

Information about the CUPE 3912 NSCAD Members' Strike

Pay Comparison

INSTITUTION	PAYMENT (2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR)
NSCAD (ICA Instructors)	\$5,873.00
Dalhousie (Part-time Faculty)	\$8,260.00
SMU (Part-time Faculty)	\$8,045.00
National Average (Part-time Faculty)	~\$9,200.00
NSCAD (Teaching Assistants)	~\$17.80/hr
Halifax Universities (Unionized TAs)	>\$30.00/hr
National Average (TAs)	~\$40.00/hr

These disparities highlight the pressing need for fair compensation for ICAs and TAs, as they earn significantly below the average rates across comparable institutions.

Employer Offers

The Employer's wage offer to ICAs was \$6,063.00 for the 2025/26 academic year, a mere \$190 increase over the status quo. This offer falls short of addressing the inflationary pressures that have impacted cost of living, and is far below the part-time wages at other post-secondary institutions. NSCAD walked away from the bargaining table after a single pass on the final day of conciliation, reflecting a concerning unwillingness to engage in meaningful negotiations.

- Offered TAs and RAs only \$22.35/hr for the 2025/26 academic year.
- Categorically rejected any discussion of job security, seniority, or ongoing relationship between employee and employer.

Union Demands

The Union's current demands include:

- \$8,327.00 per 3-credit course for ICAs in the 2025-2026 academic year.
- \$37.00/hr for Teaching and Research Assistants.

These demands are rooted in the need for fair compensation that aligns with industry standards at other major universities in Halifax.

- The Union remains willing to negotiate on these positions, and expects a final agreement which is comparable to what is received at other universities in Halifax.

- Other major universities in Halifax offer job security guarantees to their contracted instructors, which NSCAD currently lacks. A formalized system for job security is essential to protect instructors' rights and provide a pathway for career advancement.
- The Union is demanding guarantees for fair hiring based on experience and qualification. All other major universities in Halifax have similar such guarantees.
- The Union is asking that ICAs receive basic Health Benefits for dental and vision care, or payment in lieu of benefits.

Progress of Bargaining Since 2024

The Union provided the above demands to NSCAD at the final day of conciliation. This was in response to NSCAD's initial wage counter at conciliation on February 10. These demands represent a significant decrease from our opening position and signify our preparedness to find compromise. However, NSCAD promptly walked away from negotiations, later sending contradictory correspondence to the school about being ready and willing to negotiate.

Work Conditions

Independent Course Appointees (ICAs) at NSCAD are hired on a per-course basis. Although NSCAD designates these roles as temporary and meant to fill gaps, **ICAs delivered over 50% of total course instruction in 2023**, with some individuals having taught for 10+ years. Following the unionization of ICAs, there has been a disproportionate reduction in courses made available to ICAs. Many ICAs close to achieving part-time status find themselves without contracts, trapping them in cycles of insecurity.

Similar to ICAs, Research Assistants (RAs) often face short-term contracts that contribute to job instability and uncertainty about future employment. RAs have little recourse to address issues like workload demands or contract renewals, leading to job insecurity. The Union is advocating for job security measures that protect RAs, ensuring that their contributions to research are acknowledged and compensated appropriately.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) at NSCAD have not received a pay increase since 1984. TAs face challenges in protecting their rights, having minimal recourse when supervisors impose excessive hours or unreasonable demands. This emphasizes the need for clearer support mechanisms and financial recognition for their contributions to education.