**Q&A on research grants in the event of a strike or lockout**

1. **Can the employer freeze access to existing Tri-Council grants or funds during a strike or lockout?**

No. Tri-Council grants and funding awarded to researchers, students and fellows for existing research projects are maintained during a strike or lockout. CAUT has received the following communication from Benjamin Cyr, the Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Finance DG for both the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

In the event of a strike or lockout:

* *The agencies would maintain grant and award funding to researchers, students and fellows for existing research projects. Funds for grants, fellowships, and scholarships must continue to be used for the eligible expenses for which the funds were awarded. During this time, in keeping with the Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration (*[*TAGFA*](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/interagency-interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide_eng.asp)*), the institution must ensure that the research project and/or the grantee's signing authority is not compromised. As such, a grantee may delegate his/her signing authority to one or more person of his/her choice at the organization for the purpose of approving research expenditures directly related to the funded research.*
* *As indicated in the “*[*Authorization of grant expenditures*](https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/interagency-interorganismes/TAFA-AFTO/guide-guide_eng.asp#19)*” section of the TAGFA: “The grant recipient holds the authority to use the grant funds.  Only the grant recipient can delegate authority to use the grant funds. The delegate should possess the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise the role effectively. Approval of the delegated authority must be formally documented using an appropriate delegation instrument and in accordance with the administering institution’s relevant policies and requirements.”  Therefore, unless pre-authorized, only the grantee or authorized delegate should have access to the funds.*

1. **In the event of a strike, does the Faculty Association need to do anything to negotiate the delegation of signing authority to ensure full access to existing Tri-Council funds or grants during a strike or lockout?**

No, not collectively. A strike protocol does not need to include this option. However, individual members who are grant holders may choose to delegate signing authority during a strike to a delegate who possesses *“the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise the role effectively”.*

1. **Can applications for new Tri-Council grants be made and processed during a strike or lockout?**

Yes, they can. Furthermore, Tri-Council application deadlines cannot be extended to accommodate strikes and lockouts.

1. **Can employers refuse to process new grant applications during a strike or lockout?**

No. The Tri-Council [Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](https://www.science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_56B87BE5.html?OpenDocument) requires institutions to “confirm the eligibility of each Grant or Award applicant at the time of application” and to “provide adequate, equitable financial and administrative support to its Recipients to ensure sound management of funds”.

However, there is no guarantee the employer will do what is required on its end to process new grant applications, unless this is negotiated into the strike protocol. Associations should advise members to submit applications early when possible. Where feasible, associations may wish to consider grant submission dates when setting a strike deadline.

1. **What about protection for internal research grants?**

If internal grants are at the employer’s discretion, the association should advise members to apply early, submit expenses early and retain records of their submissions. Expense refusals by the employer can be addressed after the fact in a Back to Work Protocol and/or by a grievance.