

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Policy regarding  
Anti-Oppression

Preamble

WHEREAS the Mandate, Mission, Vision and Values of the Graduate Students Association of McMaster University ("GSA") set out at <https://gsamcmaster.org/mandate/#:~:text=Mission%20Statement%3A,graduate%20student%20experience%20at%20McMaster.>

WHEREAS the GSA has participated in protests and social action against activities that have negatively impacted students, including against government actions and in support of CUPE 3906 during bargaining.

AND WHEREAS the McMaster community, inclusive of graduate students, is raising its voice for the end of institutionalized racism, in light of heightened violence against Black and Indigenous peoples.

NOW THEREFORE:

1. The GSA is a not for profit organization that advocates for the welfare and interests of its members, particularly those made most marginalized.
2. The GSA condemns all forms of oppression, such as racism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism.
3. The GSA upholds the values of relevance, inclusivity, and connectedness, seeking to remain tuned to changing graduate student demands and engage the community in conversation.
4. The GSA upholds the value of free speech while recognizing the need to uphold the basic decency, dignity, and human rights of graduate students, as outlined in Ontario Human Rights Code.
5. Therefore the GSA shall:
  - a. commit itself to an anti-oppression policy;
  - b. consistently leverage its position as a large student body to promote social justice on campus, recognizing the increasing interconnectedness between different communities;
  - c. work in solidarity with unions and progressive campus organizations as they align with the GSA mandate and values, by participating in campus movements for social justice;
  - d. listen to and amplify the demands of community members who experience marginalization on the basis of racism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of oppression.
  - e. when graduate student interests coincide with broader social issues concerning international and non-citizen graduate students, the SIA committee will consider taking a position as appropriate.

6. Any protest, letter, or documentation that is seeking GSA support shall be reviewed by the Student Issues Action Committee, who will make a position and put it to a vote by the Council and the Board.
7. The Student Issues Action Committee may put forward a resolution to the Council and the Board any action it deems necessary after conducting research and outreach to inform a vote to establish common interest on the issue at hand.
  - a. Any vote by the Student Issues Action Committee will be subject to a supermajority of the quorum made up of no less than half of the Student Issues Action Committee membership.
  - b. Any resolution made by the Student Issues Action Committee will be guaranteed to pass by The Council and the Board, barring any issues with standing policy documents.
8. The Student Issues Action Committee will conduct audits that coincide with the development of the Strategic Plan every four years and conduct internal surveys every year tracking graduate student experiences with oppression, to assess the efficiency of the anti-oppressive actions, identify deficiencies, and suggest remedies of the GSA.