



Appendix: Freedom of Speech Annual Report Template (2023)

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, 2022** and **July 31, 2023**.

The reports are to be posted on the institution's website and submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) by **September 1, 2023**.

Please submit your institution's annual report and the link to its location on your website to 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 2022 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 Policy 8 – Freedom of Speech 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.

- The responsible University officer for Policy 8 – Freedom of Speech is the President and Vice-Chancellor. In addition, the Waterloo community is aware of and frequently engages with the University Secretariat on policy interpretation.
- The President may be reached at president@uwaterloo.ca or through contact information at this page: [Welcome to the Office of the President | Office of the President \(uwaterloo.ca\)](#)
- The Secretariat may be reached at: secretariat@uwaterloo.ca or through contact information at this page: [Welcome to the Secretariat | Secretariat \(uwaterloo.ca\)](#)
- Inquiries regarding specific events are typically directed to the event organizer. If further information or support is required, they may be referred to relevant offices such as the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism or University Communications. Additional departments and individuals will be involved as necessary.

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?

When the University hosts events or speakers which require security, it assumes such costs; when an external party uses University space for an event that requires security, that party is responsible for those costs.

Where safety concerns with regard to an event have been identified, we engage with our Special Constable Services and our Communications and Issues Management Team to support safety planning and work with event organizers to ensure that events are able to proceed safely.

To the University's knowledge, there have been no instances of any event, curricular or otherwise, that did not proceed as a result of costs or safety concerns associated with the event.

Section B: Complaints

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

Between **August 1, 2022** and **July 31, 2023**, 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.

Between August 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023 there was one complaint submitted to the Office of the President. The complaint alleged undue interference where the student complainant was asked by an employee of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) to lower a sign being carried by the student complainant, and to remove the sign from the building, which was on University property managed and operated by WUSA.

The student did not believe that the sign contained hateful or offensive speech and did believe that their message qualified as free speech.

In the complaint, the student asked for the issue to be resolved (allowing them free speech) or in the alternative further explanation as to why they were not permitted to carry the sign.

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.).

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?

The issue under consideration was whether the student was permitted to carry their sign in the building in question. Jurisdictional issues were considered, as the request to remove the sign was made by an employee of WUSA, who was interpreting a WUSA procedure, and which occurred on University property managed and operated by WUSA. Ultimately it was determined that WUSA and the University would address the complaint jointly.

In accordance with Policy 8 – Freedom of Speech, the complaint was reviewed by the Secretariat where it was determined to be within the scope of the policy.

The undue interference was referred to the Associate Provost, Students, who worked with the Executive Director of WUSA to investigate the allegations. The investigation revealed a misunderstanding of the rules related to solicitation in the particular building in which the incident occurred. The solicitation rule in question belonged to and was enforced by WUSA, who manage the building in question.

A meeting with the student was held. In attendance were the student, the Associate Provost, Students, and the Executive Director of WUSA. An apology was made to the student, including a hand delivered written apology from the WUSA employee who made the error in interpreting the WUSA procedure. The student accepted the apologies, and their questions were answered.

The complaint has been resolved.

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.	1
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.	1
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, 2022 and July 31, 2023**. 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.

The University has events calendars maintained by several departments that allow events to be publicly posted for purposes of bringing events to the attention of community members. Between August 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023, there have been an estimated 642 advertised non-curricular events listed that the University is aware of that took place on campus or online. Note: Faculties, departments, staff, students, student associations and the public do not list all their events in these calendars. Therefore, it is likely that the number of events was much higher than estimated.

Institutional Comments (if any).