

## **Freedom of Speech Annual Report Template (2024)**

As indicated in the December 14, 2018 and September 12, 2018 memos from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, each of Ontario's publicly-assisted colleges and universities is to prepare an annual report on the implementation of a free speech policy. Please use this template; you may append additional documents or institution-specific information as you see fit.

The institutional Freedom of Speech Annual Report will be a public document and should respect privacy obligations. Please report on events or incidents that took place between **August 1, 2023** and **July 31, 2024**.

The reports are to be posted on the institution's website and submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) by **September 3, 2024**.

Please submit your institution's annual report and the link to its location on your website to [submissions@heqco.ca](mailto:submissions@heqco.ca). Please reach out to HEQCO at the same address with any questions.

### **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 2023 report? If so, please explain the reason for the change and provide the link to its location on your institutional website.

George Brown College's Freedom of Expression policy was not amended since the last reporting.
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Where are members of the institutional community (or guests) directed when there is a free-speech-related question or complaint about an institutional event? Please provide contact information.

GBC Community members or guests are directed to contact the Office of Anti-racism, Human Rights and Equity Services when issues related to free speech arise.

Our Freedom of Expression policy can be found on the college website.

Link <https://www.georgebrown.ca/about/policies/freedom-of-expression-policy>

Contact detail:

Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services George Brown College  
160 Kendal Ave., Room C221B Toronto, ON, M5R 1M3 T. 416-415-5000  
[diversity@geogebrown.ca](mailto:diversity@geogebrown.ca)

Members of the GBC Community are also referred to the Ontario Ombudsman for any complaints that remain unresolved

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?

George Brown commits to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive working, learning and living environments for all members of the College community. George Brown has a Use of College Facilities for Advocacy Purposes policy that works in conjunction with the Freedom of Expression Policy and supports the navigation around free speech related safety or cost concerns.

**There have been no instances where a non-curricular event did not proceed due to a security concern or their related costs since the last report. The policy sections below set out how the college manages holding events where there may be security concerns:**

The College is responsible for controlling and managing the use and access to college facilities to ensure that College space is used efficiently and responsibly and in ways that are consistent with College values and priorities, and in a manner that does not interfere with normal academic activities. Any demonstrations and/or other special events for advocacy purposes are subject to approval and limitation that are set out in the **Use of College Facilities for Advocacy Purposes policy and the Freedom of Expression Policy**.

**The policy outlines the following procedures for events with potential security concerns:**

Individuals seeking to use or book college facilities for advocacy purposes must request approval from the Facilities Management in writing and in advance of proposed use. Requests and all information are sent to all appropriate decision makers which may include Public Safety and Security and other College offices as part of the approval process. Appropriate decision makers will review and consider the request.

A risk assessment may be initiated at the sole discretion of the College and if it is determined that the requesting person/organization may engage in prohibited conduct the request may not be approved. Decision maker(s) must exercise discretion when imposing limitations on expressive activity, striking a reasonable balance between the expressive interest of the requesting party and the objectives of the College. Following the Decision makers' review, a decision, including terms and conditions of use, should be communicated in writing to the person or organization who made the booking request.

## Section B: Complaints

You may append additional documentation or institution-specific information as you see fit.

Between **August 1, 2023**, and **July 31, 2024**, did any member of the institutional community (or guests) make an official complaint about free speech? If yes, please provide a general description that protects the privacy of complainants.

No official complaints were received during the reporting period.

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.).

Not applicable

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?

Not applicable

## 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.	0
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	0
Number of official complaints where the institution determined that the free speech policy was not followed appropriately.	0
Number of official complaints under the free speech policy that resulted in the institution applying disciplinary or other institutional measures.	0
To your knowledge, were any free speech complaints forwarded to the Ontario Ombudsman?	0

To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate of the number of **non-curricular events** held at the institution either online or in person between **August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024**. Non-curricular events include, for example, invited speakers, sporting events, rallies, student life/student affairs events, conferences, etc., as opposed to regular events held as part of an academic program or course.

During the period of August 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024, GBC held over 737 events for staff and students. This number includes all online and in-person events that are categorized as non-curricular, including, workshops, sporting events, student life events, cultural celebrations, orientations, conferences, info sessions, campus days and professional development for employees.

Institutional Comments (if any).

During the August 1, 2023 - July 31, 2024, reporting period there were no official complaints made to the College under the policy. However, during the reporting period, a member of the GBC community posted about the Israel-Gaza conflict on social media. This post triggered several concerns from other GBC community members, external community members and the mainstream media. Upon review, the College concluded that the speech in the post was protected and did not trigger the College's discrimination and harassment policy