

PUBLIC POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Approval Authority: Board of Governors

Approved: May 31, 2024

Category: Equity and Inclusion

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the guidelines and expectations for the issuance of public political statements by NOSM University as an institution. NOSM University commits to advocacy for social justice, defined as actions supporting equal opportunities and rights, promoting inclusivity across all identity spectrums, and diversity, which encompasses the variety of experiences and perspectives that arise from differences in race, culture, religion, mental or physical abilities, heritage, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. This policy is grounded in our core values and aligns with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the existing NOSM U Statement on Free Speech and Academic Freedom and Integrity of Research. NOSM University is committed to ensuring a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive place to learn and work.

2. Scope

Official statements shall only be issued by the President, Vice Chancellor, Dean, and CEO or designated spokesperson(s), after a comprehensive review of the request. This process involves consultation to ensure balanced and inclusive representation of viewpoints.

All individuals to whom this policy applies are responsible for becoming familiar with and following this policy. University supervisors and employees with learner oversight duties are responsible for promoting the understanding of this policy and for taking appropriate steps to help ensure compliance with it. The operationalization of this policy is the responsibility of the President's Office and the Office of External Relations.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a public political statement is an open declaration issued by the University to the public by any means of communication which takes any position on a matter relating to government, whether local, national or international, and which by its issuance, whether directly or implicitly, may be perceived as an attempt to influence the policies, activities and/or positions of said government, or to enjoin the public to take any position or action.

“Public” refers to something “of, relating to, or affecting all the people or the whole area of a nation or state,” or that is “done, perceived, or existing in open view;”

“Political” means “of or relating to government, a government, or the conduct of government;

“Statement” refers to “something that you say or write which gives information in a formal or definite way;”.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the values and standards for issuing Public Political Statements on local, regional, global or national events, activities or issues originating beyond NOSM University, and reflect NOSM University's values and standards, considering our social responsibilities and legal obligations under laws such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

5. Intended Impact

Public political statements from NOSM University aim to raise awareness of significant issues and inspire positive change, ensuring alignment with our mission, vision, and values. The University commits to assessing the impact of these statements on all community members, especially marginalized groups, and to providing appropriate support and resources.

In certain situations, the University is obligated to consider implementing a tailored approach to outreach and resource provision for members of the NOSM U community directly impacted by these events. Emphasizing the importance of health and well-being and access to wellness and support resources should be communicated to faculty, staff, learners, and University committee whenever possible.

6. Framework for Identification, Consideration and Key Components

Research and Fact-Checking: All public political statements must be supported by accurate and credible information. NOSM University encourages thorough research and fact-checking to ensure the integrity of the statements.

Collaborative Decision-Making: The issuance of public political statements should involve a collaborative decision-making process that includes input from relevant stakeholders, which may include NOSM U faculty, staff and learners, and others within the university community, as deemed necessary. This ensures a diverse range of perspectives and promotes inclusivity.

Consideration of Potential Consequences: Before issuing a public political statement, careful consideration must be given to potential consequences, both positive and negative. This includes assessing the impact on the university's reputation and relationships with stakeholders.

Alignment with NOSM University's Social Accountability Mandate: Public political statements must align with NOSM University's commitment to social accountability. Statements should reflect the University's dedication to addressing health and social disparities and promoting equitable access to education and healthcare.

7. Compliance and Enforcement

Non-compliance with this policy will invoke disciplinary processes in alignment with the University's existing disciplinary procedures, ensuring fairness and respect for the rights of all parties involved. These processes will be conducted with regard to the principles outlined in the Ontario Labour Relations Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

8. Conclusion

NOSM University is committed to fostering a community that actively engages in social and political discourse. This policy, underpinned by principles of social accountability and inclusivity, will be reviewed regularly to remain responsive to evolving legal, social, and political landscapes, ensuring continuous alignment with our core values and mission.

9. Reference Documents

The information is intended to help explain this policy and is not an all-inclusive list of policies, procedures, laws and requirements.

This policy is supported by NOSM University's foundational documents, and considers relevant Ontario legislation, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, AODA, FIPPA, and others pertinent to our operations and commitments.

- [NOSM University Mission, Vision and Values](#)
- [Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Code of Respect](#)
- [Statement on Free Speech at NOSM University](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Integrity of Research](#)
- [FIPPA Policy](#)
- Program and Faculty professionalism policies.
- Communications Procedures

Review and Revision History

Review Period: This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed one year from the date of the initial approval and every 3 years after that time.

Date for Next Review: 2025 05 31