Strategic Grievance Handling

Developing Techniques and Processes to Manage Grievances Efficiently
Queen’s IRC evidence-based and practitioner-centered programs give HR business professionals the skills they need to lead change in an evolving global economy.
The number of outstanding grievances is one of the most telling indicators of the state of labour relations in a unionized environment. Considering legal costs and reduced productivity, it is also a very expensive indicator for both employers and unions. Like taxes, grievances are impossible to avoid. But strategic practitioners can reduce their frequency. There are measures you can take before grievances are launched. There are measures you can take during the grievance procedure, and during mediation and arbitration process to lessen the impact on employees, the union, and the organization. That’s where this program comes in.

Strategic grievance handling is a thoughtful approach to labour relations. It involves identifying workplace-wide issues and problems, then analyzing the way in which individual grievance management can address those issues. A long-term goal can then be developed for solving the systemic issues. You will come away from this program with the big-picture perspective, as well as the skills that you can use back at work to confidently handle all steps in the grievance process.

**Transforming Knowledge into Action**

By the end of this program, you will be better positioned to:

- Diagnose when and how conflict escalates
- Understand the context and purpose of a grievance
- Consider your options when a grievance is filed
- Prepare for and take control of the grievance meeting
- Deploy your skills most effectively during the grievance process
- Strategically choose mediation or arbitration as an option for resolution
- Conduct a grievance analysis before a round of collective bargaining

**Organizational and Union Benefits**

- Enhanced in-house capacity to handle grievances
- Reduced time and legal costs spent on arbitration
- Poised and well-grounded responses to changing labour laws and legal issues
- Well-grounded positions going into collective bargaining

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**Essentials**

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| Apr. 17-20, 2018: Toronto  
Jul. 17-20, 2018: Halifax  
Mar. 26-29, 2019: Toronto |
| **Fee:** $4,495 |

**Who Should Attend**

Supervisors and managers who oversee unionized staff as well as union officials, shop stewards, and others who represent workers.

**Takeaway Tools**

- Five-Stage Conflict Escalation Model
- Grievance Preparation Checklist
a) The Rules of the Road
Much of the grievance process is grounded in law, so that’s where we start. In no time, you’ll have an understanding of the basic legal foundation.
- What is a grievance?
- How is it linked to collective bargaining?
- What are the typical boundaries and scope of a grievance?
- Which sorts of outcomes are predictable?
- When can a grievance be reviewed?

b) Conflict Escalation and Containment
There’s both art and science to recognizing, assessing, and preventing conflict from escalating into a formal grievance. Learn to identify the stages in conflict escalation and acquire the techniques for controlling conflict. Come away with a practical five-stage conflict escalation model with immediate practical benefit for reducing workplace “temperature.”

Best of all, test your understanding of this tool in a scripted scenario and, in a safe workshop setting, discuss methods of intervention. And working in a small group, compare your judgment in real-life cases against actual decisions made by arbitrators.

c) Case Studies: Learning From Disasters
From a Safe Workplace Advocate at a hospital, hear the story about how an “ordinary” grievance process contributed to a workplace tragedy.

From a Union Counsel, learn how the merger of two Canadian airlines generated hundreds of grievances relating to seniority, layoffs, pensions, and benefits.
- What creative solutions were developed to work through these situations?
- What was learned?

- How can each of us translate these lessons into practical applications in our own workplaces?

d) How to be a Strong Advocate
The basis of effective grievance handling are thorough preparation and solid advocacy, communication, and negotiating skills.

In this session, you learn:
- How to conduct a preliminary complaint investigation
- How to prepare for grievance meetings
- How to apply strategic analysis of grievances for early resolution
- How to negotiate at grievance meetings

Join the session leader in a discussion on key issues and questions that inevitably arise.
- What information should or should not be revealed at early stages?
- What should the grieving party or supervisor say and do in grievance meetings?
- Which types of negotiating strategies can be employed during grievance meetings?
- What is the best way to communicate for maximum impact?

e) Following the Mediation and Arbitration Routes
Grievance mediation and arbitration each demand a specific skill-set and understanding. Learn — and practice — the difference between the two in role plays. You are asked to take on a role and, guided by confidential information, play out a scenario that will be resolved through the mediation process. Then, the exact same scenario is played out through an arbitration process. Get on-the-spot coaching along the way.
Implement.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of grievance mediation and arbitration?
- When would you choose either process?
- When would you make a process shift, and move from one process to the other?
- How should you make that shift?

f) Feeding the Collective Agreement
Strategic grievance handling inevitably translates into strategic labour relations. In this closing session, we make the connection to the all-important bargaining relationship and review the processes that nurture that relationship.

- What are the best practices in tracking grievances, planning the negotiating agenda, and achieving consensus in your grievance and bargaining committees?
- Which processes work best in the private and public sectors?
- What are the economic realities of grievance mediation or arbitration?

Interactive Learning
Participate in a number of grievance role plays that allow you to practice negotiating techniques and test assumptions in a safe environment, and receive on-the-spot coaching. Learn how to use the conflict escalation model in a scripted scenario by deciding, in your small group, the best intervention to make, and then learn how the professionals approached the same scenario.

Learning Beyond the Classroom
Our learning programs are focused on your growth:

- Opportunities to network with high-level colleagues from across the country
- Coaching from internationally-renowned facilitators with real-world experience
- Skills and strategies that directly apply to work environments
- Experience-based programming to test theories and ideas
- Mentoring beyond classroom sessions

Call toll-free: 1-888-858-7838
Facilitators and Speakers

Elaine Newman (Lead Facilitator)
Elaine Newman, BA, LL.B., LL.M., is a very experienced full-time arbitrator and mediator, specializing in labour relations, employment, and human rights matters. She is a teacher, an author, and frequent speaker on labour, employment and human rights issues. Elaine served as Associate Director of the LLM program in Labour Relations and Employment Law at Osgoode Hall Law School 2002 to 2008.

Lori Aselstine
Lori has over 33 years of experience in the fields of program management, human resources and labour relations. She has extensive experience conducting complex investigations, developing corporate grievance management/resolution strategies and processes, developing negotiation and bargaining mandates, and managing in a complex union-management environment.

Blaine Donas
Blaine Donais, B.A., LL.B., LL.M., RPDR, C. Med. is President and Founder of the Workplace Fairness Institute. Blaine is a labour lawyer and an expert in labour/management facilitations, mediation, and investigation. He teaches human resources professionals, labour leaders and others in areas such as human rights, labour and employment law, human resources, collective bargaining and conflict resolution.

Dawn Ricker
Dawn Ricker, Senior Advisor of Dispute Resolution and Support for Wilfrid Laurier University, has a 25-year history of working with people and organizations in crisis, implementing community programs and developing institutional supports for people experiencing marginalization, victimization, harassment and discrimination. Currently Dawn is responsible for managing interpersonal disputes between individuals and within groups at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Rick Russell
Rick has been working full time in the dispute resolution field for over 25 years. He has a busy mediation and facilitation practice specializing in commercial, construction and workplace issues, as well as conflict management training, facilitation and partnering. He also works frequently in the area of workplace investigation and fact-finding, workplace assessment and restoration, conflict coaching and advanced conflict management training.
Registration Kiosk

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We offer four easy ways to register:
Web: Complete the online form at: irc.queensu.ca
Telephone: Reserve by calling toll-free: 1-888-858-7838
Fax: (613) 533-6812
E-mail: irc@queensu.ca

Confirmation and information on program location, check-in time, and agenda will follow.

Registration and Fees
Program fees include tuition, workbook materials, lunches, and some dinners. For all programs, payment in full is required one month before the program begins.

Register 60 days prior to a program and save $300 on the tuition of four- and five-day programs, and $150 on two- and three-day programs.

Register three people from the same organization in the same program at the same time, and receive a 10% discount on program fees. Register five or more people in the same program at the same time, and receive a 20% discount.

If you know you will be pursuing a Queen’s Certificate and would like to remit tuition in one payment before your first program, we offer a special fee with a considerable saving. Contact our Program Administration office for details.

Note: Only one discount may be applied.

Cancellation Policy
Substitutions are permitted with no penalty 8 days or more from the program start date.
Substitutions 7 days or less before the program start date will be subject to a $500 charge.
Transfers and cancellations are permitted with no penalty up to 15 days prior to the program start date.
Transfers and cancellations 14 days or less from the program start date will be subject to a 100% charge of the program fee.

Location and Accommodation
Please refer to our website, irc.queensu.ca, for the latest information on venues.