

Association of Dalhousie University
Research Employees
(A-DURESS)
PSAC #86001

Postdoctoral Fellows bargaining info session



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

Who are we?

- We are the Public Service Alliance of Canada directly chartered local 86001, representing the approximately 140 Postdoctoral Fellow Employees at Dalhousie University
- Grant-Paid Employees are also part of this local, but are engaged in separate bargaining talks as they work towards establishing a first collective agreement
- Together we are the Association of Dalhousie University Research Employees (A-DURESS)

What are we asking for?

1. Salaries that keep up with inflation
2. Job security
3. Healthcare benefits

Full details of all our specific asks are available here:

<https://a-duress.ca/postdoc-bargaining>

1. Salaries that keep up with inflation

- The minimum salary at Dalhousie is **\$38,500/year** (\$18.51 per hour)
- This is one of the lower minimum postdoc hourly wages in Canada, the average being \$19.16 per hour
- In 2022, a living wage in Halifax **\$48,878/year** (\$23.50 per hour)
- Average rent for a 1 bedroom apartment is \$1770/month (\$21,240/year)

<https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/livingwageNS>

<https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/halifax-ns>

1. Salaries that keep up with inflation

- Currently, 2% of postdocs are paid at the minimum salary, 9% are paid below \$45,000, and 22% are paid below \$50,000. The average postdoc salary is \$53,804.
- **78% of faculty supervisors are able to pay postdocs a living wage.** We want to ensure that **all postdocs are paid a living wage** and have made proposals that the minimum salary be raised annually for the next three years.

<https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/livingwageNS> ;

<https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/halifax-ns>

Proposed increase to minimum salaries

Effective date	Our proposed minimum salary	Dal admin proposed minimum salary	Real terms pay cut
January 1, 2022	\$45,000	\$38,500	7.5%
January 1, 2023	\$50,000	\$38,500	3.8%
January 1, 2024	\$55,000	\$40,000	2.3%
January 1, 2025	Not in our proposal	\$40,000	2%

Proposed increase to all salaries

Effective date	Our proposed economic increase	Dal admin proposed minimum salary
January 1, 2022	4.5%	0%
January 1, 2023	4.5%	0%
January 1, 2024	4.5%	0%

2. Job security

- Postdoctoral work is characterised by a high degree of **precarity**
- This precarity is exacerbated by scholars' legal status: 50% of postdocs are International scholars whose residency in Canada is contingent on their work permit; another 21% are Permanent Residents
- There is currently no minimum contract length and no minimum notice period for a contract extension, which can cause difficulties with renewing immigration paperwork, leases, etc.

2. Job security

- To improve job security, we are asking:
- That the usual minimum contract length be 12 months
- That notice of contract extension should be given 60 days prior to the contract end date
- That the probationary period should be lowered from six to three months
- That the salary for a renewed position with the same faculty supervisor/grant should not be lower than the current salary

3. Healthcare benefits

- We are asking for increased medical coverage to bring us in line with other unionised employees at Dalhousie
- We are asking for access to the Student Health & Wellness Centre
- We are asking for consistent application of the discounted membership to the Dalplex (campus sports centre)

How is it going so far?

- We've met to bargain one three occasions so far: November 8-9, January 17-18, & March 6-7; next round TBD
- Dalhousie admin felt the presence of postdocs in the room threatened their “psychological safety” and they refused to meet, moving us to conciliation
- This has slowed the process considerably
- Dalhousie admin has not offered meaningful counter-proposals, whereas we've compromised on several articles

How does this impact PIs?

- The vast majority of supervisors are already paying their postdocs above the minimum salary
- Most supervisors are already offering 12 month contracts
- These improvements to working conditions will primarily impact a minority of supervisors

How can you support us?

- Let the administration know you stand with us
- Sign our open letter
- Put up one of our posters outside your lab to show you care about paying your PDFs well
- Talk to your colleagues

We share a common goal of advancing the important research we all do at Dal and want to work together to ensure our working conditions enable this to be achieved

Questions?

Website: <https://a-duress.ca/>

Twitter: [@psac_86001](https://twitter.com/psac_86001)

Email: psaclocal86001@gmail.com

