

Freedom of Speech Annual Report (2025)

As indicated in the December 14, 2018 and September 12, 2018 memos from the then Ministry of Training, 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, 2024** and **July 31, 2025**.

The reports are to be posted on the institution's website and submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) by **September 2, 2025**.

Please submit your institution's annual report and the link to its location on your website to 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 2024 report? If so, please explain the reason for the change and provide the link to its location on your institutional website.

No, the policy has not been amended since 2024. [Link to UWindsor's Policy on Freedom of Expression](#).

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.

Questions or concerns about free speech are typically directed to the Office of Student Experience; the Office of Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Mediation; or Special Constable Services. These offices connect with central administration when needed to address any issues. Key contact: Office of Student Experience, 519-253-3000, Ext. 4211/studentexperience@uwindsor.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 University of Windsor's [event planning guide](#) and [protocol](#) require all events to be approved by the appropriate campus department, Health & Safety, and potentially Campus Safety & Emergency Planning, with submission of the appropriate Event/Activity Forms 4 weeks in advance.

Organizers must adhere to event planning guidelines covering aspects like food service, safety protocols, event planning forms, risk management, and more. Key aspects include using Campus Catering for food and beverages, ensuring attendee safety, obtaining approvals for any equipment, and managing event logistics through the relevant University offices. Any costs or safety considerations related to freedom of expression and the booking of events on campus are the primary responsibility of the individual(s) organizing the event.

There have been no known cases where a non-curricular event did not proceed due to security concerns or their related costs between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025.

Section B: Complaints

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

Between **August 1, 2024** and **July 31, 2025**, 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.

Yes, two official complaints about free speech were made between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025:

[1] In September 2024, a University of Windsor alum made a complaint after a Faculty declined to forward their email to former classmates. The personal message was not forwarded due to its content, which – if shared – would have violated the University Electronic Mailing List (UEML) Policy and PIPEDA. Mass emails are restricted to University business and are subject to departmental approval.

[2] In January 2025, a student group hosted an event in one of the Faculty buildings featuring two external speakers who discussed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and the ongoing war in Ukraine. The event drew complaints from a faculty member, a student, and members of the external community. Concerns focused on the content of the speakers'

remarks, which some attendees disagreed with and alleged included views they believed amounted to antisemitism.

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.).

[1] The complaint concerned the University's email distribution policy in relation to an alum's personal views on a campus event. The alum argued that the University's refusal to forward an email amounted to content-based censorship and disputed the University's reference to privacy laws and policies that restrict mass emails. The alum also criticized the University's complaint process and amounted the instance as a suppression of their views. If shared, the email would have violated the University Electronic Mailing List (UEML) Policy and PIPEDA. Mass emails are restricted to University business and are subject to departmental approval.

[2] The complaint concerned accusations of the University providing a platform for harmful and misleading content through a guest speaker engagement. The event featured external speakers who presented critical perspectives on conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. Students expressed concern over what they described as disinformation and rhetoric that appeared to legitimize foreign aggression and misrepresent the realities faced by affected populations.

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?

[1] Following legal review, the University informed the alum that the Faculty had acted in accordance with University policy. Under the University Electronic Mailing List (UEML) Policy and PIPEDA, mass emails are restricted to University business and require departmental approval. The University explained that its Freedom of Expression Policy does not obligate it to disseminate personal messages or override privacy and policy requirements. The University also noted that interpreting the policy to require distribution of personal emails could compromise computing resources and privacy obligations.

[2] Senior administrators reviewed the recorded event and acknowledged it could have made students—particularly from Jewish and Ukrainian communities—feel unsafe and unwelcomed. However, it was concluded that the content did not meet the threshold for hate speech. The incident highlighted the important balance between freedom of expression on campus and maintaining a respectful, inclusive academic environment.

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.	2
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	2
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?	No

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, 2024 and July 31, 2025**. 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.

2,204

Institutional Comments (if any).

In reviewing the complaints received, the University noted that its current Freedom of Expression Policy includes procedures for addressing interference with expression—but these appear to apply only to complaints against individual campus members (e.g., faculty, students, unionized staff).

The University is reviewing the complaint procedures to clarify their scope and application. This effort will be incorporated into an ongoing broader policy review, which includes the University inviting feedback on the Freedom of Expression Policy to ensure it remains responsive, equitable, and aligned with institutional values and strategic priorities.

The feedback portal is open until September 30, 2025.