

Policy on the Recognition of Student Groups

CATEGORY: Student Affairs	APPROVAL DATE: May 7, 2024
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2024	REVIEW: Every two (2) years
APPROVAL: Executive Leadership Team	
SPONSOR: Vice-Provost, Students & International	
CONTACT: Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community	
PREVIOUS VERSIONS: Approved: Vice-Provost, Students & International, April 2019 Modified/approved: Vice-Provost, Students & International, April 2018 Modified/approved: Associate Vice-President, Students, August 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015 Modified: January 2008 Approved: Academic Council: May 2006 Approved: Policy & Planning Committee: May 2006 Academic Support Services Committee: April 2006	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OCAD University wishes to acknowledge the following institutions, whose related policies and guidelines provided background in the development of this policy: University of Toronto, Sheridan College.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Organizations, clubs, affinity groups and associations formed by students of OCAD University (“Student Groups”) are a traditional part of life on and off campus. Student Groups formed for the purpose of pursuing social, cultural and other interests of students of the University, and activities and events held by Social Groups for the benefit of their members, contribute in significant ways to the University’s intellectual, political, social and cultural diversity.

In its interactions with Student Groups, the University is guided by a commitment to respect Student Groups that are organized for lawful purposes and to respect the privilege of those Student Groups to move about the University, to use its facilities in a reasonable way, to distribute on campus, in a responsible way, published material provided that the material is not contrary to University policies or procedures, to hold meetings, to debate, and to engage in peaceful demonstrations. The University is also guided by a commitment to the right of all Members of the University Community to communicate and to discuss and explore all ideas, as well as to freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination. Members of the University Community include students, faculty, post-doctoral fellows, contractors and employees of the University.

Freedom of expression is a principle which is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of art and design. This principle requires the ability to question and debate many subjects — even the most controversial — while promoting freedom of expression. The University also has a concurrent responsibility to ensure that all Members of the University

Community are able to pursue their work and studies in an inclusive and respectful working and learning environment, free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.

Therefore, the University does not condone discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, invasion of personal privacy, threatening or violent conduct, or offences against University property.

While Student Groups are independent and autonomous from the University, their actions reflect upon the University community as a whole. As such, recognition as a Student Group is a privilege based on abiding by all University policies and procedures. It follows that this privilege can be withdrawn if University policies and procedures are not followed, or if the Student Group fails to abide by the responsibilities outlined in this Policy or any other University policy or procedure.

Under the terms of this Policy, the University will not attempt to censor, control or interfere with any Student Group on the basis of its philosophy, beliefs, interests or opinions, unless these lead to activities which are contrary to University policies and procedures or which infringe the rights of other Members of the University Community. By the same token, recognition as a Student Group by the University implies neither endorsement of a particular Student Group's beliefs or philosophy, nor the assumption of legal liability for the Student Group's activities. It assumes only that the University has a responsibility to inform itself of Student Groups which have been formed, and to deny or withdraw recognition of Student Groups for the reasons set out in this Policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the terms for eligibility for recognized Student Group status, to identify Student Groups' privileges and responsibilities, and to outline the procedures for recognition, approval or denial of recognized Student Group status, complaints against Student Groups, appeals of decisions regarding status, and reporting of administrative decisions.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to Members of the University Community.

POLICY

1. Recognition requirements and eligibility

In order to be recognized as a Student Group at the University, the Group must:

- (a) Hold activities or events, or be mandated to exist primarily for the purpose of bettering the experiences of OCAD University students or the Group's members. Student Groups are encouraged to hold activities and events that are open to all students of the University.
- (b) Contribute to the educational, social, or cultural values of OCAD University.
- (c) Have a membership comprised of at least 80% currently registered OCAD University students.

- (d) Contribute to establishing and maintaining a respectful work and learning environment by demonstrating respect for others and by not condoning and/or engaging in conduct that is inconsistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code, this Policy or any other University policies or procedures.
- (e) Comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act (Ontario), respecting the collection, use, disclosure, retention or storage of personal information.
- (f) Not be essentially commercial in nature, that is, provide services or goods at a profit when the profit is used for purposes other than the activities of the Student Group.

Recognized Student Group status will not be granted for:

- (a) One-time events or activities. Student Groups must have on-going activities and student members.
- (b) Events or projects that are primarily related to a course or an instructor. These students should be referred to the appropriate Faculty office for support.
- (c) Events or projects primarily commercial in nature.

2. Procedure to apply for recognized Student Group status

To become officially registered as an OCAD University-recognized Student Group, the proposed Student Group must:

- (a) Submit an application for recognized Student Group status to the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community. The application must state the Group's name, purpose, and the manner by which it proposes to carry out its activities.

The application must include a list of members and officers, with a minimum of five (5) currently registered students, indicate position (where applicable), and include up-to-date contact information (OCAD U email address and student numbers).

Group leaders (officers) must be currently registered students for the duration of their leadership.

Applications are accepted year-round. Student Group leader(s) applying for status for the beginning of the Fall academic term are recommended to submit an application by July 31 to be recognized in advance of the start of classes and participate in Orientation and Welcome events.

- (b) Declare outside commercial/corporate relationships and/or affiliations (directly or indirectly) with umbrella organizations or associations. Student Groups must completely disclose the nature of the affiliation and any monetary or other benefits the umbrella organization or association receives from the Student Group.

Applications for recognized Student Group status are reviewed by a committee comprised of the Vice-Provost, Students & International, staff from the Student Communications & Campus Community office, and a representative of the OCAD Student Union. Approval or denial of recognized Student Group status will be communicated in writing to the Student Group leader(s) who applied.

3. Denial of recognized Student Group status

The Committee may deny an application for recognized Student Group status, under the following conditions:

- (a) The Student Group fails to meet the recognition requirements and eligibility (see 1. Recognition requirements and eligibility).
- (b) The Student Group's stated purpose or the manner by which it proposes to carry out its activities would, by their very nature, be contrary to establishing and maintaining a respectful work and learning environment consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code and University policies or procedures.
- (c) The Student Group has previously had its recognized status withdrawn and has not provided with the application a plan detailing how the Group intends to achieve the specific conditions or required actions identified in the withdrawal decision (see 9. Withdrawal of status).

The Student Group leader(s) who applied for status will receive the decision within ten (10) working days from the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community, in writing, with specific conditions that must be met to achieve approval.

4. Recognized Student Group privileges

Student Groups that have been approved for recognized status are eligible to:

- (a) Free use of bookable on-campus spaces and equipment, subject to availability, apart from shops, studios and computer labs.
 - OCAD University recognizes the value that studio practice centred student Groups bring to advancing learning and professional practice. These types of Groups are welcomed and encouraged. However, Student Groups centred around a studio practice (for example, ceramics, drawing and painting, fabrication, foundry, wood working) must not assume that shops and studios can be used for their Group's activities. These facilities, resources and equipment are prioritized for curricular needs. Studio practice centred Groups may enquire about accessing studio spaces for their activities by discussing their needs in advance with the Studio Management office and related technician(s).

- Any access to shops or studios for Student Group activities must be approved in writing by the Studio Management office.
- (b) Student Group and events marketing and promotion support, facilitated by the Campus Life office.
- (c) Apply for Student Group funding programs offered by the University or the OCAD Student Union.
- (d) Participate in University community events including Orientation and welcome activities, OCAD Student Union sponsored events, and other events identified as appropriate.
- (e) Participate by invitation in advisory councils, committees or working groups that pertain to student life, leadership and Student Group activities by appointing leader participants or delegate members.
- (f) Access to special programs and services developed to support the success of Student Groups.

5. Student Group obligations and requirements

- (a) (Group Leaders) Attend and complete required trainings, including training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, as prescribed by the University.
- (b) (Group Leaders) Attend or send a Group representative/delegate to participate in meetings or workshops organized by Campus Life or OCAD Student Union for recognized Student Groups.
- (c) Adhere to all University policies and procedures, with particular attention to:
- OCAD University Freedom of Expression Statement and Policies
 - Respectful Work & Learning Environment Policy
 - Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
 - Response to Violent and Threatening Behaviour Policy
 - Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence
 - IT Acceptable Use Policy
 - Events & Beverage Service Policy
 - Any policies, guidelines or regulations governing the use of equipment or University facilities, as applicable.
- (d) Be aware of and operate in compliance with all municipal, provincial and federal bylaws, laws, regulations, standards and rules.
- (e) Maintain updated leadership/officer information with the University by submitting a Change of Leadership form within ten (10) working days of a change in Student Group leaders.
- (f) Renew annually. To renew Student Group status, Group leader(s) must update the Campus Life office of their intention to renew. Student Groups that do not renew annually will be declared inactive.

Annual renewal is required before April 30 (the end of the Winter term), after which date Student Group status expires. Student Groups that wish to hold summer programming must apply for recognized status at least ten (10) working days prior to accessing privileges.

Renewals must include any updates or changes to outside commercial/corporate relationships and/or affiliations (directly or indirectly) with umbrella organizations or associations, as outlined in 2. (b).

6. Communications requirement

Recognized Student Groups are required to maintain an email account and respond to inquiries from the University within ten (10) working days. Should a recognized Student Group or their leader(s) fail to respond to the University's inquiries, a Complaint may be submitted (see 10. Complaints about Student Groups), which may lead to a suspension of recognized Student Group status.

7. Alcohol at events

All events on campus that include alcohol, including those held by recognized Student Groups, must adhere to the University's Events & Beverage Service Policy, and are required to obtain a Special Occasion Permit in accordance with requirements of the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario.

8. Student Group name and visual identity

Recognized Student Groups may create their own graphical identity system (e.g. logo, systems of typography, identity guidelines, etc.). Recognized Student Groups are not permitted to use the OCAD University visual identity system, including the logo.

Recognized Student Groups may use the name, "OCAD," "OCAD U," or "...at OCAD University" as part of their Group naming convention.

Permission to use of the OCAD University visual identity, including the logo, may be granted to a Student Group by the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community, for some one-time use scenarios, such as to recognize an official partnership with the University. Permission must be provided in writing, detailing the specific usage parameters.

9. Independent organizations

Recognized Student Groups are understood as independent and autonomous organizations from the University and are responsible for managing their own affairs. Recognized Student Groups are not authorized to enter contractual obligations in the name of the University, nor are they units or agents of the University, and are not permitted to represent themselves as such.

Events and activities conducted by recognized Student Groups are not considered University-sponsored or endorsed under this Policy unless the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community confirms University sponsorship in writing.

10. Complaints about Student Groups

The University will not attempt to monitor or review the activities of a Student Group recognized under this Policy in the normal course of events, unless a complaint is received.

Complaints regarding a Student Group acting in a manner that is inconsistent with the requirements of this or any other University policy or procedure are encouraged first to be resolved through informal resolution processes, such as meeting with the Student Group's leader(s) to discuss and remedy the issue. If informal processes fail to resolve the concern, a formal complaint may be submitted to the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community. Complaints may only be submitted by OCAD University students or employees.

Complaints against individuals must be made in accordance with the procedures outlined in the appropriate University policy, including, but not limited to, the Respectful Work & Learning Environment Policy, the Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence, or the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

11. Investigation of complaints and suspension of status

Complaints against a Student Group will be referred to the Vice-Provost, Students & International who may suspend recognized Student Group status and its privileges during an investigation.

The decision to suspend recognized Student Group status during the period of investigation will be provided in writing to the Student Group's leader(s). The Student Group's leader(s) may be required to provide a list of members as part of an investigation. The Student Group's leader(s) and members are required to participate in an investigation.

12. Withdrawal of status

If a complaint is substantiated, in addition to any other sanctions applied pursuant to other University policies, recognized Student Group status may be withdrawn. The Student Group's leader(s) will be provided with the decision in writing within ten (10) working days of the decision. The decision will include the specific conditions, required actions and timeline that must be met for the Group's recognized Student Group status and associated privileges to be reinstated.

If a Student Group's status is withdrawn and the outlined conditions and action timelines required for reinstatement are not met, the Student Group may reapply for recognition status any time after the Student Group renewal deadline of April 30. As part of the Student Group's application, the leader(s) will be required to provide, in writing, a plan for how the Student Group will achieve the specific conditions and required actions previously outlined in the decision to withdraw status.

13. Appealing a decision to withdraw status

A Student Group's leader(s) may appeal a decision to withdraw recognized Student Group status by submitting an appeal in writing to the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community within ten (10) working days of a written decision to withdraw status. Appeals submitted after this time will not be heard.

The Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community will strike an Appeal Committee comprised of a member of the OCAD Student Union Executive, a faculty member and the Vice-President, Academic & Provost.

An appeal hearing will be promptly set by the Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community with the complainant and the Student Group's leader(s) being notified of the date and location of the meeting with sufficient time for preparation.

The Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community will prescribe the format, rules, roles, and nature of the hearing.

Legal counsel may not represent organizations at an appeal hearing.

The Manager, Student Communications & Campus Community will forward the Appeal Committee's decision in writing to the Student Group's leader(s) within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of their decision.

14. Administration of this Policy

The office of Student Communications & Campus Community is responsible for the review and implementation of this Policy. This Policy must be reviewed every two (2) years. Amendments may be made as needed with the approval of the Vice-Provost, Students & International.

The OCAD Student Union maintains the right to administer their own internal policies and procedures with respect to recognized Student Groups at the University.

Campus Life publishes a list of currently recognized Student Groups that is updated every thirty (30) days, and shares the list with departments across the University that support Student Group activities, including but not limited to, Safety, Security & Campus Operations, Facilities and Studio Services, IT Services and AV Loans, Marketing & Communications, the Vice-Provost, Students & International, and office of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost.

A copy of this Policy will be kept on file at all times in the offices of Campus Life, OCAD Student Union, and Office of the Vice-Provost, Students & International.