

# Constitution of the Muslim Students' Association

## University of Toronto, St. George Campus

Ratified July 14, 2021

## **In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

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## **Article 1 - Aims and Purposes**

### *Section 1 - Aim & Purpose*

The Muslim Students' Association ("MSA") shall be a recognized student group at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus ("U of T"). The Aim and Purpose of MSA shall be to serve as a representative body of Muslims on campus which caters to their needs, while striving to be a vibrant, integrated and contributing body within the campus community.

### *Section 2 - Objectives*

The objectives of MSA are:

1. To serve as the representative voice of Muslims at the University of Toronto;
2. To cater to and accommodate the intellectual, spiritual and social needs of Muslim students;
3. To build a cohesive and unified community of Muslims on campus;
4. To expand MSA's scope of work and influence within the larger campus community;
5. To provide opportunities for leadership development within MSA's student body; and
6. To participate in community initiatives that complement MSA's mission.

### *Section 3 - Scope*

MSA shall be a student organization.

## **Article 2 – Policy Handbook**

### *Section 1 - Purpose of Policy Handbook*

The MSA Constitution is the operating document of the MSA. The Policy Handbook shall expound mainly pertaining to internal operations of the MSA, including a list and descriptions of Directorships.

### *Section 2 - Scope of Policy Handbook*

Nothing in the Policy Handbook shall contravene the Constitution. Wherever there is an ambiguity within the Policy Handbook or a discrepancy between the Constitution and the Policy Handbook, the Constitution will take precedence.

## **Article 3 – Membership**

### *Section 1 - Definition of General Membership*

The General Membership of the MSA shall be constituted as inclusion on the MSA e-mail list. General Membership shall be regulated and recorded by MSA with the full name and email addresses of members.

### *Section 2 - Definition and Rights of U of T Members*

U of T Members (students, staff, faculty or alumni) may be members of the MSA given they submit their full name and Student Identification Number for the MSA to submit this information to relevant overseeing bodies within the university (eg. University of Toronto Students' Union, Engineering Society).

### *Section 3 – Definition and Rights of Voting Members*

Voting members are General Members of the MSA who are currently registered UofT students. These members may vote in elections and constitutional amendments and be nominated for Executive positions.

## **Article 4 – Elected Executives**

### *Section 1 - Executive Positions*

The elected executives shall be eight (8) in number. Executives shall be primarily responsible for the overall administration of the MSA.

The Executive of the MSA shall consist of:

President

Secretary

Vice-President Communications

Vice-President Internal

Vice-President External

Vice-President Finance

Vice-President Student Life

Vice-President Social Advancement

*Section 2 - Role of Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee shall oversee the work of the MSA, taking responsibility for the leadership and management of the Directorships. The Executive Committee shall approve of all plans which are executed under the MSA name.

*Section 3 - Executive Term*

The term of office for Executives shall be May 1st of one year to April 30th of the following year.

*Section 4 - Recommended Presidential Experience*

It is strongly recommended that Presidential nominees have held an Executive or Director position for at least one year. The nominee is highly preferred to have been an active volunteer within the organization.

**Article 5 – Duties of the Executives**

*Section 1 - President*

The President shall be responsible for:

The general management of all the activities of the MSA;

Being the public face for the MSA and acting as the representative of the MSA Executive;

Presiding over meetings of the MSA Executive;

Administering the overall strategic development of the MSA;

Ensuring that MSA activities remain within the boundaries of Islam

Facilitating the activities and work of the executive committee

Ensuring all parts of the MSA are connected and working collectively

*Section 2 - Secretary*

The Secretary shall be responsible for:

Calling meetings of the MSA Executive;

Preparing and circulating the minutes of all MSA Executive and General Body meetings;

Presenting at the beginning of every MSA Executive meeting the minutes of the previous meeting for approval by the MSA Executive;

Preparing the agenda for the MSA Executive and General Body meetings and notifying the members of the MSA Executive and the General Body of it;

Developing and implementing new strategies to improve organizational efficiency;

Maintaining the list of members of the MSA;

Booking facilities for MSA meetings and events;

Maintaining liaison with the University administration, U.T.S.U. and other bodies on any secretarial matters, with the cooperation of the Vice-President External;

At the end of the MSA term, facilitating the process of handing relevant MSA documents to the next Executive;

Performing general administrative duties of the MSA

### *Section 3 - Vice President Communications*

The Vice-President Communications shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Supervising website management and development;

Approving of and monitoring notices from the Executive to the community, including the newsletter, Facebook and other web-based online platforms;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directors associated with advertising, website management and MSA publications;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings;

Approving all press releases and advertisements;



Drafting Policies on behalf of the MSA and assisting in implementing MSA policies;

Acknowledging receipt of inquiries to the MSA and forwarding to appropriate parties within 48 hours.

#### *Section 4 - Vice President Internal*

The Vice-President Internal shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Generating feedback from Muslim students on their religious and academic needs; developing, in coordination with Directors, strategies to meet students' needs;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which offer services to the Muslim community on campus, such as religious and academic services;

With the cooperation of the Secretary, maintaining an MSA Volunteer Database, and overseeing activities related to volunteerism, such as volunteer recognition; assisting committees with the recruitment and deployment of MSA volunteers;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

#### *Section 5 - Vice President External*

The Vice-President External is an official spokesperson of the MSA and shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Liaising and strengthening relationships with other student clubs, the University Administration, and the wider community;

Representing the MSA at functions held by external parties, including meetings called by the University Administration, MSA National and other MSA-affiliates;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directors associated with external communication, such as outreach to the wider community; ensuring that any formal agreements and collaborations between MSA and external groups be agreed upon and documented by MSA;

Presiding over meetings between the MSA Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings;

Overseeing and approving of the works and activities of the MSA Alumni Society.

*Section 6 - Vice President Finance*

The Vice-President Finance shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Maintaining the record of all the financial transactions of the MSA;

Systematic bookkeeping for the MSA;

Collecting and depositing of all funds on behalf of MSA;

Preparing the annual budget of the MSA for the upcoming year in consultation with the Executive;

Presenting, before the Executive, reports every trimester on the status of the financial affairs of the MSA;

Managing MSA finances and overseeing fundraising initiatives;

Approving and reimbursing properly documented expenses.

*Section 7 - Vice President Student Life*

The Vice-President Student Life shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Generating feedback from Muslim students on their social needs; developing, in coordination with Directors, strategies to meet students' needs;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which advance student life on campus, such as special events, sports and social activities;

Presiding over meetings between the Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

*Section 8 - Vice President Social Advancement*

The Vice-President Social Advancement shall be responsible for:

Assisting the President in accomplishing the purpose of the MSA and implementing MSA policies;

Offering guidance to MSA Directors on various opportunities and challenges in social advancement;

Overseeing and coordinating the work and activities of MSA Directorships which are associated with social advancement, such as community development and social justice activism;

Presiding over meetings between the Executive and Directors, and ensuring that a proper agenda and minutes are completed for Directors' meetings.

## **Article 6 – Non-Executive Directorship Positions**

### *Section 1 - Role of Directorships*

Directorships shall be responsible for carrying out projects and events of the MSA, or otherwise facilitating MSA activities, in accordance with MSA policies and the MSA Constitution.

### *Section 2 - Eligibility for Directorships*

All Directors (except Advisor) must be U. of T. students. The position of Advisor may only be held by a person who has been an MSA Executive member for one year.

### *Section 3 - Duties of Directorships*

Descriptions and duties of all Directorship positions will be found in the Policy Handbook and be available on the MSA website for reference. Following the Appointment Period, the Executive may change the duties and description of each Director, as they see fit for the current MSA term. A change in the duties and description of a Directorship may take place if ratified by at least two-thirds of the Executive.

### *Section 4 - Changes in Description of Directorships*

Any changes in the duties, the description, the addition and/or deletion of Directorships must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email. The opening of the application process for a new Directorship shall occur as defined in Article 11.

### *Section 5 - Executive Oversight*

Each of the MSA Executives shall be responsible for overseeing and ensuring the success of up to five (5) Directorships. The Executives shall report to the Executive Committee on the Directorships which they are responsible for, and keep their directors informed of the goings on of the rest of the MSA. Directors shall submit all plans to the MSA Executive for approval by the MSA Executive.

*Section 6 - Addition or Removal of Directorship Positions*

The Executive may add and remove Directorships as it deems necessary. Removal of a Directorship requires it to be vacant.

*Section 7 - Orphan Sponsorship Program*

Guidelines and policies detailing the MSA's relationship with the Orphan Sponsorship Program shall be detailed in a document ratified by the MSA Executive, on an annual basis.

**Article 7 – Finances**

*Section 1 - Membership Fees*

Membership fees, if any, shall be determined by the MSA Executive. Membership fees are typically \$0.00.

*Section 2 - Contributions*

The MSA may accept contributions in any form from any source consistent with the purposes of the MSA.

*Section 3 - Allocation of funds*

All funds collected for a specific cause shall be used for that cause unless a 2/3 majority of the MSA Executive authorize its use for a different purpose consistent with the goals and objectives of the MSA.

*Section 4 - Expense Approval*

All proposals for expenses shall be authorized by the Vice-President Finance or an Executive member appointed by the Vice-President Finance.

*Section 5 - Withdrawals*

All check or cash withdrawals from the bank account shall be signed by no less than two of the members of the Executive.

## **Article 8 – Meetings**

### *Section 1 - Executive Meetings*

The Executive shall meet at least biweekly at such a time and place as is most convenient and suitable to the majority of committee members.

### *Section 2 - Quorum at Executive Committee Meetings*

The presence of at least five members of the Executive, including the President, shall constitute quorum for the Executive meeting and for the purposes of decision making. Members of the Executive shall be deemed present if able to participate in discussions in the meeting.

### *Section 3 - Decision-making at Executive Committee Meetings*

The decision on all matters presented to the Executive shall at first be attempted to reach through consultation, with the aim of attaining consensus. If the issue at hand appears to be irresolvable via consensus, the chair can end the discussion and seek permission to resort to a vote. At least two-thirds of the Executive must be in favour of terminating discussion and passing decision via a majority vote. If less than two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, attempt to attain consensus resumes. If at least two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, the issue at hand will be resolved via a simple majority vote and the decision will come to pass.

### *Section 4 - Emergency Executive Meetings*

The President may call emergency Executive meetings in addition to the regular meetings, when considered necessary.

### *Section 5 - Executive-Director Meetings*

Each of the Executives responsible for overseeing a Directorship shall meet with the Directors whom they oversee at least bi-weekly. Executives must inform Directors of any decisions and new directions which may affect Directorships, and relay Directors' comments and concerns to the Executive in a timely fashion.

### *Section 6 - Council Meetings*

The Executive and Directors shall meet at least once each month for the academic year, at a time and location whichever suits as many members of both groups as possible. Directors shall be given the opportunity to raise concerns and issue comments to the Executive regarding the goals, direction and decisions of the Executive.

### *Section 7 - General Body Meetings*

The MSA shall have at least one General Body meeting during the academic year.

## **Article 9 – Elections**

### *Section 1 - Time Frame*

Annual elections shall be held within the last two months of the University of Toronto September to April Academic Term, in order to elect the Executive for the following academic year. The exact date and time of elections shall be announced by the Elections' Committee at least 7 days prior to the date of the election.

### *Section 2 - Elections Committee Appointment*

The elections shall be conducted by an Elections' Committee appointed by the Executive. The Elections' Committee must be nominated at least 3 (three) weeks prior to the date of the election.

### *Section 3 - Elections Guidelines*

The Elections' Committee may create additional election rules and guidelines. These shall be announced alongside the exact date and time of elections. These rules and guidelines must not contravene the MSA Constitution.

### *Section 4 - Composition of Elections Committee*

The Elections' Committee shall have one chairperson. The Elections' Committee shall comprise at least three persons, and it must include at least one female, one male, and one alumnus. The Elections' Committee shall not include any candidate contesting the election.

### *Section 5 - Supporting Elections Committee*

The Elections' Committee may seek assistance in administering the Election from any persons not contesting the election.

### *Section 6 - Campaigning by Elections Committee*

The members of the Election Committee shall not campaign on behalf of or against any candidate standing for election or comment on, favorably or unfavorably, any of the candidates standing for election. The members of the Election Committee may not vote in the elections.

### *Section 7 - Nomination Period*

The period to nominate candidates for the Executive Committee must remain open for at least five (5) days, and must be announced to the members of the Association via regular mail or email.

### *Section 8 - Duration of Elections*

The elections must take place at the University of Toronto St. George campus and voting must be open for at least two (2) weekdays.

### *Section 9 - Nomination Limitations*

A candidate may be nominated for no more than two positions on the MSA Executive. All candidates running for an executive position with voting privileges shall be currently registered students of the University of Toronto during the term in which they will hold their executive position. Staff, faculty, or alumni members may hold non-voting executive positions. These non-voting executive shall be limited to a maximum of one (1) or ten percent (10%) of the full executive body, whichever is greatest. Persons holding these nonvoting executive positions cannot serve as an officer (including financial signing officer) or contact person of the Student Group.

### *Section 10 - Nomination Requirements*

A candidate requires two nominators in order to be nominated to the Executive. The nominator and seconders of nominations must both be General Members of MSA. The Elections Committee must accept the nomination by a majority vote.

### *Section 11 - Voting Privileges*

An MSA member who is not registered as a Voting Member (as per Article 3) within 1 (one) week prior to the date of the election shall have no right to vote nor the right to be a candidate in the election. An MSA member is eligible to vote and to run for office if he/she is a currently registered U. of T. student.

An MSA member who is not registered as a General Member (as per Article 3) within 1 (one) week prior to the date of the election shall have no right to vote nor the right to be a candidate in the election. An MSA member is eligible to vote and to run for office if he/she is a U. of T. member.

### *Section 12 - Campaigning*

There shall be no public campaigning, nor campaigning against any candidate.

### *Section 13 - Voting System*

The Elections' Committee shall select the voting system.

*Section 14 - Resolving a Double-Victory*

If a candidate is elected to more than one position he or she must select one position and withdraw from the other position. In that case the candidate attaining the second-highest number of votes in the withdrawn position is elected to that position.

*Section 15 - Disqualification*

The Elections Committee may censure publicly or disqualify any candidate who violates the Constitution or the rules of the Election.

**Article 10 – Resignation or Removal from Office**

*Section 1 - Grounds for Removal of Executive*

An Executive member may be removed from office for:  
Committing a serious violation of the Constitution;  
Failing to fulfill the duties of office;  
Failing to attend three meetings without being excused by the Executive.

*Section 2 - Process for Removal of Executive*

If a member of the Executive commits a serious violation of the Constitution, or fails to fulfill the duties of his/her office, or fails to attend three meetings without being excused by the Executive, he/she shall be asked to give an explanation for his/her behavior to the Executive. If the committee does not find the explanation to be satisfactory, the Executive shall vote to dismiss the member. A vote to dismiss a member requires at least a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive. If a member of the Executive is dismissed he/she may appeal the decision to the general body members.

*Section 3 - Resignation of Executive*

A member of the Executive wishing to resign from office shall present the reasons for resignation in writing to the Executive committee. Resignation of a member of the Executive is pending acceptance by the Executive.

*Section 4 - Replacement of Executive*

If a member of the Executive resigns or is dismissed from office, the Executive shall appoint the second ranking candidate from the previous elections within two weeks of the resignation or removal of office.



If the second ranking candidate is unavailable or refuses to accept the nomination, and there is no third ranking candidate, the MSA shall hold by-elections to contest this position within one month of the resignation or removal from office. By-elections shall occur pursuant to the election guidelines in Article 9 of the Constitution. If no candidate can be found to fill the vacant position pursuant to Sections 1 and 2, or if the resignation or removal of office occurs following the first semester of the academic year, the Executive on a 2/3 majority vote shall appoint another member of the MSA to fill the vacated role within one month of the refusal or unavailability of the second ranking candidate.

#### *Section 5 - By-Elections Committee*

The elections committee shall be dissolved as June 1st of the current Executive term. The MSA Executive may appoint a new elections committee to hold-by elections, as needed after June 1st.

#### *Section 6 - Announcement of Changes in Executive to Membership*

The general members shall be informed of any changes in office of the members of the Executive.

### **Article 11 – Appointment of Directors**

#### *Section 1 - Directorship Applications*

Application to Directorship positions for the following term shall be opened at the start of **the new elected team's term**. The Applications shall be submitted to and collected using a form approved by the **new** MSA executive committee. The period to apply for Directorships must remain open for at least ten (10) days and must be announced to the members of the Association via email.

#### *Section 2 - Directorship Eligibility*

A member who is not registered as a General MSA Member (as per Article 3) shall have no right to apply to a Directorship. A candidate may apply for as many Directorships as s/he wishes. All applicants, except applicants to the Advisor Directorship, must be current U. of T. students.

#### *Section 3 - Campaigning for Directorships*

There shall be no campaigning in favor of or against any applicant.

#### *Section 4 - Outgoing Executive Recommendations of Applicants*

The outgoing Executive may be requested to review the list of applicants to the Directorship positions and submit recommendations to the incoming Executive. Recommendations shall include a ranking of applicants for each Directorship and an explanation of the reasons behind the rankings. Recommendations shall be submitted within two weeks of the closure of the application process.

### *Section 5 - Appointment Process*

Once an incoming Executive has been elected, it shall appoint applicants to Directorships for the upcoming MSA term. The decision on whom to appoint to each Directorship shall at first be attempted to reach through consultation, with the aim of attaining consensus. If the issue at hand appears to be irresolvable via consensus, the chair can end the discussion and seek permission to resort to a vote. At least two-thirds of the Executive must be in favour of terminating discussion and passing decision via a majority vote. If less than two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, attempt to attain consensus resumes. If at least two-thirds of the Executive are in favour of moving to a vote, the issue at hand will be resolved via a simple majority vote and the decision will come to pass. If the vote results in a tie, attempt to attain consensus will resume.

### *Section 6 - Appointment Period*

The incoming Executive committee shall attempt to appoint an applicant to every by **June 1**. No person may be appointed to more than one Directorship at one time.

## **Article 12 – Resignation or Removal from Directorship**

### *Section 1 - Grounds for Removal from Directorship*

A Director may be removed from his/her position for:  
Committing a serious violation of the Constitution;  
Failing to fulfill the duties of his/her position;  
Failing to attend three meetings without being excused by the Vice-President overseeing his/her committee.

### *Section 2 - Process for Removal from Directorship*

If a Director commits a serious violation of the Constitution, or fails to fulfill the duties of his or her position, or fails to attend three meetings without being excused by his/her Executive Supervisor, he/she shall be asked to give an explanation for his/her behavior to the Executive committee. If the committee does not find the explanation to be satisfactory, the President shall recommend a vote of the Executive committee to dismiss the Director. A vote to dismiss a Director requires a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive committee.

### *Section 3 - Resignation from Directorship*

A Director wishing to resign from his/her position shall present the reasons for resignation in writing to the Executive committee. Resignation of a Director is pending acceptance by the Executive committee.

#### *Section 4 - Replacement of Vacant Directorship*

If a Director resigns or is dismissed from office, the Executive committee shall appoint the second choice from the previous application process (described in Article 11) within two weeks of the resignation or removal of office. If the second choice is unavailable or refuses to accept the nomination, and there is no third ranking choice, the elections committee shall re-open the application process to contest this position within two weeks of the resignation or removal from office.

### **Article 13 – Amendments**

#### *Section 1 - Proposals for amendments*

Proposals for amendments to the MSA Constitution may be submitted by any MSA Member with a minimum of ten (10) signatures of other MSA Members who endorse the proposal(s).

#### *Section 2 - Referenda for Amendments*

A voter turnout of five percent (5%) of the General MSA Membership or 60 MSA Members (whichever is less) must be present for referenda on constitutional amendments. For a proposed amendment to be passed, a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the voter turnout must vote in favour of the proposed amendment(s).

#### *Section 3 - Exceptions for Amendments*

Alterations to the MSA Constitution may be made by the Executive Committee, only through unanimous vote, whenever it is directly required by ULife and the Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups. These changes must follow the core principles and values of the MSA and must be ratified at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).