Why Choose Queen’s IRC?

Queen’s IRC focuses on developing and delivering human resources (HR), labour relations (LR) and organizational development (OD) programs for busy practitioners.

- 85 years of evidence-based and practitioner-focused training
- In-person, virtual and custom programs available
- Coaching from industry leaders with real-world experience
- Certificate-based programs in HR, LR and OD
- Practical simulations and tools that apply to your work environment
Collective bargaining may get all the attention of the outside world, but smart, day-to-day relationship management determines the effectiveness of managers and unionized workers. It is the ongoing ability for both management and the union to resolve issues and problems that arise daily that will either create a culture of success or one of resistance and fear. In this program designed for both supervisors and union representatives, the use and application of the collective agreement is placed into an intensely practical context. In addition, specific skills and tools for improving trust, engagement and problem-solving are central to the program.

Learning Objectives

- Learn and apply two foundational tools and approaches for resolving problems in the workplace
- Understand the structure and role of all collective agreements
- Practice problem-solving and issue resolution skills and approaches
- Use discipline strategies and tools that support change and improvement
- Utilize simple tools for building and managing trust in every workplace situation

Organizational Benefits

- Stronger labour management relations to enhance competitive capabilities
- Aligned labour relations systems that promote worker satisfaction and high performance
- Poised and well-grounded responses to the changing face of labour law and legal issues
- Reduced time and costs spent on grievance arbitration
- Better understanding of how to build the union/management relationship into a resource for both parties

Takeaway Tools

- Practical conflict management tools such as:
  - The Stairway - a tool for responding effectively to any situation of conflict in the workplace
  - The Triangle of Satisfaction – a framework for understanding behaviour and motivation
  - BrainFishing – A skills-based approach to engaging effectively in emotional or difficult situations
  - The Discipline Checklist – a tool for ensuring discipline is decided and applied fairly
  - The Dynamics of Trust – a framework for building and managing trust in direct and practical ways
Tour of the Program

Learn both management and union best practices on challenging issues such as discipline, performance management, and job competition. Develop interest-based skills to help eliminate positional behaviour and engage difficult people, be they managers or workers. Reduce friction arising from the daily interpretation of the collective labour agreement. Start using the collective agreement as a platform for productivity and achievement.

a) Interests, Rights, and Power

We first distinguish three related yet distinct concepts in how all of us approach problem solving:

- A focus on interests, which calls for engaging, motivating, and coaching
- A focus on rights, which involves setting boundaries, rights, and obligations
- A focus on power, which calls for discipline, accountability, and enforcement of boundaries

Understanding the distinctions, and knowing when and how to pull on each of these levers, is a crucial initial learning. How can managers and union representatives effectively use these processes? How can you get management’s attention on important issues?

We then do a deep dive into interests, using the Triangle of Satisfaction as a means to understand three types of interests. This will help you to better diagnose people’s behaviour in the workplace and resolve workplace issues. In many cases, union representatives are focused on one set of these interests, while managers are focused on a completely different area, often leading to frustration. Managers and union reps will learn how to engage on the full range of key interests.

b) Understanding Human Rights in the Workplace

With the help of a case study, we examine the law, rights, and obligations governing the workplace, with a focus on both human rights legislation as well as recent developments, such as Ontario’s Bill 168. We work through the following themes:

- How to recognize harassment and discrimination
- The DNA of a poisoned work environment
- How to manage issues that arise related to harassment
- How managing performance is related to human rights in the workplace
- What obligations that management and unions have in relation to human rights issues

c) Dissecting the Collective Agreement

You’ll learn all about the laws, rights, and obligations embedded in collective agreements that touch all parties. What are the key provisions and hot spots in the collective labour agreement that front-line managers need to know?

You’ll also be briefed on the grievance process. What is the front-line’s role in this process? What is the anatomy of a grievance? What are the best interventions from both a management and union perspective? You’ll have an opportunity to identify the key areas for your own collective agreement, and develop strategies for starting to address those issues.
d) Managing Relations in the Unionized Environment
In this module, learn how to work effectively to build trust in the unionized environment, and how to apply power without causing long-term problems. Participate in a spirited discussion of the union’s role in building and maintaining a productive work environment.

e) Applying Key Interest-Based Skills – The Dynamics of Trust
Even when working with “rights” and “power”, you still need to engage people and build productive and sustainable workplace relationships. Trust is a key component of every relationship, workplaces included. What creates and builds trust, both on a personal and impersonal level? When trust is low or broken, what can help repair and rebuild it? How do we weave trust into everything we do, even when not everyone is getting what they want?

You’ll be given a clear and easy-to-implement template for building and managing trust in the workplace. Build your skills in:

■ Eliminating positional behaviour
■ Effective listening in search of the “why”
■ Reality testing to engage difficult staff and effect change
■ Working effectively with difficult managers and members

f) Managing and Applying Discipline
When done properly, what does progressive discipline look like? How do you set boundaries that are respected? If you’re a front-line manager, how do you gather the facts and conduct a disciplinary meeting? When does the Human Resources department need to be brought in?

In addition, you’ll learn the best way to represent a member in the discipline process. What is best for the member, and the membership? How do you sell a result to the member that he or she may not like?

g) Performance Management that Works
Improving the performance of workers involves insight and a number of skills. Motivations need to be understood. Expectations need to be set collaboratively. In this module, learn how to:

■ Set expectations
■ Give feedback that is heard
■ Execute on the maxim, “Gentle pressure, relentlessly applied”

h) The View from the Union Hall
Hear the union perspective on discipline, performance management, and seniority.

■ What does the union look for in “good” supervisors?
■ Union duty to represent – goals and limits
Facilitators and Speakers

Gary Furlong (Lead Facilitator)


Gary has worked with the Queen's University School of Industrial Relations conducting research into employment models of dispute resolution in Canadian companies. He teaches a number of labour-related courses at Queen's University IRC, along with advanced mediation skills at York University.

In the labour area, Gary mediates collective agreements, grievances and labour board complaints for sectors as diverse as school boards, public health care, utilities, and airlines across Canada. Gary has delivered collective bargaining negotiation skills training for both management and union bargaining teams, bringing a strong focus of effective and collaborative skills to the table. Gary specializes in leading joint bargaining training for intact negotiation teams just prior to negotiations, with a focus on helping parties maximize joint gains at the table. In addition, Gary also conducts relationship building interventions to strengthen day-to-day union-management effectiveness away from bargaining.

Gary has worked with a wide range of organizations in the private sector, in the public sector with municipalities, provincial governments and the federal government, and with unions including Unifor, Teamsters, CUPE, ONA, OPSEU, IATSE and PSAC.

Gary was awarded the McGowan Award of Excellence by the ADR Institute of Canada. He is a graduate of Stanford University in California.

Al Loyst (Speaker)

Al was a member of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) for 45 years. This unprecedented tenure provided him with valuable insight into collective bargaining and the unionized landscape as it has adapted and transformed in Canada. As a result of the unique roles that Al held at General Motors (GM), he has been able to utilize his skills to play an integral role in assisting the membership in obtaining solid contracts and fair employment. Al’s lengthy career with GM has offered him the ability to see change through a variety of different positions such as “wellness coordinator” (with the transition of the truck plant, Al was instrumental in bargaining for a fitness centre), human-rights investigator and human-rights facilitator, service representative for the membership and team lead on a pilot project in a self-directed work group. Al retired in 2017, as the second longest serving GM employee in their history.

Al held elected positions (dating back to 1992) and worked tirelessly at the CAW to advocate on behalf of the members. Throughout his years of service, Al dealt with employee benefits, sick and accident E.I. compensation, and pensions. He took on roles such as strike coordinator (1997) and was an instrumental part of organizing a plant occupation, which led to a settlement and the sale of the plant to Peregrine Inc. Al was a member of many bargaining committees, one of which negotiated a transition agreement with GM and Peregrine. In 1998, he was elected district committee person and was later amongst the negotiating committee members that successfully negotiated the first collective agreement in 2000.

Throughout his career, Al has utilized both traditional and interest-focused bargaining and has seen the impact of both styles of bargaining and their long and short-term effects on organizational relationships and union/management interactions.

Al has been a long-standing trainer with the Queen’s IRC Negotiation Skills and Managing Unionized Environments programs and has completed both his Organizational Development and Labour Relations Certificates through Queen’s IRC.

He undertakes training across the country and is called upon by union and management teams alike to share his experiences to enhance and shape union and management relations across a broad spectrum of workplaces in the private, public, government and not for profit sectors.

The roster of facilitators and speakers may change. We will do our best to keep you informed of program changes.
Building Better Leaders