

## **Freedom of Speech Annual Report Template (2024)**

As indicated in the December 14, 2018 and September 12, 2018 memos from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, each of Ontario's publicly-assisted colleges and universities is to prepare an annual report on the implementation of a free speech policy. Please use this template; you may append additional documents or institution-specific information as you see fit.

The institutional Freedom of Speech Annual Report will be a public document and should respect privacy obligations. Please report on events or incidents that took place between **August 1, 2023** and **July 31, 2024**.

The reports are to be posted on the institution's website and submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) by **September 3, 2024**.

Please submit your institution's annual report and the link to its location on your website to [submissions@heqco.ca](mailto:submissions@heqco.ca). Please reach out to HEQCO at the same address with any questions.

### **Section A: Institutional Policy**

You may append additional documentation or institution-specific information as you see fit.

Has your institution amended its free speech policy (or policy framework) since the time of your 2023 report? If so, please explain the reason for the change and provide the link to its location on your institutional website.

No changes have been made to the free speech policy framework during the reporting period.

Where are members of the institutional community (or guests) directed when there is a free-speech-related question or complaint about an institutional event? Please provide contact information.

Enquiries about particular events are typically directed to the event organizer in the first instance and referred to other offices, as appropriate, where additional information or support is needed. Offices that might be engaged to respond to enquiries include the Equity and Inclusion Office, Student Affairs, and Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs, with other units and individuals being brought in as needed. In the event that complaints are received, these would typically be referred to the University's Equity and Inclusion Office ([equity@mcmaster.ca](mailto:equity@mcmaster.ca)) for review in the first instance.

What is your institution's policy on holding events where there are security concerns? To your knowledge, were there any instances where a non-curricular event did not proceed due to security concerns or their related costs?

Where safety concerns with regard to an event have been identified, McMaster's Campus Safety Services is engaged to support safety planning and work with event organizers to ensure that planned events are able to proceed wherever possible.

The University is not aware of any events that were unable to proceed due to cost and/or safety concerns.

## Section B: Complaints

You may append additional documentation or institution-specific information as you see fit.

Between **August 1, 2023** and **July 31, 2024**, did any member of the institutional community (or guests) make an official complaint about free speech? If yes, please provide a general description that protects the privacy of complainants.

The University is not aware of any official complaints relating to free speech initiated during this period.

If there has been an official complaint (or more than one):

What were the issues under consideration? Please identify any points of contention (e.g., security costs, safety, student unions and/or groups, operational requirements, etc.).

N/A

How did the institution manage the free speech complaint(s)? Was the complaint addressed using the procedures set out in the policy? How were issues resolved?

N/A

**Section C: Summary Data**

Please provide the following summary data for free-speech-related official complaints received by the institution:

Number of official complaints received under the free speech policy relating to curricular and non-curricular events.	None
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	None
Number of official complaints where the institution determined that the free speech policy was not followed appropriately.	None
Number of official complaints under the free speech policy that resulted in the institution applying disciplinary or other institutional measures.	None
To your knowledge, were any free speech complaints forwarded to the Ontario Ombudsman?	No

To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate of the number of **non-curricular events** held at the institution either online or in person between **August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024**. Non-curricular events include, for example, invited speakers, sporting events, rallies, student life/student affairs events, conferences, etc., as opposed to regular events held as part of an academic program or course.

Non-curricular events, ranging from panel discussions, seminars, lectures, to art installations, musical performances, information sessions, film screenings, public announcements, recognition events and more, take place on our campus on a daily basis.

As non-curricular events are organized and promoted by Faculties, Departments, individuals and groups across the campus, there is no accurate way of estimating the total number held in either the physical or virtual environments.

However, as an illustrative example, our University Health & Safety office, which has responsibility for reviewing and approving student events, approved more than 4,500 virtual and physical events during the period August 1, 2023 to July 31, 2024.

Institutional Comments (if any).:

There are no immediate plans to amend the current policy framework. McMaster is committed to monitoring the implementation and impact of the policies and processes currently in place and to make appropriate adjustments.