

Tri-Campus Guidelines on the Recognition of Campus Groups

October 1, 2024

Scope of Guidelines

These tri-campus guidelines have been developed to facilitate the specific mechanics of administering the [Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups](#) (the [Policy](#)). The Student Life office on each campus may also develop additional guidelines, practices, and processes that complement the [Policy](#) and these tri-campus guidelines to meet unique local needs.

I. Membership

The [Policy](#) states that “Membership in Student Groups should be open to all registered student members of the University”, requires that “Student Groups must have a minimum of five (5) members who are registered students of the University of Toronto”, and defines a member of a Student Group as, “A person who has signed up to participate in a Student Group, whether it be on an on-going or provisional basis, such as to participate in a class or workshop”.

1. Student Groups are required to provide the names and U of T email addresses (i.e., @mail.utoronto.ca) of five (5) registered U of T student members when applying for or renewing University recognition. These students must first consent to being listed as members and made aware that they may be contacted by the University for validation purposes.
 - a. Executive members and officers of the Student Group who are also registered U of T students may be included in this list of student members.
 - b. Student Groups should contribute to the educational, recreational, social, and/or cultural values of the University and, more specifically, of the campus they receive recognition from. As such, Student Groups may engage members from any campus but, if recognized by a particular campus, their membership and leadership should be primarily composed of students from that campus.
2. For additional clarity, so long as they consent to be identified as a member of the Student Group, a registered U of T student member may be a student who:
 - a. has completed the membership process outlined in the Student Group’s constitution;
 - b. signed up to be a member, either online (e.g., email, website form, etc.) or in-person (e.g., clubs fair, outreach event, etc.); or
 - c. registered for a class, workshop, or other activity provided by the Student Group.
3. If a Student Group’s membership process requires payment of a membership fee, that fee should be reasonable, accessible, and explicitly stated in the Student Group’s constitution.
4. Student Groups that do not have five (5) or more registered U of T student members may contact the Student Life office on their campus for support.

II. Executive Members & Officers

The [Policy](#) states that “Registered students may... only serve as a financial signing officer on one Student Group at a time”, and that “Groups seeking recognition must supply... The names of two officers and a contact person (who could be one of the officers) responsible for all bookings of

University space, rentals of University equipment, and use of other University services”. Additionally, the [Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations](#) lists the “Ability of all members to stand for executive positions” and “Impartial and fair elections processes that allow members to participate easily as both voters and candidates” among the characteristics of a democratic student organization.

1. Student Groups must ensure that their financial signing officers are not financial signing officers for any other Student Groups.
2. The two officers required by the [Policy](#) shall be the officers assigned the Primary Contact and Administrative Officer roles on the Student Organization Portal. As these officers are responsible for interfacing with the University in various ways, Student Groups should carefully consider their operational needs when selecting their Primary Contact and Administrative Officers.
3. A Student Group’s Primary Contact shall be responsible for keeping the Student Group’s information on the Student Organization Portal (SOP) up to date, for posting and editing events and opportunities on the SOP, and for receiving and replying to correspondence from the University. Each group is required to identify one (1) Primary Contact.
4. A Student Group’s Administrative Officers shall be responsible for all bookings of University space, rentals of University equipment, and use of other University services. Each group is required to identify two (2) Administrative Officers. The Student Group’s Primary Contact is permitted to be one of the Administrative Officers.
5. For additional clarity, staff, faculty, librarians, alumni, and members of the external community cannot serve as a Student Group’s Primary Contact nor Administrative Officer.
6. While a Student Group may choose to recommend that members who wish to stand for executive positions possess certain experiences and/or skills, eligibility requirements that do not allow all members to easily participate as candidates in impartial and fair elections are considered to be undemocratic.

III. Group Names & Representations

The [Policy](#) states that “Where a group applying for recognition wishes to use “University of Toronto”, “University of Toronto Mississauga”, “University of Toronto Scarborough”, “U of T”, “UTM”, “UTSC”, or similar, in their name, it shall be clear in their name and all related representations (e.g., websites, social media, merchandise, etc.) that it is a Student Group”.

1. Should a Student Group’s name include a U of T trademarked name and it is not clear in their name that it is a Student Group, or if a Student Group’s name could be reasonably confused for a U of T department, program, or service, the Student Group will be required to change its name in order to be eligible for University recognition. Whether or not a Student Group’s name meets the requirements of the [Policy](#) shall be the discretion of that campus’ Student Life office.
2. Permitted group names that include a U of T trademarked name may include those containing the words “club”, “student association”, “student chapter”, or “student group”. Additionally, “students for”, “students against”, or other names that clearly identify the Student Group as a group of students gathered for a common cause.

3. Group names that include a U of T trademarked name that may require changes include those on the following non-exhaustive list:
 - a. Group names that suggest that the University may be affiliated with and/or supportive of a third-party organization (e.g., charities, corporations, political parties, etc.). These group names may be resolved by adding the words “student chapter”.
 - b. Group names including the words “centre”, “design team”, and “institute”. These words could be reasonably confused for a University department, program, or service.
 - i. If “centre” is used, the Student Group should be operating a student-facing, service-providing, physical centre.
 - ii. If “design team” is used, the Student Group should change their name to “student design team” or provide a signed letter from the Dean or Chair of the University faculty or program sponsoring the group’s activities.
 - iii. If “institute” is used, the Student Group should be affiliated with an institute of U of T and make clear in their name that it is a Student Group (e.g., University of Toronto XYZ Institute Student Association).
4. Group names that do not include a U of T trademarked name that may require changes include those on the following non-exhaustive list:
 - a. Group names that could be reasonably confused for a U of T department, program, or service (e.g. “Academic Success”, “Career Centre”, “Student Life”, etc.).
 - b. Group names that are confusing and/or do not appropriately describe the nature of the group (e.g., a “student union” that is neither a student union elected to formally represent a group of students nor a student chapter of a professional or trade union).
5. Student Groups may not seek University recognition using one name and then operate and/or represent themselves with a different name. However, Student Groups may use a shortened version of their name (i.e., an abbreviation or acronym), so long as shortened name complies with the conditions listed above.
6. Should a Student Group not renew its recognition within twelve (12) months of expiration, its name will be considered to no longer be in use by the group.
7. Student Groups that indicate inaccurate or misleading information in their application for recognition, or that intentionally misrepresent themselves, may have their recognition revoked.
8. Staff, faculty, librarians, alumni, and members of the external community who serve a Student Group in a non-voting resource role (e.g., cultural/spiritual guidance, mentorship, parent organization liaison, etc.) are, in the context of that role, considered to be associated with the Student Group, not with the University. This should be reflected in any representations made by or about them.

IV. Relationships with External Organizations

The [Policy](#) states that “Where a group applying for recognition has a direct connection with another body outside of the University of Toronto, the nature of this connection and the name of the body must be disclosed fully and substantially in the application for recognition”, that “The executive members, officers, and contact person of the Student Group shall not be executive members of the external organization”, that “Student Groups shall not confer financial benefit to external organizations without

fully and completely disclosing to the University the nature and amount of the benefit”, and that the University will “investigate complaints or charges that an organization has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with its constitution and/or by-laws, or with the requirements of University policy”.

1. For additional clarity, the nature of a connection with an external organization (e.g., charities, corporations, political parties, etc.) may include those on the following non-exhaustive list:
 - a. Fundraising Relationship – the Student Group raises funds for an external organization.
 - i. Student Groups are required to disclose the amount of financial benefits (e.g., cash, cheques, electronic transfers, gift cards, tangible goods, etc.) being given to an external organization, and the reason for them being given, to the University. While it is suggested that this disclosure come in the form of an email to the Student Life office on their campus a minimum of three (3) business days before the transfer to the external organization, the method of disclosure may differ by campus.
 - ii. Student Groups are expected to inform their members (and guests, should it be an event) of their intent to give funds to an external organization before, or at the time of, collecting the funds.
 - b. Parent-and-Chapter Relationship – the Student Group is a local student “chapter” of a larger provincial, national, and/or international external “parent” organization.
 - i. While there may be similarities among local student chapters, external organizations may not dictate the content Student Group’s constitution and/or by-laws nor how a Student Group may conduct its activities.
 - ii. Relationships with “parent” organizations must be made clear in the Student Group’s description on the Student Organization Portal.
 - c. Sponsor Relationship – the Student Group receives monetary or in-kind (e.g., food, building materials, web services, etc.) support from an external organization.
 - i. Student Groups are required to adhere to the requirements of University policy, including the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#), which outlines the responsibility of students and groups of students to not be a party to an academic offence. If a Student Group knowingly promotes or engages in sponsorship relationships with external organizations that provide services that contravene this [Code](#) (e.g., essay writing services, etc.), there may be consequences under the [Code](#) and/or the [Policy](#).
2. Representatives from an external organization may participate in a Student Group’s event if they are invited by the Student Group to do so. Likewise, members of a Student Group may participate in an external organization’s event if they are invited by the external organization to do so and the Student Group has made it clear to their members that the event is being run by an external organization.
3. Student Groups must be the primary organizers of the events for which they book space on campus and may not use their space booking privileges to book space on campus for an external organization, including a “parent” organization.

V. Complaint & Resolutions Processes

The [Policy](#) states that “The University will not attempt to monitor or review the activities of a Student Group in the normal course of events. It will however investigate complaints or charges that an organization has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with its constitution and/or by-laws, or with the requirements of University policy. If these complaints or charges prove to be valid, recognition may be withdrawn”. Additionally, the [Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations](#) lists “Ways for dissent, and for complaints, to be considered and resolved, and, where appropriate, processed at successively higher levels within the organization” among the characteristics of a democratic student organization.

1. Where removal of an executive member from office and/or termination of membership in a Student Group is decided by a subgroup of the organization (e.g., the executive committee), the person facing removal from office and/or termination of membership should be able to make an appeal to a second subgroup (e.g., an appeals committee), separate in interest and membership from the first subgroup, and/or the broader membership.
2. As Student Groups are autonomous, their members and/or related parties are expected to work through the Student Group’s internal complaint process, as outlined in their constitution, before submitting a complaint to the Student Life office on their campus.
3. If a member’s complaint alleges criminal activity, discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual violence, the Student Group must contact the appropriate University resource for support. For example, if a member’s complaint alleges sexual violence, the Student Group must contact the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre. Student Groups are encouraged to contact the Student Life office on their campus for support in navigating appropriate resources.
4. Student Life offices will address complaints related to Student Groups acting in a manner that is inconsistent with their constitution, to the [Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups](#), and/or to the [Policy on Open, Accessible and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations](#). Student Life offices may refer Student Groups and/or related parties to, and/or include, other University departments if the complaint is related to alleged criminal activity, discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, and/or contraventions of policies or processes under the purview of other University divisions and departments.
5. Student Life offices may first take an educative approach to resolving a complaint. This approach involves providing Student Groups with tools and resources to aid them in working through conflict. Resources may include email, phone, and/or in-person coaching; educational workshops; published documents; and/or referrals to other campus resources that may have expertise on particular types of conflict.
6. Although complaint processes may differ by campus, the following guidelines applies to complaint processes on all campuses:
 - a. Complainants are expected to:
 - i. provide clear, detailed, and honest information regarding the complaint;
 - ii. respond to requests for information and/or meetings in a timely manner; and
 - iii. respect the time and diligence required to complete the complaint process.

- b. Complainants can expect to:
 - i. have their complaint considered sensitively;
 - ii. have their privacy respected; and
 - iii. receive correspondence from the Student Life office on their campus, outlining the resolution to their complaint and how to make an appeal, within a reasonable amount of time.
- c. Student Groups that are the subject of a complaint are expected to:
 - i. understand and abide by the Student Group's constitution, these guidelines, the [*Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups*](#), the [*Policy on Open, Accessible, and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations*](#), and any other relevant University policies, processes, guidelines, and timelines;
 - ii. provide clear, detailed, and honest information regarding the complaint;
 - iii. respond to requests for information and/or meetings in a timely manner; and
 - iv. respect the time and diligence required to complete the complaint process.
- d. Student Groups that are the subject of a complaint can expect to:
 - i. receive correspondence from the Student Life office on their campus, informing them that a complaint has received and clearly outlining the nature of the complaint;
 - ii. have an opportunity to address the complaint through their internal complaint process, as outlined in their constitution;
 - iii. provide information outlining their understanding of the complaint;
 - iv. have their concerns considered sensitively;
 - v. have their privacy respected; and
 - vi. receive correspondence from the Student Life office on their campus, outlining the resolution to the complaint and how to make an appeal, within a reasonable amount of time.
- e. University staff involved in the complaint process are expected to:
 - i. listen to the complainant, or read their complaint, carefully and with sensitivity;
 - ii. initiate a thoughtful and thorough investigation and response process;
 - iii. inform the Student Group that is the subject of the complaint that a complaint has received and provide them with the nature of the complaint;
 - iv. ensure that the complaint has worked through the Student Group's internal complaint process, as outlined in their constitution;
 - v. gather all relevant information required to fully investigate the complaint;
 - vi. document the complaint process;
 - vii. respect the privacy of all parties involved;
 - viii. inform the complainant and the Student Group that is the subject of a complaint of the resolution to the complaint and how to make an appeal;
 - ix. escalate complaints to a Manager and/or Director, should it be warranted; and
 - x. refer Student Groups and/or related parties to, and/or include, other University departments if the complaint is related to alleged criminal activity,

discriminatory practices, sexual violence, and/or contraventions of policies or processes under the purview of other University departments.

- f. University staff involved in the complaint process can expect to:
 - i. be treated with respect by all parties;
 - ii. be involved as an investigator and resource to all parties throughout the complaint process;
 - iii. receive clear, detailed, and honest information regarding the complaint in a timely manner
 - iv. have their requests for information and/or meetings responded to in a timely manner; and
 - v. have the time required to fully investigate and respond to a complaint.
7. As front-line University staff who regularly work with Student Groups (i.e., Coordinator and/or Officer roles) would typically be responsible for handling an initial complaint process, an appeal may be made to the corresponding Manager and/or Director. Should the complaint be made by a Student Group contesting a decision made by the Student Life office on their campus to deny or withdraw their recognition, they may make an additional and final appeal to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students after this step, as outlined in the [Policy](#).

VI. Application & Renewal Timelines

The [Policy](#) states that “Eligibility for recognition should be assessed annually” and that “Applications for Student Group status may be submitted at any time during the year”.

1. Student Group recognition expires on July 31 each year.
 - a. Recognition may be extended to expire on July 31 of the following year if a Student Group is recognized during the winter or summer terms at the discretion of the Student Life office on their campus.

VII. Additional Expectations of Student Groups

The [Policy](#) states that “In its relations with [Student Groups], the University is guided by a commitment to the right of University members to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas, to organize groups for any lawful purpose, to move about the University and to use its facilities in any reasonable way, to distribute on campus, in a responsible way, published material provided that it is not unlawful, to hold meetings, to debate and to engage in peaceful demonstrations, and to freedom from discrimination.” These additional expectations of Student Groups are related to those relations.

1. Student groups are expected to adhere to the [Policy on the Temporary Use of Space](#), the [Procedures for the Temporary Use of Space](#), and the [Policy on the Disruption of Meetings](#) when booking and using University space.
2. In addition to “not us[ing] the University’s signatures, crests, word marks, or letter marks without expressed written consent from the Trademark Licensing Office”, Student Groups are expected to adhere to the [Trademark Licensing Guidelines for Student Groups](#).
3. Student groups are expected to adhere to banner, poster, and publication guidelines on their respective campuses.

VIII. Review & Amendment

1. These guidelines shall be reviewed every three years but may be reviewed and amended at any time.
2. These guidelines shall be reviewed and amended by a designate of the Vice-Provost, Students; the Executive Director, Student Life Programs & Services (St. George) or designate; the Dean of Student Affairs & Assistant Principal, Student Services (UTM) or designate; and the Dean of Student Experience & Wellbeing (UTSC) or designate and then considered for approval by the Vice-Provost, Students.