

The role of the delegate

The union delegate plays a key role in AENQ. Without him, the tie between the Union and its members (and vice-versa) is impossible. He is the one who keeps the union informed of any problems that arise in the workplace. He is also responsible for communicating information to members. Finally, he is the sole representative of the Association in the workplace, which is even more important for AENQ than for other unions, given the vast extent of our territory.

Let's take a closer look at the duties of the union delegate as they are defined in clause 16.04 of our By-laws:

16.04 General duties of the union delegate.

a) He/she is the official representative of the Association in his/her school, establishment or CPE;

This means that you are the intermediary with the Association for the communication of all information and for obtaining decisions from the general assembly.

It also means that the employer (whether directly or through your immediate superior) must go through you for any problems that might concern the Union in your workplace.

b) He/she is the liaison officer between the members of his/her school, establishment or CPE and the Director of his/her sector;

This is another example of the "two-way highway" we describe further on. You keep the SD informed of what's happening in your workplace and the SD, in turn, keeps you informed of what's happening at the Executive Committee and/or with the employer.

c) He/she shall work to maintain good relations within the staff;

Since you are representing members in the workplace where you yourself are a member, you should, as much as possible, try to create good relations within your group.

Admittedly, there will be times when that isn't easy. However, you can't view this as a rigid obligation you can't remove yourself from, where necessary. Rather, you should see your role as that of a mediator. To the extent possible, try to ensure that your colleagues listen to and respect the opinions of others.

Don't hesitate to contact your Sector Director or the union advisors in the office. They can provide help and, if necessary, intervene.

d) He/she shall communicate the notices, letters, circulars and directives of the Association without delay, either by personal delivery, posting of notices or during meetings;

It is important that any information sent out by the Association reach all members concerned. While it is not necessary to read the content of every document out loud, it is similarly not enough to simply stick it up on a bulletin board on top of everything else.

For example, a posting on the union bulletin board with a notice on the billboard in the staffroom or somewhere else that a new union notice has just been posted is usually sufficient.

You should pay careful attention yourself to the content of any documents, since it is often the case that a general assembly or a vote is required. In that case, it is clearly not enough to just post the notice.

e) He/she performs the mandates assigned to him/her by the union bodies;

As the representative of AENQ, you are also expected to carry out any duties that the Executive Committee (or a superior body through the Executive Committee) entrusts to you.

In the event that is impossible because of absence, lack of time or any other reason, notify your Sector Director as soon as possible so an alternative solution can be found. Where that is not possible, you could also pass the responsibility on to the substitute delegate or another person designated temporarily.

f) He/she participates in the Sector Council.

In the next section, we will look at the function of the Sector Council. However, it should be noted here that one of the duties and responsibilities of the delegate is to participate in this body, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In that case, you should let the SD know as soon as possible.

Substitute Delegate

The duties of the substitute delegate as defined in clause 16.05 don't really require any explanation:

16.05 General duties of the substitute Delegate

- a) The Substitute Delegate assists the delegate and performs all tasks assigned by the latter;
- b) In the absence of the Union Delegate, the Substitute Delegate replaces the latter in all his/her functions.

**You should also ensure that new teachers have filled out the union membership form at the time they are hired. If they say they have never filled out the form, copy the following page, have them fill out the form, and send it by fax to the AENQ office.