

Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) McMaster



Working Group Policy

OPIRG McMaster's objectives are to

1. Engage in charitable non-profit research and activities to advance the welfare of the University and general community;
2. To execute, sponsor and publish educational studies and programs to advance the welfare of the University and general community;
3. To facilitate and encourage students to develop their research and advocacy skills in order to become active and informed citizens;
4. To make diverse view points available to the University and general community.

As part of accomplishing these objectives, OPIRG McMaster will work with its members in the McMaster and Hamilton communities to facilitate the creation and operation of Working Groups. Working Groups are OPIRG-supported, student-run networks organized around anti-oppression principles and directed towards research and/or positive action on social justice and environmental issues in the public interest.

The types of Support available to groups may include, but is not limited to:

- * Funds or in-kind donations not exceeding the standard annual dollar sum granted to OPIRG Working Groups;
- * Reasonable use of the OPIRG McMaster name and logo in promotions;
- * Room bookings or similar facilitation in accessing University resources;
- * Public awareness raising including support in printing, button-making, data projector; access to OPIRG listserv or otherwise publicizing the event;
- * Institutional support such as assistance in volunteer recruitment, organizing, planning and/or training;
- * Any other reasonable request to access a resource held by OPIRG McMaster.

All OPIRG McMaster Working Groups must be student led and/or meaningfully involve students in decision-making. Working Group organization is characterized by difference: Working Groups may define their own organizational structure and are not required to operate like MSU Campus Clubs. As a result, OPIRG McMaster Working Groups are bound by their successfully approved Working Group Application. The OPIRG McMaster Working Group Application form is considered a part of this policy and shall be reviewed and the end of each budget year and revised and approved by the OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors if deemed appropriate by that body. The standard Application form is to be made available to potential applicants through the OPIRG McMaster Website and the OPIRG McMaster Office.. Applicants are required to use the most recent iteration of the

Working Group Application Form, and this Application form shall list all application requirements; all information requested by the Working Group Application form is considered mandatory for applicants wishing to be considered for Working Group status.

While OPIRG Working Groups are not required to have a formal leadership, each Working Group must provide OPIRG McMaster with two reliable contact persons, one of which must be a McMaster University student. These two contact persons commit themselves to attending mandatory OPIRG McMaster Orientation as well as Workshops on Consensus Decision Making and Anti-Oppression, and any other sessions deemed mandatory by OPIRG McMaster. Failure of both Working Group contact persons to attend these orientation, training and other mandatory sessions without approval will result in the immediate indefinite suspension of their Working Group, and both contact persons will be required to attend the next scheduled OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors meeting to discuss the matter and identify the restitutive measures required to release the Working Group from suspension.

All Working Group Applications will be reviewed by OPIRG McMaster and approved or rejected by its Board of Directors. All Applications will be reviewed against OPIRG McMaster's objectives, and all Working Group concepts must adequately meet all of the following criteria:

- * Working Group is a distinct and independent organizational form, and is not currently receiving funding from the McMaster Student Union.
- * Working Group is directed towards research and/or action in the public interest;
- * Working Group is issue-based, demonstrates a clear focus, and is reflective of OPIRG's commitment to Environmental and Social Justice;
- * Working Group concept must be able to demonstrate reasonable community support;
- * Working Group encourages positive contributions to the local and/or Global community;
- * Working Group focus is based on credible and defensible positions or research and be constructive in nature;
- * Working Group concepts must be respectful to all members of the McMaster, Hamilton and Global communities;

All successfully approved Working Groups are granted access to Support until the end of each Budget Year, and Working Groups are required to submit an Annual Report to be submitted to OPIRG McMaster at the end of that year which will be used (in part) to complete an annual Evaluation conducted by OPIRG McMaster. Completion and submission of Annual Reports are the responsibility of a Working Group's contact persons, and may be submitted in various formats, but must include the following, without exception:

- * A comprehensive overview of all work (research and/or action) completed by the Working Group throughout the budget year;
- * An up to date list of key contact persons in the Working Group. This list must include, at a minimum, the two reliable contact persons named in the Working Group application.
- * A self-evaluation of the Group's work, including a fair assessment of the Group's ability to complete its goals as outlined in its Application, and identification of areas of strength and weakness.
- * A vision for the Working Group's future, including any plans to re-Apply as a Working Group in future budget years, any proposed future work, and any new opportunities for OPIRG McMaster to support the Working Group.

Annual Reports may be returned to Working Group contact persons for revision should the

Reports be considered by OPIRG McMaster to be incomplete. Failure to submit an Annual Report will be noted and be considered in any future Applications or re-Applications made by the Working Group or its contact persons. Previously approved Working Groups are required to re-Apply for Working Group status at least once each Budget Year, and their submitted Annual Reports and annual Evaluations of research and activities will be considered in the approval or rejection of these re-application requests. A Working Group Evaluation Form is considered part of this policy, and shall be used by OPIRG McMaster to produce an annual record of each Working Group's activities, and track their progress in relation to their approved Application. The standard Working Group Evaluation Form shall be available to OPIRG McMaster members upon request, and reviewed at the end of each budget year and revised and approved by the OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors if deemed appropriate by that body. Working Group contact persons are entitled to request and review their Working Group's completed Evaluations.

While Working Groups may operate in a relatively autonomous fashion, their Support may be suspended or revoked at any time through a decision by the OPIRG McMaster Board of Directors if there is the reasonable belief the actions or decisions of a Working Group threaten the credibility, reputation, working-relations, or other interests of the OPIRG McMaster, its Working Groups and/or community partners. Should Support be revoked, the McMaster Board of Directors shall provide immediate notice of suspension, and also shall provide a written reason for their decision to suspend within two weeks of the decision.

Working Groups are encouraged to fundraise to support Group activities and/or research, but the majority of the Group's work and resources must be directed towards its mandate. OPIRG Support must only be directed towards Group activities and/or research, and are not to be re-directed towards other groups or individuals, inside or outside the University.

Because the strength of OPIRG McMaster lies in its volunteers, Working Groups are encouraged to actively recruit new members and promote other Working Groups and OPIRG projects. Working Group members are also encouraged participate in OPIRG McMaster events and training and to become further involved further with organization through its other Working Groups, or the Board of Directors.