

## University of Ottawa - Freedom of Speech Annual Report Template

August 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020

### 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 2019 report? If so, please explain the reason for the change and provide the link to its location on your institutional website.

No, there have been no changes to Policy 121 – Statement on Free Expression since the release of the 2019 report.

Where are members of the institutional community (or guests) directed when there is a free speech related question or complaint about an event on campus? Please provide contact information.

The implementation and periodic review of this policy is the responsibility of the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs. The contact information is as follows:

Rachel Ouellette  
Chief of Staff  
550 Cumberland Street, Room 217  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 6N5

613-562-5737  
provost@uOttawa.ca

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?

The majority of non-curricular events on campus are organised through the Congress and Reservations sector. If security concerns arise, a working group is established to review the activity and make recommendations and/or modifications to the organiser prior to the event.

There were no events that did not take place due to security or cost concerns.

All policies related to holding events on campus can be found on the website at the following link: <https://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/policy-121-statement-free-expression>.

## Section B: Complaints

You may append additional documentation or institution-specific information as you see fit. Between **August 1, 2019** and **July 31, 2020**, did any member of the institutional community (or guests) make an official complaint about free speech on campus? If yes, please describe.

No, the University of Ottawa has not received formal complaints about freedom of speech on campus.

However, the Director of the Human Rights Office has provided information on eight (8) matters that his office oversaw including a matter that was referred from the Office of the President during the period from 1 August 2019 through to 31 July 2020:

1. Five (5) complaints were received from internal and external community members against a professor who had made comments on a social media platform suggesting that people from a specific demographic group were racists. The Human Rights Office responded that while the comments were offensive and that the University of Ottawa does not condone, nor support such comments, these would be protected free speech and the complainants were referred to the University's Policy 121 - Statement on Free Expression.
2. The Human Rights Office received one (1) complaint from an internal community member alleging that certain posters on campus were perceived as discriminatory and racist. The Human Rights Office responded that this type of comment, while offensive, would be protected under free speech and referred the complainants to the University's Policy 121 - Statement on Free Expression.
3. One (1) complaint related to a display by a group that denigrated and called into question the scientific discipline of psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy. This complaint was also referred by the Office of the President. The Human Rights Office responded that while the display and its contents were offensive in a university setting that conducted important research in psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, these types of comments would be protected free speech and referred the complainants to the University's Policy 121 - Statement on Free Expression.
4. One (1) complaint involved a male professor who made certain sexist comments in class and on social media about menopause. While these comments were offensive, they would be protected by free speech and referred the complainants to the University's Policy 121 - Statement on Free Expression.

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.).

See above for description of concerns raised. In all cases, the comments were adequately protected by the Ontario and Canadian legal frameworks governing freedom of expression. During this reporting period, the University of Ottawa did not have any serious issues with additional security or with student unions or other group and all cases were protected by the current legal framework and University policy, to which the correspondents were directed. (The complaints and concerns received were about expressions/statements made by others, and accordingly none were in a position to lodge a formal complaint under Policy 121 – Statement on Free Expression – as their own right to express themselves was not infringed nor curtailed in any way.)

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?

N/A

## 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.	none
Number of official complaints reviewed that were dismissed.	none
Number of official complaints where the institution determined that the free speech policy was not followed appropriately.	none
Number of official complaints under the free speech policy that resulted in the institution applying disciplinary or other institutional measures.	none
To your knowledge, were any free speech complaints forwarded to the Ontario Ombudsman?	none

To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate of the number of **non-curricular events** held at the institution between **August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020**. Non-curricular events include, for example, invited speakers, sporting events, rallies, conferences, etc., as opposed to regular events held as part of an academic program or course.

Every year, thousands of events are organized on the University of Ottawa campus by various internal and external groups. Many of these events are coordinated by our Conventions and Reservations service, which provides assistance to the organizers.

Data collected by the Conventions and Reservations service shows that at least 1,990 non-curricular events were held on campus during the period covered by this report (student clubs, speakers, sporting events, various gatherings and conferences). However, since many other events do not use the Conventions and Reservations service, it is impossible to establish with any accuracy the total number of non-curricular events held on campus each year.

Institutional Comments (if any).

N/A