

## **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.**

Toronto Metropolitan University's (TMU) institutional free speech policy framework has not changed since the 2023 report.

TMU has long been committed to freedom of expression, including free speech. As a vital and dynamic university, TMU welcomes the opportunity to talk freely and openly. It is important that at a university, controversial subjects are discussed, attitudes are challenged, and that alternatives are suggested and considered. Everyone who is part of the university, as well as guests and visitors, have a role to play in this shared enterprise.

TMU's 2010 statement on freedom of speech, as well as related Senate and administrative policies, are linked below. Collectively, these documents constitute the University's free speech policies:

- [TMU Senate Statement on Freedom of Speech](#)
- [TMU Policy on Discrimination and Harassment Prevention](#)
- [Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct](#)
- [Bookable Space Policy](#)
- [Workplace Civility and Respect Policy](#)
- [Sexual Violence Policy](#)

Additional [university administrative policies](#) and [Senate policies](#) are available.

**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.**

There are multiple designated offices at TMU where members of the community are directed when there is a free speech-related question or complaint. Complaints related to free speech at TMU are addressed depending on the nature of the incident. Some of the designated offices where members of the community can raise complaints include the following:

**Human Rights Services:** Complaints related to the [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) and [Sexual Violence Policy](#) are handled through the Human Rights Services office. The policy places freedom of expression and freedom from intimidation and harassment as guiding principles. As such, any instance where a community member feels they have been the subject of discrimination (based on a ground protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code) from any other member of the community or feels they have been harassed to the point where they cannot exercise their freedom of speech, can be reported through the Human Rights Services office. A prescribed process for filing and resolving complaints is in place that may result in several different outcomes including mediation, alternative resolution, investigation, adjudication and referral to appropriate services and resources within the university. Full details of this process are available at

<https://www.torontomu.ca/policies/policy-list/dhp-policy/> and  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/policies/policy-list/sexual-violence-policy/>.

**Contact:** <https://www.torontomu.ca/humanrights/>

**Student Conduct Office:** Complaints about the conduct of students related to free speech events are handled by the Student Conduct Office, which is responsible for administering the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct. This policy prohibits any conduct which is abusive, demeaning, threatening, or endangers health and safety. It prohibits the disruption of the learning, teaching and work environment, and distribution of malicious and untrue material. A breach of the policy may result in a range of penalties. Details of this process can be found online at <https://www.torontomu.ca/student-care/students/student-code-of-conduct/file-complaint/>

**Contact:** <https://www.torontomu.ca/student-care/students/student-code-of-conduct/file-complaint/>

**Ombudsperson's Office:** Students who wish to take up a complaint through an independent avenue may elect to contact the Ombudsperson's Office, which will assess and discuss issues with students, investigate them if appropriate, or make a referral to the appropriate services and areas of the university.

**Contact:** <https://www.torontomu.ca/ombudsperson/>

**Campus Safety and Security:** In instances where specific actions by community members pose an immediate risk to the safety of community members, a 24/7 access to security services is available at TMU. Where events that stand to create a significant amount of controversy on campus are anticipated, campus security must be engaged within the risk assessment process. For spontaneous incidents, such as protests or demonstrations, security will ensure that safety and peace are maintained, but will typically not shut events down without engaging other decision-makers. Temporary space users are expected to pay for any extra costs to the university caused by events.

**Contact:** <https://www.torontomu.ca/community-safety-security/>

**Student Life Office:** Student Life supports students who wish to plan or host an event. This office assists students with planning and delivering events and meeting

the requirements of TMU's policies. While other offices more formally conduct investigations and enforce TMU's free-speech-related policies, this office can help coordinate, liaise and ensure that students with complaints access the appropriate avenues.

**Contact:** <https://www.torontomu.ca/student-life-and-learning/>

**Senate Statement of Free Speech:** In May 2010 TMU's (then Ryerson) Senate approved and posted its statement on Freedom of Speech, which can be found at: [https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/senate/documents/Statement\\_on\\_Freedom\\_of\\_Speech\\_May\\_04\\_2010.pdf](https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/senate/documents/Statement_on_Freedom_of_Speech_May_04_2010.pdf)

**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?**

TMU's Student Event Management Process, also known as '[Explore TMU](#)' helps to demystify event planning and ensures success and safety for campus events. The process involves reviewing requests for events using a detailed event risk management framework and working with event organizers to gather event details and understand and assess ways to mitigate and/or eliminate potential safety risks. Factors considered in the event risk management process include, among others, the nature of the event, type of activities to be undertaken during the event (e.g., physical or non-physical activities, topics of discussion etc.), type of speakers and participants (e.g., government officials or other VIPs) and whether alcohol will be consumed.

For faculty, staff, members of the public, and alumni, an online space reservation request form must be completed and submitted to Events and Space Reservation Services. The Department reviews all requests for potential risks and to ascertain space availability. Events that pose potential risks are flagged for review, and event organizers are held to similar standards as students. The approval process takes up to 45 days and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/student-life-and-learning/programs/exploretmu/event-risk-management/>

Between August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024, there were no instances where a non-curricular event did not proceed due to security concerns or related costs. However, there was one event that was postponed to a later date due to insufficient information provided to the university.

## **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.**

There are multiple avenues for students and community members to register complaints when they have concerns about free speech. Sometimes these will come through official channels (i.e., Human Resources, Human Rights Services and Student Conduct Office, Security); other times they will surface organically through calls to security, or letters and emails to the senior administration.

For the purposes of reporting, complaints are defined as instances where an individual complained about either:

1. being prevented from exercising their free speech through the actions of another individual or group; or
2. being subjected to inappropriate behaviour while exercising their free speech.

In the reporting year, no free-speech complaints related to organized events on campus were submitted through the university's official channels.

**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.).**

## **Organized Events**

During the reporting period, no free-speech complaints related to organized events held on campus were registered through the university's official channels.

## **Spontaneous Incidents**

Outside the scope of organized events, unplanned free-speech incidents occur on a university campus at any time, including protests and demonstrations involving TMU community members and non-community members.

TMU is located in the heart of downtown Toronto. The campus is open to the public and the streets that run through the campus are public property. Often, non-community members enter the campus to protest or to demonstrate.

As the streets are public property, non-Community members on such streets may be subject to applicable municipal, provincial, and federal laws.

For TMU community members, TMU's framework of free speech-related policies applies regardless of whether the complainant is a TMU community member, or a non-community member.

## **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?**

While there were no free speech complaints in this reporting period, TMU has the following mechanisms should such issues arise:

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Incidents involving students are handled through the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct. This policy specifically protects free speech and the right to protest but allows the university to issue sanctions to students who engage in behaviour that infringes on the free-speech rights of others.

In the reporting period, no complaints related to free speech as described in the definition above were filed in relation to the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Human Rights Services**

Human Rights Services conducts investigations related to discrimination and harassment regarding any TMU community member (faculty, staff and students). No complaints related to free speech as described in the definition above were filed with Human Rights Services in the reporting period.

## 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.	0
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	0
Number of official complaints where the institution determined that the free speech policy was not followed appropriately.	0
Number of official complaints under the free speech policy that resulted in the institution applying disciplinary or other institutional measures.	0
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.**

Between August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024, there were 2,080 event space bookings and 2,421 non-curricular events for students at TMU. This includes events taking place off-campus, online, and in some department-owned spaces. None of these events were cancelled/denied due to freedom of speech related concerns.

**Institutional Comments (if any).**

*None*