



Higher Ed Strike Prep Materials

What happens if the contract expires FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Expiration of a Union Contract

The University negotiators have informed our bargaining committee that they will not agree to extend the contract past the July 31 expiration unless we agree to extend the current contract through October, which is not something our bargaining team is willing to do. While this is a departure from the past and appears to be aimed at pressuring us, it is not something to be overly concerned about. Here are common questions and answers on the subject:

What happens if the contract expires?

The impact is very limited. The law basically requires management to maintain the status quo and prevents changes in workers' wages, hours, and working conditions – including leaves such as vacation, sick time, and personal days. Management cannot unilaterally change any of these items simply because the contract expires.

If we don't reach an agreement, is it possible for the Universities to force changes to our wages, hours, and working conditions?

Yes. Under Oregon law, the parties must engage in mediation for a minimum of 15 days before either party may declare impasse. After we reach a formal impasse at the bargaining table and satisfy a 30-day cooling-off period, management would be able to implement their final contract offer and the union would be released to go on strike after a vote of the membership. We are not at this point yet and will continue to negotiate in good faith in hopes of reaching a fair agreement.

What protections do I have against unfair treatment if the contract expires?

The contract's just cause provision, which protects us against unfair discipline and discharge, remains in effect after the expiration of the contract. In some circumstances, you may also have protection under other State laws.

What happens to my health care if the contract expires?

It will continue as is. Health care is part of your benefits and management cannot unilaterally change or stop paying for health care while bargaining continues to progress.

What happens to our ability to file grievances or arbitrations on events that occur after the contract expires?

The grievance and arbitration procedures are some of the few items that are affected by the expiration of the contract. Management would not be obligated to accept new grievances or arbitrations during this period. However, if the events or dispute at issue took place before the contract expired, management would have to follow the grievance arbitration process even if the grievance was filed after the contract expired.

What happens to grievances or arbitrations that have already been filed? They will continue forward unaffected.

If you have questions that were not covered here, contact your union steward or call the SEIU Member Resource Center at 1.877.772.6551