



Freedom of Expression Policy

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PURPOSE

Freedom of expression, which means the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn, must be protected as it is essential to discovery, critical assessment and the effective dissemination of knowledge and ideas and leads to social and economic advancement.

SCOPE

Freedom of Expression Policy

This policy comes into effect on January 1, 2019 and applies to all college faculty, students, staff, management, guests and others who are present at the college.

DEFINITIONS

This section includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within the policy and procedure.

<i>WORD/TERM</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>
The Ontario Human Rights Code	The Ontario Human Rights Code is a provincial law that seeks to ensure all Ontarians have equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in areas such as jobs, housing and services.

POLICY

1.0 General Principles

- 1.1 This policy statement is aligned with other college policies, all of which shall be read in harmony.
- 1.2 Members of the college community are free to criticize and contest the views of others; however, they may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views. The rights of others to express or hear ideas must also be respected.
- 1.3 Colleges may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of freedom of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt normal college operations and ordinary college activities or endanger the safety of others.
- 1.4 Colleges must be places that allow for open discussion and free inquiry where diverse voices can be heard and ideas and viewpoints can be explored and discussed freely and debated openly without fear of reprisal, even if these are considered to be controversial or conflict with the views of some members of the college community. Although colleges greatly value civility and all members of colleges share responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, it is not the role of colleges to shield members of the college community from ideas and opinions that they may find disagreeable or offensive. It is up to individuals and not colleges to make such judgments for themselves and to debate and challenge ideas that they find unacceptable.
- 1.5 Speech that violates the law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, is not allowed. Speech that constitutes harassment, a threat or hate speech is not allowed. Other context-specific boundaries to freedom of expression may also apply, such as those arising out of the terms of employment and collective agreements.

Freedom of Expression Policy

1.6 Existing college mechanisms and processes will be used to handle complaints and ensure compliance with the policy. Complaints that remain unresolved may be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman. Existing disciplinary measures will apply to those whose actions are contrary to the policy.

1.6.1 George Brown College will provide, whenever possible, a safe and confidential process to receive concerns or complaints and constructive feedback. Any member of the George Brown college community who wishes to raise their concern should do so by contacting the Human Right's Office.

1.6.2 Concerns must be raised in a professional and respectful manner that respects the confidentiality of all members of George Brown College's community and supports the college's commitment to maintaining a supportive environment for learning.

1.6.3 The complaint will be addressed using the 'Complaints Resolution Process' found in the Human Rights, Discrimination and Harassment Policy [See Section 5.0 "Procedures" in the [Human Rights Policy](#)]

1.7 George Brown College will consider official student groups' compliance with the policy as a condition for ongoing financial support or recognition, and encourage student groups to adopt policies that align with this policy.

NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy has been sanctioned by the Board of Governors, requiring compliance across the College. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures commensurate with the offence.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

RELATED POLICIES

Academic Code of Conduct

Code of Student Behaviour and Community Standards

Employee Codes of Conduct

Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment

Use of College Facilities for Advocacy Purposes

RELATED MATERIALS

Freedom of Expression Policy

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

