



Position Title/Titre du poste: National Labour Relations Officer/Agent·e national·e des relations de travail/

Position Number/Numéro du poste: 203

Band Level/Échelle: 11

Position Description

Position Title: National Labour Relations Officer

Position Number: 203

Band Level: 11

Supervisor Position Title: Director of Member Representation and Labour Relations

Supervisor Position Number: 202

Position Designated Bilingual: Varied (bilingual essential – English and French; unilingual English; unilingual French)

Purpose of Position

With its 20,000 plus union members, the Union of National Employees (UNE) is one of the largest and most diverse Components within the Public Service Alliance of Canada, (PSAC), the Certified Bargaining Agent. UNE represents members in approximately 57 Departments, Agencies, Commissions and Separate Employers, governed by multiple legislations and approximately 45 collective agreements within 170 Locals from coast to coast to coast in Canada and in Consulates and Embassies around the world.

The National Labour Relations Officer (NLRO) represents between 2,500 and 4,000 union members in a diverse portfolio of Employer Groups.

Under the direction of the Director of Member Representation and Labour Relations, the NLRO provides a wide range of services in a variety of forums to the union membership and Elected Officers regarding the fair representation of members' rights, entitlements, concerns and interests with respect to the interpretation and application of collective agreements, labour-related legislation, employer policies, and other labour relations, human resources and human rights issues.

Statement of Responsibilities

As a representative and advocate of member rights, the NLRO provides technical and strategic advice, recommendations, guidance, support and representation on workplace matters, final-level grievances, mediation, adjudication/arbitration, appeals, facilitated discussions and complaints regarding working conditions, compensation, benefits, discipline, leave, health and safety, human rights, accommodation, harassment, workplace violence, workforce adjustment, staffing matters, employment equity, etc.



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The position is required to:

- Provide technical advice, recommendations, guidance, and representation on multijurisdictional labour relations matters to members, union representatives and employers relating to the interpretation, administration and application of collective agreements, federal, parliamentary, and provincial labour legislation and related regulations, employer policies and procedures.
- Research, collect and analyze relevant information from various sources and interview members/witnesses to gather facts and evidence in order to prepare the representation strategy, arguments, and/or presentation before senior employer representatives, committees, tribunals, boards, or the National Joint Council (NJC).
- Provide technical advice and support to members in preparing and participating in mediation and other forums of informal conflict resolution (ICMS) or alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- Analyze and interpret federal, provincial, and/or parliamentary legislation, regulations and legal precedents related to grievances or complaints in order to prepare recommendations to either refer the grievance to PSAC for adjudication/arbitration or determine the grievance is non-adjudicable/non-arbitrable or non-meritorious and provide a sound rationale supporting the decision to members, union representatives and Elected Officers.
- Attend adjudication/arbitration hearings to provide input, advice, and specialized case knowledge to PSAC Grievance and Adjudication Officers, or to testify as a witness and on occasion, act as a technical advisor to lawyers in attendance. Provide case debriefing to PSAC advocates or external counsel.
- Conduct impact analysis and review of proposed departmental and central agency policies, standards, programs, directives, guidelines, procedures, and initiatives and provide advice, assessment and/or recommendations.
- Plan, prepare and participate as a union representative or technical advisor on various joint union-management committees or working groups to advocate on behalf of the membership. Prepare agendas, review draft meeting minutes for accuracy, recommend or advise on strategies and provide meeting report summaries to the Elected Officers and Director.
- Facilitate and coordinate discussions with union participants, including other bargaining agent representatives, in advance of joint union-management forums to confirm common understanding, objective(s) and voice.



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- Prepare written responses for the National President's or National Executive Vice-President's signature on the Union's position regarding various issues affecting the membership including union representation in the workplace, unfair or unreasonable employer decisions or practices (ULPs), and application of policies and directives.
- Initiate, draft, coordinate, file, submit and argue policy grievances and coordinate national, regional, and Local grievance campaigns.
- Prepare and submit regular updates in the grievance and complaints databases and provide overview or summary of complaints to UNE and PSAC staff and Elected Officers when required.
- Cultivate and maintain good labour relationships between members, employers, and unions.

As a negotiator, the NLRO enters into discussions with senior departmental officials, agencies, and separate employers to negotiate, draft, approve and implement legally binding grievance settlements, and/or agreements based on the interpretation and application of legislation and precedent cases. The position is required to:

- Negotiate and/or advise, draft, sign, and enforce binding Memoranda of Agreements (MoA), Settlements (MoS) and/or Understanding (MoU) with senior officials in settlement of grievances, accommodations, return-to-work plans, consent forms for the release of medical information and complaints.
- Recommend, negotiate, accept, or reject proposed Essential Service Agreements (ESA) and Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) with departments, agencies and separate employers.
- Review position descriptions and related documentation for exclusion proposals; consult with Local Presidents, regional teams, and employer representatives.
- Collect, analyze, and prepare bargaining input/proposals for specific Collective Bargaining Conferences in respect of member grievances, interpretation difficulties and changes in legislation and policies. Participate in collective bargaining meetings, as assigned. Assess risk levels associated with collective bargaining strategies and submit bargaining recommendations to Local Union Executives, Elected Officers and the PSAC Negotiator. As a subject-matter expert, participate in the Parks Canada (PCA), Treasury Board (TB) and Statistical Survey Operations (SSO) Component Ad hoc Bargaining Committees and as assigned, attend PSAC Bargaining Conferences.



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As a trainer and facilitator, the NLRO creates, designs, develops, facilitates, and delivers training workshops/seminars and modules on a variety of topics that are important to the members and Elected Officers and support the development of Locals. The position is required to:

- Fulfill facilitator or technical advisor responsibilities, as assigned, at the Component Triennial Convention, workshops, seminars, conferences local meetings, and various other national, regional, and local forums.
- Proactively handle Local issues to prevent unnecessary escalation.
- Participate in organizing or reactivating Locals and membership mobilization activities.
- Undertake special assignments outside of the incumbent's assigned employer groups.

At all times, the position is required to protect and safeguard all forms of personal and highly confidential information such as Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), medical documents, criminal records, contents of settlements and agreements etc. in accordance with, federal, parliamentary, and provincial privacy acts and regulations as well as UNE's privacy policies.

In compliance with federal, parliamentary, and provincial privacy acts and regulations as well as employer policies, this position interprets, compiles, processes, verifies, analyzes and records data and information. It is accountable for the proper distribution of information, subject to the duty of fair representation.

Knowledge

- Current and extensive knowledge of relevant Federal and Provincial legislation, policies, directives, and collective agreements that dictate the terms and conditions of employment of members; comprehensive knowledge of employment and labour laws as they pertain to individual rights.
- Extensive knowledge of processes, terms and conditions related to the collective bargaining process, grievance procedures, workplace investigations, mediation, adjudication/arbitration, and complaint processes.
- Extensive knowledge of the principles and practices of mediation and other methods of alternative dispute resolution.



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- Knowledge of interviewing methods and advocacy techniques.
- Knowledge of worker rights, employer policies, procedures, directive, and guidelines including the structure role and processes of various joint union/management forums.
- Knowledge of union principles, the UNE constitution, regulations, policies as well as knowledge of the broader PSAC, labour and social justice movement.
- Knowledge of compensation, group benefits including disability insurance policies, programs, accommodation processes and recourse avenues available to members.
- Knowledge of adult education and training methods.
- Knowledge of computer-based technology including Microsoft, internet, email, and various software applications.

Interpersonal Skills

- The position requires very strong and effective oral and written communication skills to present arguments, persuade or gain agreement of others, to departmental and central agency representatives including Deputy Heads, Presidents, CEOs, Senior Management and NJC Boards on matters falling within the grievance procedures and consultation processes. These arguments contain complex information that may be sensitive, protected, or top secret.
- The position is required to effectively communicate information both complex and standard, to the members, the National Elected Officers, and to other staff members.
- The position requires conflict resolution skills to manage difficult/emotionally distraught people, to defuse the escalation of conflict in a stressful environment and to respond appropriately.
- The position requires interviewing, listening and good judgment skills to gather relevant information and supporting evidence from various parties to prepare an effective grievance representation.

Concentration

- The position requires a very high and intense level of concentration and ability to focus attention when preparing grievances, witness statements, gathering information/evidence, researching legislation, regulations, policies, and legal precedents, participating in national and regional joint union/management forums, participating at local union AGMs and other meetings, participating in conferences and preparing training materials.



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- The position requires a very high level of concentration at grievance hearings and during mediation to listen to the proceedings and provide counter arguments and final conclusions.
- Work is subject to conflicting requirements, multiple requests on time and fixed legal deadlines with respect to grievances, staffing complaints and adjudication/arbitration processes.
- Work is subject to numerous interruptions and changes in work that require the ability to shift priorities, address multiple issues, refocus on new tasks, and adapt to changing situations, new ideas and concepts.

Physical Demands

- The position is required to possess a high level of resilience and flexibility to meet the demands of the position.
- The position is required to work at a desk for long periods of time in a seated or standing position and required to operate office equipment such as computer and mobile devices.
- The work requires routine efforts to lift and transport materials to meetings, conferences and hearings that can weigh 25 pounds.
- The position is required to work for extended periods on the telephone, including participation in meetings, interviews, and video/teleconferences.

Complexity

- The position is required to represent the interest of the UNE membership and requires the ability to define issues/problems, recommend solutions, understand impacts, anticipate reactions, and develop strategies to resolve workplace issues before a grievance or complaint is filed.
- The position is required to develop grievance representations by defining the issues, collecting information (protected to top secret) and establishing supported facts, weighing credibility, conducting analysis and research, interpreting legislation, regulations, policies, collective agreements and any other relevant information being presented, evaluating options and developing technical arguments/position.
- The position is required to review and analyze proposed organizational, department and central agency policies and policy changes and provide recommendations. This may involve research and interpretation of the relevant Acts, regulations, existing policies, and collective agreements.



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- The position must keep abreast of current trends in the labour relations field including collective bargaining rights, entitlements, privileges, benefits and demands that are current and meet or exceed the established standard.

Impact

- The position is responsible for providing a wide range of representational services, technical advice, guidance and recommendations to members and UNE Elected Officials in accordance with UNE representation policies and processes. The position has significant impact on matters by which positions are taken, presented, negotiated, and implemented that may set precedents for the UNE, employer organizations and in some cases the PSAC. As a result, improper representation may result in financial loss, impact the morale of the UNE membership, and set precedents. Inappropriate advice may negatively impact the UNE leadership and could result in serious complaints before Labour Board(s).
- The position provides recommendations to NJC-endorsed Directives (Cyclical Review) and also provides representation on NJC grievances which may result in new, improved or changed benefit entitlements to PSAC members and other federal public service employees governed by the NJC Directives. The positive impact of such changes may be significant to the membership.

Responsibility for Information

- The position researches, analyzes and interprets collective agreements, legislation and related regulations, precedents, policies, and procedures and provides recommendations and explanation of approach, process and impact related to grievances or complaints.
- The position is responsible for handling highly sensitive information that cannot be divulged without the consent of the member. The information may be highly sensitive, confidential, protected, or top secret (i.e., the information may affect national security, medical information, criminal investigations etc.). The position is required to maintain security and confidentiality of such information and documentation to ensure that member's privacy rights are protected and relations with the department are not jeopardized.
- The position is responsible for coordinating information and documentation between the UNE office, regional teams, local union representatives and meeting delegates to ensure there is good communication and awareness of the issues that are important to the members.



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Development and Leadership of Others

- The position is required to provide accurate and timely advice to UNE membership, Elected Officers and colleagues on all matters relating to grievances, complaints, investigations, compensation, collective agreements, relevant legislation and regulations, policies, directives and procedures and any other matters that may affect the workplace.
- The position provides training to elected officers, researches, develops, and presents training discussions and seminars, covering a wide variety of topics, to members at various forums.
- The position does not have formal supervisory responsibilities however provides functional direction and oversight to assigned administrative personnel.

Environmental Working Conditions

- The position requires in-town and out-of-town travel using private, public, and commercial transportation and may be exposed to occupational health & safety risks. The position occasionally requires out-of-town, overnight travel in various locations and conditions. Irregular and overtime hours may be required to meet deadlines. Work and travel in different time zones and may result in jet lag.
- The position works in a closed secure office at the employer's work location (i.e. panic buttons and secure entry to protect against potential risk of violence). However, off-site, the position is required to work in various public or private locations to meet members or attend meetings/hearings/conferences.
- The incumbent may be subject to a high degree of stress associated with representing distraught members and with some areas of the work involving cases of emotional and mental health issues.
- The incumbent may be exposed to potential violence, harassment and critical incident stress and may be a target of unwarranted criticism from members, Elected Officers and/or employer representatives.

Qualifications

- Post-secondary graduate in labour relations, political science, social sciences, law, legislative studies or a related discipline, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.



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- A minimum of five (5) years' experience in grievance or adjudication processes, or equivalent relevant experience.
- Experience working in a political or union environment and a demonstrated commitment to progressive social justice principles (e.g. as an activist).
- May be required to pass a security and/or credit check based on assigned employers and regulatory requirements.
- Knowledge of the political and operational structures of the UNE and PSAC.
- Knowledge of broader Labour movement and social justice issues.
- Ability to analyze, apply, explain, and interpret collective agreements, employment legislation, and employer policies and directives.
- Ability to inspire, motivate, and organize groups to achieve collective goals and objectives.
- Ability to design and facilitate union education courses according to the principles and practices of popular education.
- Ability to develop union education materials.
- Exceptional ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, in one or both official languages with workers in a variety of occupations and backgrounds.
- Effective planning and time management skills.
- Demonstrates a high degree of self-motivation and initiative; ability to work independently.
- Demonstrated strong judgment, problem-solving, conflict resolution, teamwork, and leadership skills, often under circumstances that are stressful, politically and personally sensitive,
- Ability to use computer-based technology including Microsoft, internet, email, and various software applications.