



**Carleton**  
UNIVERSITY

Canada's Capital University

<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Freedom of Speech Policy</b>
<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>November 30, 2018</b>
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	<b>Senate</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Provost and Vice-President (Academic)</b>

## Policy:

Carleton University is proud of its longstanding commitment to free speech. This commitment is reflected in the purpose of the University and its existing policies. As an institution of higher learning anchored in the ideals of open inquiry and debate, the University's students, staff, and faculty have the freedom of speech to articulate their views. Pursuant to the *Carleton University Act*, the essential purpose of the University is to engage in the pursuit of the advancement of learning, the dissemination of knowledge, and the intellectual development and betterment of its community. To achieve this purpose, members of the University have freedom of speech, which is defined as the right to examine, question, investigate, speculate, comment and criticize except insofar as limitations are necessary by law or the functioning of the University. The purpose of the University also depends upon an environment of respect and tolerance. Every member needs to be able to learn, teach, live and work free from harassment and discrimination.

Therefore, subject to the limits set by law, the University is committed to the following principles:

- That the University is a place of open discussion and free inquiry;
- That the University introduces students to a wide range of ideas and does not attempt to shield students from debates or opinions that they may disagree with or find offensive;
- Faculty, students and staff are free to criticize, contest and condemn the views expressed on campus;
- At the same time, faculty, students and staff may not prevent, obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views;
- Freedom of speech includes accompanying responsibilities such as civility, respect and tolerance;
- Speech that violates the law will not be permitted including but not limited to hate speech, threatening violence, harassment, discrimination, unjustified invasion of privacy or confidentiality interests, defamation or speech that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University.

Disagreements and dissenting views make for a vibrant academic culture. The University strives to find a balance between allowing for critical views to be

expressed civilly on campus and not obstructing the freedom of others to communicate their views. In exercising free speech, staff, students and faculty are encouraged to consider the value of mutual respect. Informed, thoughtful and respectful argument, even when disagreement is profound, benefits the University community and fosters its essential purpose.

Canadian law recognizes that freedom of speech is not absolute and can be limited in situations where there is a need to balance competing interests such as respect for differences and equality. The University may intervene, for example, when speech violates the law, interferes with the conduct of University operations, demeans others on prohibited grounds of discrimination, is harassment, defamatory or in breach of legal obligations.

University community members may engage in peaceful assemblies and demonstrations as well as make reasonable use of University facilities in accordance with its policies. Of necessity, in order to achieve its essential purpose, the University must be able to operate free from unreasonable interference from any person or group. Therefore, the University reserves the right to reasonably regulate the use of facilities and the time, place and manner of speech. The University may intervene when activities disrupt the operations of the University, its learning, living and work environment, the safety of the community and to comply with the legal obligations including but not limited to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

Organizers of events on campus or using University facilities are responsible for ensuring that their invited speakers and participants are aware of and are in compliance with the law as well as the University's expectations and policies. The University will consider a student organization's compliance with this policy as condition for ongoing financial support or recognition pursuant to the Accreditation of Student Organizations Policy. The University encourages student organizations to consider adopting policies that respect freedom of speech.

This policy does not exhaust all of the University's policies with respect to freedom of speech. Rather, it informs the interpretation of and is reflected in other University policies. The policy does not amend or qualify University policies on academic freedom, including, as expressed for example, in Article 4 of the Collective Agreement with Carleton University Academic Staff Association. The University reaffirms its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and human rights as set out in the University's Human Rights Policies and Procedure.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including but not limited to, faculty, students, staff, contractors as well as visitors and guests.

**Complaints:**

Students whose actions violate this policy are subject to complaint and disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy. Such violations include, but are not limited to engaging in disruption that significantly interferes with the ability of an event to proceed or the ability of others to express themselves. Similarly, faculty and staff whose actions violate this policy are subject to complaint and disciplinary action pursuant to the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy, the Human Rights Policies and Procedure and any collective agreement as applicable in the specific circumstances. Disciplinary action involving unionized staff and faculty will be subject to the applicable collective agreement.

Questions regarding the interpretation and application of this policy, including the appropriate complaint process, are the responsibility of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

**Contacts:**

Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**Related Policies\*:**

Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy  
Human Rights Policies and Procedure  
Sexual Violence Policy  
Student and Visitor Ban Policy  
Accreditation of Student Organizations Policy  
Booking Space on Campus Policy  
Booking University Centre Galleria Space Policy  
Posting Policy  
Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy  
Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

\*Carleton University Policies: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/policies/>