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Current Association Grievances

What are Association grievances? These are UTFA's complaints about the Administration's breaches of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) that directly relate to the Association. They are similar to "policy grievances" in other organizations.

Why are there so many? Prior to UTFA and the Administration negotiating meaningful amendments to the grievance and arbitration procedures of the MoA (effective April 2025), faculty and librarians at UofT had been poorly served by the MoA; the previous grievance article left UTFA members with fewer and weaker workplace rights and protections than are found in agreements at other Canadian universities. In addition, a multi-year backlog of cases was caused, in part, by the Administration unilaterally refusing to schedule future arbitration dates until the Grievance Review Panel (GRP) was fully populated, even though there were more than enough panelists confirmed to hear grievances. While the new grievance processes have replaced the GRP with a roster of professional artibitrators, it will still take years to work through the backlog of cases.

The following Association grievances are listed in reverse chronological order by the date of filing.

Grievance	Overview of Issue(s)	Time of Filing	Update (as of the October 2026 Council Meeting)

Violations of Academic Freedom, the Statement of Institutional Purpose, Statement on Freedom of Speech, Article 1 of MoA, etc (social media, reprisal)	UTFA is grieving the ongoing pattern of Deans calling UTFA members into urgent meetings about social media posts. UTFA is also grieving reprisal members have experienced for seeking UTFA representation in response to being called in.	September 2026	The grievance was filed September 11, 2026. The Administration denied the grievance at Step 3 on October 27, 2026. UTFA will be referring the grievance to arbitration.
Violations of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), Occupational Health and Safety Act, Policy on Health and Safety, and Code of Student Conduct	UTFA is grieving the Administration's response to an incident in which the Administration significantly mishandled safety concerns raised by UTFA members. UTFA cannot share details about the incident without exposing the impacted members to risk. The context is serious and revealed a significant gap in the Administration's approach to the safety of members and the safety of the University Community. UTFA is alleging violations of Articles 1, 5 and 8 of the MoA, the Health and Safety Policy, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the Code of Student Conduct.	April 2026	The grievance was filed April 6, 2026. The grievance has been put in abeyance while the parties attempt to negotiate a resolution.
Systemic Discrimination and Failures to Accommodate Disabled Members	UTFA is grieving the Administration’s systemic failures to provide reasonable and timely accommodations for disabled faculty members and librarians, including, for example, failures to respond to workplace accommodations requests for several months. These failures to accommodate have significantly affected our members’ health (some members had no recourse but to take sick leave due to the inability to carry out their duties without accommodations) and affected workloads (as these members attempt to self-accommodate), all due to the absence of support to which they are medically and legally entitled and that is necessary to perform their duties. The Administration's actions and processes fail to treat our members with dignity and respect and, UTFA alleges, constitute breaches of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Memorandum of Agreement.	February 2026	The grievance was filed February 26, 2026. The Administration did not respond to the grievance within the timelines under the Memorandum of Agreement. The grievance was thus referred to arbitration in March 2026.

Improper Program Closure and Lack of Collegial Process	UTFA is grieving the Administration’s bad-faith practice of indefinitely suspending enrollment in an academic program to initiate a program closure based on the consequent low enrollment, thus circumventing the normal collegial and consultative processes.	April 2025	The grievance was filed April 28, 2025. The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in May 2025.
Violations of Academic Freedom, the Statement of Institutional Purpose, Statement on Freedom of Speech, etc. (Social Media)	UTFA is grieving the troubling pattern of Deans calling UTFA members into urgent meetings about social media posts/reposts and related violations of the Memorandum of Agreement Articles 5 and 9, the Statement of Institutional Purpose, the Statement on Freedom of Speech.	April 2025	The grievance was filed April 09, 2025. The Administration failed to provide the required written response by the deadline. UTFA treated the Administration's non-response as a denial and referred this grievance to arbitration in May 2025.
Failure to Provide Written Reasons for the Rejection of Unit Workload Policies (2 of 2)	Similar to another grievance filed in November 2024, this grievance relates to another example of a violation of the Workload Policy and Procedures for Faculty and Librarians (WLPP) - specifically, the Administration's failure to provide to UTFA a copy of the rejected Unit Workload Policy, and the written reasons for rejecting that policy, for a unit at UTM.	January 2025	The grievance was filed January 09, 2025; discussions were begun to address the ongoing problem. (The outcome of another, individual grievance led to the parties' agreement about processes for the Administration's sharing of rejected policies and written reasons with UTFA.)

Workplace Investigations Concerns	UTFA is alleging serious and significant errors in procedural fairness, violations of natural justice, and unreasonable and inconsistent procedures and practices in the conduct of workplace investigations at the University of Toronto. The list of violations is long, but includes failures to conduct impartial investigations, address vexatious complaints, provide necessary information, and protect confidentiality. UTFA is grieving the University Administration’s failure to establish minimum protections to ensure reasonable, appropriate, and procedurally fair workplace investigations in compliance with the University’s legal obligations under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, obligations under the Memorandum of Agreement with UTFA, and obligations under its own policies.	November 2024	The Administration did not provide a written decision at Step 3. The grievance was referred to arbitration by UTFA in February 2025 and has been held in abeyance, as the parties have agreed to try to work through the issues in dispute through a facilitation process which began earlier in 2025 and will continue into 2026.
Failure to Provide Written Reasons for the Rejection of Unit Workload Policies (1 of 2)	UTFA is grieving a pattern of non-compliance with the Workload Policy and Procedures for Faculty and Librarians (WLPP) - specifically, the Administration's failure to provide to UTFA copies of rejected Unit Workload Policies, and the written reasons for rejecting those policies, for several units on all three campuses of the University of Toronto.	November 2024	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in December 2024. (The outcome of another, individual grievance led to the parties' agreement about processes for the Administration's sharing of rejected policies and written reasons with UTFA.)
Arbitrary exclusion of Teaching Stream faculty from full membership in the School of Graduate Studies	The Administration is excluding Teaching Stream faculty members from full membership in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) based solely on the fact that they are in the Teaching Stream. UTFA is grieving that this exclusion is arbitrary and discriminatory.	November 2024	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in November 2024.

Failure to Provide Unit Workload Documents with Complete and Sufficient Data ("Workload Documents")	UTFA is grieving the Administration's lack of compliance with Arbitrator Eli Gedalof's September 6, 2023 interest arbitration award: specifically, the failure to provide Annual Workload Documents by the required June 30 deadline, and the fact that the data that was provided was unparticularized, incomplete, and often shared in an inaccessible format.	July 2024	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in August 2024.
Improperly Changed and Undisclosed PTR Processes ("PTR")	UTFA is grieving a number of PTR (Progress-Through-the-Ranks) issues: a Dean's unilateral changes to the PTR evaluation criteria and processes used to determine some UTFA members' 2024 salary increases without appropriate collegial governance, the imposition of a resolution that excluded the members' UTFA representatives, and a failure to disclose to UTFA all necessary documents related to the processes and criteria used to determine the affected members' PTR awards or those necessary for the negotiation of member salaries.	July 2024	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in September 2024.
Widespread Violations of the Workload Policy and Procedures (WLPP) and Systemic Failure to Abide by its Core Principles ("Workload")	UTFA is grieving a number of PTR (Progress-Through-the-Ranks) issues: a Dean's unilateral changes to the PTR evaluation criteria and processes used to determine some UTFA members' 2024 salary increases without appropriate collegial governance, the imposition of a resolution that excluded the members' UTFA representatives, and a failure to disclose to UTFA all necessary documents related to the processes and criteria used to determine the affected members' PTR awards or those necessary for the negotiation of member salaries.	December 2023	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA in February 2024. In the meantime, as Workload Policy violations continue, UTFA is filing targeted grievances.

Lack of Compliance with 2020 Asbestos Health and Safety Settlement Agreement ("Asbestos Non-Compliance")	UTFA is objecting to the Administration's failure to comply with the terms of a signed agreement related to an earlier Association Grievance related to a series of serious health and safety violations during large-scale asbestos abatement at the Faculty of Medicine. The parties returned to the original mediator to ensure that the Administration complies with the terms of the agreement and adheres to established best practices as they are required to do under their own Health and Safety policy.	November 2022	After mediation failed in spring 2023, UTFA referred the issue to arbitration, which was scheduled to begin in 2025. Arbitration had to be deferred due to availability of expert witnesses and is now being rescheduled.
Implementation of Vaccination Policy Against UTFA members ("Vaccination Policy")	UTFA is seeking to protect our members' rights by ensuring the Administration consults with UTFA prior to any changes to Significant Terms and Conditions of Employment for faculty and librarians. In the case of the vaccination mandate, the Administration threatened unreasonable, new disciplinary penalties without first meeting with UTFA, and repeatedly refused to respond to UTFA's questions as the vaccine mandate was implemented and revised.	January 2022	Given that the relevant policy has been suspended, UTFA has asked the Administration to agree to place the grievance in abeyance. The Administration denied UTFA's request and asked UTFA to withdraw the grievance. UTFA did not agree to withdraw the grievance.

Pay Equity	As an employer, U of T is legally obliged to establish and maintain pay equity under Ontario's Pay Equity Act. ("Pay equity" requires an assessment of all jobs and an unbiased comparison of the work done in female-dominated job classes with the work done in male-dominated job classes, in order to determine equitable compensation. Employers cannot pay one employee group at a lower rate than another employee group on the basis of sex when they perform substantially the same kind of work AND if their work requires substantially the same skill, effort, and responsibility, performed under similar working conditions.) UTFA has been pressing the Administration to comply with its obligations to our members under the Pay Equity Act for many years (although our power to do so is somewhat constrained by our status as an uncertified faculty association). Via our two pay equity grievances (one for faculty and one for librarians), UTFA is seeking several orders to ensure that the Administration maintains pay equity and meaningfully participates in a joint process with our Association. UTFA needs the Administration to disclose key information related to its pay equity evaluations to ensure that the University lives up to its obligations under the Act.	August 2019	The grievance was denied by the Administration. The parties attempted mediation in 2023, but were unsuccessful. The parties are making a last attempt at mediation prior to scheduling arbitration dates.
Salary Discrimination	UTFA is aiming to rectify significant, pervasive, systemic, and persistent salary discrimination experienced by our members based on their gender, race, Indigeneity, and membership in (sometimes intersecting) other equity-seeking groups. As a remedy, UTFA's Association grievance seeks retroactive salary for affected faculty and librarians and the creation of a permanent fund to address discrimination in salaries going forward. We also propose the creation of an UTFA-Administration joint committee focused on rooting out and preventing future discriminatory compensation practices.	August 2019	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA. UTFA is reviewing quantitative and qualitative expert analyses and preparing for future arbitration dates.

Unilateral Amendment of Divisional Guidelines on the Assessment of Effectiveness of Teaching ("Divisional Guidelines")	UTFA is protecting our members from the Administration's unilateral amendment of Divisional Guidelines on the Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness that inflate the criteria to be met during their academic reviews. The revisions constitute a departure from negotiated policy and significantly raise the bar for tenure/continuing status and promotion and improperly increase the standards of performance assessment for some faculty members by adding new and more demanding criteria to demonstrate 'competence' or 'excellence' in teaching. UTFA is working to bring the Divisional Guidelines in line with the applicable policies.	July 2019	Given the costs related to the slow rate of progress in mediation (2022/2023), UTFA moved this grievance forward to arbitration. There were two hearing dates before the GRP in September 2026. The parties are now waiting for the GRP's decision.
Administration of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) /Student Course Evaluations ("SCEs")	UTFA is maintaining that Student Evaluations of Teaching/Student Course Evaluations (SET/SCEs) are arbitrary and unreliable as a measure of teaching effectiveness and are discriminatory on the basis of the protected grounds under the Human Rights Code. Our members should not be compelled to use them. Faculty and Librarian members should retain ownership and control of any SET/SCEs, for example if they wish to use them for formative purposes to improve their teaching and or to better understand students' experiences. To the extent that SET/SCEs are relied on in the assessment of teaching for our members—whether for the purposes of annual PTR increments, tenure, continuing status, permanent status, or promotion— they unreasonably render the assessment arbitrary and discriminatory.	November 2020	The grievance was denied by the Administration. Arbitration hearings in front of the Grievance Review Panel are currently underway.

Health & Safety in the Context of the COVID-19 Crisis ("Health & Safety")	This grievance addresses ongoing threats to member Health and Safety, and specifically, the Administration's responses to COVID-19, including its initial Fall 2020 re-opening plan, its failure to test building ventilation systems, its inadequate mask policy, and its opaque procedures in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 on campus. UTFA's advocacy is guided by our commitments to key principles: respect for science; the precautionary principle; and best practices in health and safety that exceed legislated minimum standards—as is required by U of T's own Health and Safety Policy.	November 2020	The grievance was denied by the Administration and was thus referred to arbitration by UTFA.
Faculty of Law Hiring Controversy/International Human Rights Program ("IHRP")	This grievance is about upholding the core principles of academic freedom, collegial governance, non-discrimination, and freedom from undue donor influence in hiring processes. UTFA grieved that the Administration's conduct in response to the search process for a new International Human Rights Program (IHRP) Director violated Articles 5 ("Academic Freedom and Responsibilities"), 7 ("Grievance Procedures"), and 9 ("No Discrimination") of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), and the University's Statement of Institutional Purpose and Statement on Freedom of Speech. UTFA also grieved that the Administration failed to adequately respond to and remedy the serious concerns raised respecting the IHRP search process thus exacerbating the above violations of the MoA and University policy.	November 2020	Given the costs associated with the slow rate of progress in mediation, UTFA came to the position that it would be more time efficient and financially prudent to proceed to arbitration.

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