



MSS Policy on Equity and Diversity

1. Introduction

1.1. The definition of equity in our learning environment means prioritizing the needs of those who have been historically underrepresented and systematically denied access to education in medicine. An inclusive learning environment means that all students feel respected and valued and have equal opportunity to succeed and thrive in medicine.

Working towards equity means taking action to correct the past and present marginalization of certain groups. These actions should confront the privileging of dominant groups within society and conversely the lack of access by non-dominant groups. Working towards equity includes the creation of policies and actions that remediate the negative impacts of unjust power relations.

Groups currently underrepresented in medicine include:

- Indigenous peoples (Dhalla)
- Black, Filipino and Latin American people (Dhalla, Young, Slade)
- People of lower socioeconomic status (Dhalla, Young, Slade)
- People from rural areas (Dhalla, Young, Slade)
- People of minority gender identities (Young)
- People of minority sexual orientations (Young)
- People with disabilities (Young)
- Racialized people
- Women

2. Scope

2.1. This policy shall apply to:

2.1.1. All members of the MSS.

2.1.2. All activities and events hosted, funded, and promoted by the MSS and its affiliated student groups including but not limited to clubs, standing committees and class councils.

2.1.3. Written or graphic material which is published, distributed, endorsed or funded by the MSS and its affiliated student groups.

2.1.4. Activities, events, and promotions held in the Annex or in other spaces for which the MSS is responsible.

2.1.5. Funding allocated by the MSS.

2.1.6 Investments of the MSS.

2.2. In the case of Equity Complaints directed at individuals or groups not included in the scope of this policy, the Equity



Commissioners can make recommendations to MSS Council on how to advocate for the Claimant. See section 5.4.

3. MSS Commitments

3.1. The MSS will neither sustain or condone acts of sexism, racism, ableism, classism, transphobia, homophobia and other experiences of oppression.

3.2. The MSS acknowledges that McGill University is on traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst nations.

3.3. The MSS commits itself to accessible language, structures, and activities that promote the full democratic participation of all its members.

3.4. The MSS shall demonstrate leadership in matters of social sustainability. The MSS is committed to eradicating discrimination, removing barriers, promoting inclusivity and building a community that embraces its own diversity.

3.5. To broaden the scope of ideas and perspectives that contribute to our community, the MSS will actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds and experiences to participate on MSS Council and committees, as well as to represent the MSS on faculty committees and external bodies. This will be done by encouraging applications from students of underrepresented groups, by adding the following statement to position postings: "The MSS encourages students with lived experience of discrimination and from underrepresented groups in medicine to apply."

3.6. The MSS will not affiliate or collaborate with organizations known to promote or engage in discriminatory practices.

3.7. The MSS will actively support projects that aim to end discrimination or to promote diversity and inclusiveness in the McGill community.

3.8. The MSS is committed to advocating for social and economic justice for oppressed people, focusing on ongoing struggles of communities served by McGill Medical School and recognizing and deferring to the leadership of marginalized communities.

3.9. The MSS will regularly evaluate social sustainability in all aspects of the MSS and will actively cultivate an equitable and respectful environment by providing resources and trainings for MSS members and representatives.

4. The MSS calls upon the Faculty of Medicine to:

4.1. Provide resources, programs, and services to support members of the MSS who are members of marginalized groups including the groups listed in part 1.2;

4.2. Develop admissions initiatives aimed at increasing the enrollment of medical students from underrepresented communities and make transparent the results of these initiatives;

4.3. Continue to pursue initiatives designed to actively educate, heighten awareness, and provide opportunities for dialogue about equity and diversity-related issues;

4.4 Take a leadership role in the realization of equity by promoting anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, employment equity, accommodation and salary equity within its employment and governance structure.



4.5. Regularly assess medical students' experiences of oppression at McGill Medicine including in the classroom, hospitals and other teaching sites.

4.6. Commit to equity in research.

5. The Equity Committee shall be a Standing Committee of the MSS

5.1. Equity Commissioners

5.1.1. The role of the Equity Commissioners is to provide leadership in organizing the MSS Equity Committee and be a liaison with the MSS. They are responsible for overseeing the Equity Complaint Process as outlined in Section

5.3. They will maintain the Equity Log.

5.1.2. Selection of Equity Commissioners.

5.1.2.1. Two Equity Commissioners will be chosen once per year and will serve a one year term, which is renewable through the application process.

5.1.2.2. All medical students will be invited to apply for the positions by writing a short letter of intent. The application period should last at least two weeks and the positions should be advertised on all class Facebook groups, in The Murmur (MSS student newsletter), and in an email from the MSS president. The position postings should encourage students with lived experience of oppression to apply.

5.1.2.3. Outgoing equity commissioners and the MSS president will be on the selection committee and will review the letters of intent, will interview all candidates who submit an application and will select two people to be equity commissioners.

5.1.4.1. If an outgoing equity commissioner wishes to reapply, they will be replaced on the selection committee by an executive member of the MSS, to be chosen by the MSS President.

5.2. The MSS Equity Committee

5.2.1. The Equity Committee will work to improve equity in the Faculty of Medicine through education, advocacy and social events. The Equity Committee

will be a resource for other MSS clubs wishing to improve equity of their own events.

5.2.2. Equity Committee members can apply on a rolling basis by submitting a short letter of intent. Applicants will be interviewed by at least 2 members of the Equity Committee including an Equity Commissioner.

5.2.3. New committee members are asked to agree to a minimum one year commitment

5.2.4. The Equity Committee will be responsible for the MSS Equity Policy and will review the policy on an annual basis. If changes are deemed necessary, they will be brought to vote at the annual general assembly of the MSS.

5.2.5. The Equity Committee will work on the basis of consensus.



6. The Equity Complaint Process

6.1. Students can submit violations of the Equity Policy (“Complaints”) through an online form, or in writing to the Equity Commissioners. The online form will be advertised on MSS websites, the MSS Facebook group, and in orientation material provided for new students. In the case that the Complaint is against an Equity Commissioner, the complaint should be submitted to the MSS President.

6.1.1. The Claimant is the writer of the complaint

6.1.2. The Respondent is the individual or group who has allegedly violated the Equity Policy

6.2. Claimants can be anonymous or identified.

6.2.1 An anonymous complaint will be included in the year-end final report with all identifying features removed.

6.2.2. Identified claimants will have their complaint follow the process outlined in Section 5.3.4. And 5.3.5.

6.3. Equity complaints will be received and reviewed by both Equity Commissioners, who will investigate complaints and recommend resolution procedures.

6.4. Resolution procedures recommended will depend on the severity of the complaint and the number of complaints but may include:

6.4.1. Mediation

6.4.2. Letter(s) of apology

6.4.3. Trainings, workshops or other resources

6.4.4. Censure, suspension, or dismissal from positions in MSS executive, and/or representation

6.4.5. Suspension of MSS financial support for activities organized by associations or groups that violate this Policy

6.4.6. Suspension of privileges afforded to students by the MSS

6.4.7. Other recommendations of the Equity Commissioners

6.5 The timeline of the complaints process when the Respondent is a member of the MSS, within the scope of 2.1. is as follows:

6.5.1. The Claimant will be contacted and asked to attend a meeting with the Equity Commissioners within two weeks to address the Claimant’s experience and expectations for resolution procedures.

6.5.2. The Respondent will be contacted regarding the fact that there has been a complaint about a certain behaviour or action, and will be invited to respond in writing and meet with the Equity Commissioners within two weeks of the Complaint.



6.5.2.1. Any individual who does not wish to participate in the resolution process is not obligated to. However, this does not prevent the ratification of recommended resolutions by Council that could affect such an individual.

6.5.3. After having met with the Claimant and the Respondent, the Equity Commissioners will recommend resolution procedures within one week of finishing their investigation and distribute in writing the proposed resolution to the Claimant, the Respondent and MSS Council

6.5.4. The Respondent will have two weeks to appeal the resolution procedure by contacting the Equity Commissioners in writing.

6.5.5. If the Respondent does not begin the process of complying with the proposed resolution after the two-week period (four weeks total from the day that the complaint was received), sanctions from the list above will be implemented.

6.6. The Equity Complaint Process for individuals or groups outside of the scope outlined in 2.1.

6.6.1. The Claimant will be contacted and asked to attend a meeting with the Equity Commissioners within two weeks to address the Claimant's experience and expectations for resolution procedures.

6.6.2. After having met with the Claimant, the Equity Commissioners will, within one week of finishing their investigation, recommend actions the MSS take and will distribute in writing the proposed actions to the Claimant and MSS Council.

6.7. The Equity Commissioner's proposed resolution will be ratified by Council unless two thirds of MSS Council vote to overturn the resolution.

6.8 Conflicts of Interest

6.8.1 Upon receiving an Equity Complaint, Equity Commissioners must declare a conflict of interest should there be one.

6.8.2. Any Equity Commissioner who declares a conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint must abstain from all stages of the complaint process.

6.8.3. Failure of an Equity Commissioner to declare a conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint will result in review or suspension from the Equity Committee, at the discretion of the other members of the Equity Committee based on the seriousness of the violation.

6.9. Confidentiality

6.9.1. Confidentiality must be respected at all times during the resolutions process. Trust in confidentiality encourages individuals to come forward with their Complaint. However, those implicated in a Complaint have the right to be given enough information so that they are able to respond and defend their interests.

6.9.2. When the resolution is discussed at MSS Council, a confidential session will be declared, and all names and identifying features of the Claimant and Respondent will be removed from the report.

6.10. Equity Log

6.10.1. The Equity Log will be a written documentation of all Equity complaints.



6.10.2. The Equity Log will be a confidential document that maintained and protected by the MSS Equity Committee.

6.10.3. The MSS President and the Equity Committee shall be the only individuals who may access the Equity Log, but the incidence of complaints and its general nature will be available for the Equity Committee and MSS Council for planning educational activities and directing advocacy efforts.

7. Limitations

7.1. Nothing in this Policy precludes members from exercising any recourse available external of the MSS.

References:

Dhalla, I. A., Kwong, J. C., Streiner, D. L., Baddour, R. E., Waddell, A. E., Johnson, I. L. 2002. Characteristics of first-year students in Canadian medical schools *CMAJ*;166(8):1029-35

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Young, M. E., Razack, S., Hanson, M. D., Slade, S., Varpio, L., Dore, K. L., McKnight, D. (2012). Calling for a Broader Conceptualization of Diversity: Surface and Deep Diversity in Four Canadian Medical Schools. *Acad Med.* 2012;87:1501–1510.