

Graduate Student Association Communications Policy

Short description and scope:

This policy outlines the principles and guidelines for communication and advertising to McMaster graduate students (PhD and Masters) through the communications channels of the McMaster Graduate Student Association (GSA). The policy is applicable for all internal or external organizations.

Definitions

For purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

- a. External advertisements: by organizations that are based outside McMaster University.
- b. External events and programs: organized and hosted by organizations that are based outside McMaster University.
- c. External organizations: based outside McMaster University.
- d. Internal advertisements: by organizations that are based inside McMaster University.
- e. Internal events and programs: organized and hosted by organizations that are based inside McMaster University.
- f. Internal organizations: based inside McMaster University.
- g. The GSA's main communications channels: the GSA weekly newsletter and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn).

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines on the extent, content, and quality of advertisements to be communicated through the GSA's main communications channels to ensure transparency and effective communication.

Policy statement

The GSA strives to disseminate timely, accurate and quality information and communicate inclusive internal and external events and programs to the McMaster's graduate community to improve students' academic and non-academic experiences. All internal and external advertisements should adhere to the guidelines described below and should align with the [GSA's vision and mission](#).

Guiding principles

The GSA recognizes that active communication with the McMaster graduate community is an integral part of its strategy. In order to ensure effective communication, the following guiding principles should always be adhered to:

- a. *Principles of ethics and integrity:* Advertisements must respect human dignity and must not entail any behaviour that is harmful to the environment and McMaster community.
- b. *Principles of transparency:* Advertisements must be clear with appropriate non-jargon language and contain reliable and correct information.
- c. *Principles of equality:* Advertisements must keep up with the principles of equality and must not condone any form of discrimination based on any ground.
- d. *Principles of compliance:* Advertisements must adhere to the below guidelines that are relevant to the advertisement type (i.e. internal or external).

Guidelines for advertisements

Length:

- In the GSA newsletter- a maximum of **75 words**.
- In social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn)- a maximum of **250 characters**. Emojis can be used.

Time:

- The GSA Newsletter are usually sent on Fridays.
- Advertisements should be sent to the GSA VP-External at (gsavpext@mcmaster.ca) by a minimum of **4 days ahead** of Friday's newsletter (i.e. on Monday).

Content:

- Advertisements should include the following items **in the same order**: a title (name of the event), the target audience, date & time of the event/program, brief description and incentive to engage (optional), cost associated with programming (if applicable), link for more information on the hosting organization's website (**optional for internal advertisements, yet mandatory for external ones**), deadline to apply/sign up, link to sign up and who to contact for information/questions.
- For advertisements in the newsletter, URL links should be included as hyperlinks using bit.ly or other free platforms that convert long URLs into short customized

links. The full URL links are required for advertisements in other social media platforms.

- Please see the following example as a guiding template:

“Virtual Trivia Event”

-Any McMaster graduate student is welcome to join on Sep. 29 (6pm-7:30pm) for a virtual Trivia Event. Up to 4 people per team & prizes for the winning team! More info. here. Sign up here by Sep. 22. Questions? Contact XX.

Graphics:

- Graphics are required to promote your advertisement on the GSA’s social media platforms.
- For the GSA Newsletter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, graphics should have Facebook Banner dimensions (1640 pixels wide by 924 pixels tall).
- For Instagram, graphics should have the Instagram post dimensions (1080 x 1080).
- Please see the following examples as a guiding template:
 - a. For Facebook banner dimensions:



- b. For Instagram post dimensions:



Requests for study advertisements:

- The GSA requires a proof of ethics clearance for the study from the university Ethics Board and the relevant province/region as applicable to consider advertisement.
- The above criteria for length, time, content, and graphics apply for study advertisements.

Targeted advertisements:

- The GSA welcomes advertisements that target specific graduate groups, such as Science students, and will consider them in the social media platforms
- For **newsletter, priority will be given to advertisements that target all graduate students**. Therefore, relevant specialized avenues on campus should always be considered first for any advertisements that target specific graduate groups.
- Please consider the following contact list for different group-specific associations at McMaster:
 - [List for 25 associations for particular groups and specialities.](#)
 - [International Graduate Student Association](#)
 - [Science Graduate Student Association](#)

Contacts

For questions about the GSA's communication, please contact the GSA VP-External at (gsavpext@mcmaster.ca).

[Contacts for the whole GSA team can be found here.](#)