



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

University of Toronto
Governing Council

Policy on the Temporary use of Space at The University of Toronto

October 28, 2010

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Policy on the Temporary Use of Space at the University of Toronto

Preamble

Auditoria, rooms, and other kinds of space at the University of Toronto are used for a wide variety of events in support of the institution's academic mission – teaching, scholarship and research – as well as other activities of recognized university organizations. Space is also occasionally permitted to be used by external groups.

Any use of University space must abide by principles which reflect the University's purpose, mission and values. One core value is a commitment to freedom of expression and open dialogue. Another is that of mutual respect and civility, even on those issues on which strong opinions are held.

Difficulties in balancing these values can arise in the context of room bookings. Contestable sentiments that are offensive to some will be expressed on a campus populated by passionate and engaged students, staff, and faculty. As set out in its *Statement on Freedom of Expression*, the University will continue to protect freedom of expression and promote the respectful exchange of ideas, taking into account matters such as concerns about safety and the boundaries set by legislation. It encourages and expects, for instance, that there will be opportunities for respectful exchanges of perspectives in all public meetings. Though the University strives to create an environment where individuals and groups can express views on a broad range of subjects, the provision of University space for activities or events does not in any way imply that the University itself has expressed or condoned the views which may be expressed.

With respect to the assignment of space, the University's first priority must be for room bookings that contribute directly to our academic mission of teaching and scholarship. That said, we play a role in the community by opening our auditoria and rooms on occasion to external groups on appropriate terms in accordance with University policy and procedure.

Here another principle comes into play: fairness of costs. External groups must at least cover the full costs associated with room bookings. Our students, through their fees, should not be subsidizing external bodies. Internal groups, on the other hand, pay only minimal fees – nothing near full costs. We normally do not charge recognized campus groups and student societies at all, except for reasonable cost recovery for additional services beyond making the space available (such as post-event cleaning).

Clearly, this fair cost structure can only be maintained if external groups do not exploit the ability of internal groups to pay reduced or no fees. The University will, when possible, monitor such abuses of privilege and act accordingly, even if that means withdrawing booking privileges from certain internal users.

Applicability & Responsibility

This *Policy* applies to all temporary use of bookable University space on all three campuses. Administrative responsibility for this *Policy* rests with the office of the Vice-President & Provost. [Procedures](#) for the application of this Policy will be set by the Office of the Vice-President & Provost and reported for information to the Governing Council or its designated Board or Committee.

Assignment of Space

Priorities for allocation of space will be dependent on the type of space, activity, and location. These priorities may be local or general but are ultimately the responsibility of the Accommodations and Facilities Directorate (AFD), which is accountable to the Vice-President & Provost. The activity and priority for all University space is recorded on the University's space inventory system. Any change in these priorities or activities must be consistent with this *Policy* and approved by the AFD.

Principles

1. The lands and buildings of the University of Toronto are private property. The University reserves the right to control access to its campuses, and to the use of its space and facilities. All users of University space are required to comply with all applicable University policies, federal and provincial statutes and municipal by-laws relating to private property, the rights of individuals and the University.
2. Though the University strives to create an environment where individuals and groups can express views on a broad range of subjects, the provision of University space for activities or events does not in any way imply that the University itself has expressed or condoned the views which may be expressed. Similarly, recognition of any campus group or student society does not imply that the University endorses or condones that group's opinions or beliefs and the University assumes no liability for those activities.
3. Priorities for the temporary use of academic,¹ space are as follows, in descending order of priority:

¹ For the purposes of the Policy, 'academic space' is defined as a room primarily used for scheduled teaching purposes which does not require special equipment of a kind that makes the room unsuitable for regular classroom instruction. This is the definition used by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU).

- a. Teaching approved courses of study leading to degrees, diplomas or certificates of the University;
 - b. All other activities (including examinations) necessary to deliver and complete approved courses of study which lead to degrees, diplomas or certificates;
 - c. Seminars, colloquia, conferences and other University-related activities approved by the appropriate academic department or division or administrative unit;
 - d. Courses in continuing education in any division of the University;
 - e. Activities of recognized campus groups, student societies and employee groups²; and
 - f. Activities of external groups consistent with this policy (Note: Although the University may permit the temporary use of space and facilities that are not required for its own activities, the University is under no obligation to do so and may permit or not permit such use at its sole and unfettered discretion.).
4. Priorities for the temporary use of other space shall be established by the administration in a manner consistent with the purposes for which the space was designated.
 5. Users who book space or advertise events as being open to the public cannot exclude any persons or groups from the activities unless the exclusion is required by health and safety regulations, University policy, or otherwise by law. Users who book space for private gatherings in accordance with this policy and procedures cannot advertise or promote that event in a manner which suggests that non-invitees may attend.
 6. In reference to these principles, the administration shall have the authority for the efficient allocation of space and, in consultation with the relevant parties, for the resolution of matters related to competing demands for space.

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² See *Policy on Recognition of Campus Groups* (May 1993) and *Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees* (September 2003).

Appendix: Relevant Policies Related to Freedom of Speech and the Use of Campus Facilities

Many University of Toronto policies deal with the delicate process of ensuring that freedom of speech can co-exist with the similarly important values of respect for human rights and liberties, all in the context of the applicable laws of the land. The following are some key policies which have a bearing on freedom of speech and the use of campus facilities. Please refer to the policies for further details.

[Statement on Freedom of Speech](#)

[Statement of Institutional Purpose](#)

[Statement on Human Rights](#)

[Policy on Recognition of Campus Groups](#)

[Policy on Disruption of Meetings](#)

[Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment](#)

[Code of Student Conduct](#)

[Policy with Respect to Workplace Harassment](#)

[Policy with Respect to Workplace Violence](#)

In addition, statutes such as the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the [Criminal Code](#), as well as the common law, subject all members of the University community to obligations in exercising rights such as freedom of speech.