegial forum through which to express your concerns.

***If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the FSA: [fsa@bcit.ca](mailto:fsa@bcit.ca).***

