HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

Adopted by Legislative Council: 2020/09/24
Expires: 2025/01/01
Adopted Motion (Link)

1. Background

The Human Resources Policy (hereafter, “the Policy”) aims to address systemic barriers to employment and ensure that the human resources practices of the Society are well documented, accessible, equitable, and conducive to a productive and healthy work environment.

2. Scope

This Policy will apply to all remunerated Staff of the Society. It is a Policy administered by the Board of Directors through its Human Resources Committee and the Human Resources Department, as defined below.

3. Definitions

The following terms used in this Policy will have the same definitions as in the Constitution.

(a) Board of Directors
(b) Executive Committee
(c) General Manager
(d) Legislative Council
(e) Member
(f) Officer

The following definitions will apply to this Policy:

(a) Complainant will refer to any individual who files an official complaint under this Policy;
(b) Commissioner will refer to a Student Staff member who coordinates a committee of the Legislative Council or the Board of Directors;
(c) Corrective measures will refer to any disciplinary or administrative measures taken in response to a complaint received under this Policy;
(d) **Designated groups** will include groups that have been historically oppressed, marginalized, or sidelined based on, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or social class;

(e) **Deadname** refers to the name a trans-identifying individual was assigned at birth, but no longer identifies with. It is contrasted with a preferred name, which is distinct from a nickname;

(f) **Director-level** will refer to Supervisors who report directly to the General Manager or the Board of Directors. Officers and the General Manager are to be considered Director-level;

(g) **Guides** will refer to comprehensive documents detailing pertinent information related to projects, events and routine administrative functions within each portfolio;

(h) **Hiring Committee** will refer to the collection of individuals responsible for conducting the interview process for a given position;

(i) **Human Resources Committee** will refer to the committee duly established in the Internal Regulations of the Committee Terms of Reference Book;

(j) **Human Resources Department** will refer to the department of the Society consisting of the Human Resources Director, the Human Resources Manager, the Anti-Violence Coordinators, and any other Permanent Staff and Student Staff whose primary areas of responsibility include human resources;

(k) **Malicious complaints** will refer to any complaint filed with malicious intent towards the respondent and which is found to be frivolous or intentionally false;

(l) **Permanent Staff** will refer to the full-time or part-time Staff of the Society, employed for an indefinite term with contracts that do not have an end date;

(m) **Reprisals** will refer to an action, or threat, that is intended as retaliation for filing a Complaint, taking administrative or disciplinary action, or participating in a workplace investigation;

(n) **Respondent** will refer to an individual against whom a complaint is filed;

(o) **Staff** will include both Permanent Staff and Student Staff;

(p) **Student Staff** will refer to the casual Staff of the Society, who have employment contracts that specify specific end dates; and

(q) **Supervisor** will refer to Officers and Permanent Staff of the Society who are directly or indirectly responsible for the performance of other Staff members. Supervisors are not necessarily Director-level Staff.

4. Hiring Guidelines

4.1. **General**

Each Supervisor will be responsible for the hiring of Staff that they supervise. In February of each year, the Human Resources department of the Society will advertise the available Student Staff positions to the Members. All hirings must be approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors.
4.2. Employment Equity

The Human Resources Committee will be responsible for the creation, implementation, and end-of-year review of procedures surrounding employment equity. These procedures, outlined in Appendix A: Employment Equity Guidelines, will satisfy legal standards for employment equity, at minimum.

4.2.1. Language. As outlined in the Equity Policy inclusive, unbiased and ungendered language will be used in all job postings and all communications with candidates. As such, a written commitment to the principles of employment equity and inclusivity will also be included in all job postings and initial communications with candidates. Job postings, descriptions, and interview guides will be reviewed, as necessary, to ensure the use of accessible and understandable language.

4.2.2. Outreach. Specific outreach will be conducted to promote job postings to designated groups through established channels including, but not limited to, departmental partners, student associations, student groups and services, and community listservs.

4.2.3. Lived experience. Where a position is intended to serve or represent a designated group, relevant lived experience will be prioritized as qualifications for the position. This prioritization will be explicitly stated in any relevant job description, job posting, interview guide, and candidate comparison grid to allow candidates to self-identify their experiences.

4.3. Timeline

Whenever possible, interviews will be scheduled within one week after the application deadline has closed. The maximum length of the interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates. However, the Human Resource Department is also encouraged to schedule “buffer time” after interviews to accommodate delays or extended interviews. Whenever possible, Candidates will be notified of their status within two weeks of the first interview.

4.4. Accessibility

Though the Human Resources Department is encouraged to proactively facilitate an accessible environment, Candidates will be given the opportunity, without prejudice, to request accommodations throughout the hiring process. Every effort will be made to provide the requested accommodations. If an accommodation cannot be made, the Hiring Committee must provide extensive reasoning to the candidate and notify the Equity Commissioners and Human Resources Department, who will then conduct a procedural review to identify and remediate accessibility concerns. Candidates will be asked for accommodations required to fulfil the duties of the position only after selection is completed.
4.5. Notification of Status

All applicants to remunerated positions of the Society will be notified of the status of their candidacy as soon as said information is available to the Human Resources Department, within reasonable constraints. All efforts will be made to inform candidates of their status in a timely fashion.

4.6. Interview Feedback

Interviewed candidates will be informed of the opportunity to receive feedback regarding their interviews. This feedback will be issued through the Human Resources Department.

4.8. Affiliation Disclosure

When presented to the Executive Committee and reported to the Board of Directors, all hirings for approval will be accompanied by disclosures of any affiliation that the hiring Supervisor has with the Staff being considered for hire, submitted verbally or in writing.

4.9. Personal Information

Whenever possible, the SSMU will refrain from collecting and utilizing information regarding the biological sex or deadnames of trans-identifying Staff members. The Human Resources Department will ensure that trans-identifying Staff members are not, under any circumstances, exposed to deadnaming or misgendering without their expressed consent.

4.9.1. Where such information is legally required, the Human Resources Department may only collect, disseminate, or utilize personal information with the consent of the relevant Staff member. The Human Resources Department will then be responsible for making proactive accommodations, in consultation with the Equity Commissioners, to minimize the exposure of the Staff member to deadnaming or misgendering.

4.10. Contract Renewals

At the discretion of the Supervisor, incumbent Student Staff who have met the expectations for their positions will generally be offered the opportunity to renew their contracts. Where the contract is not renewed, hiring will proceed as otherwise outlined in this Policy.

5. Hiring Committees

5.1. Composition

The Hiring Committee will generally be comprised of at least:
5.1.1. The composition of the Hiring Committee and the identities of the members will be shared with the shortlisted candidates well in advance of their interviews when possible. Candidates will be entitled, without prejudice, to request that specific individuals not be present in their interviews. Candidates will be required to give minimal justification for their request but will not be asked to disclose potentially harmful or retraumatizing information. The Hiring Committee will be obliged to accommodate such requests and propose alternate interviewers for the candidate’s approval.

5.1.2. Barring the circumstances laid out in 5.1.1, the same individuals will conduct every interview for a given position, whenever possible.

5.2. Alterations to Composition

Shortlisted candidates who have self-identified as a member of one or more designated groups will be entitled, without prejudice, to request that an additional member or members be added to the Hiring Committee membership to represent their relevant designated group(s).

5.2.1. If the designated group(s) cannot be represented by SSMU Staff or affiliated Committee members, the Hiring Committee must provide adequate reasoning to the candidate and notify the Human Resources Department, who will then conduct a demographic audit. Outreach to any identified underrepresented groups will then be expanded to promote future job postings, as outlined in Section 4.3.

5.3. Reasoning

In addition to responsibilities otherwise outlined, the Hiring Committee will justify, in writing, both the selection of the final candidate and the rejection of all other interviewed candidates. The Hiring Committee will strive to make objective decisions and justifications will be grounded in detailed pre-set criteria and qualifications, respecting differing styles of communication and social conduct. Such justifications will be recorded in the Candidate Comparison grid and presented to the Executive Committee upon request.

5.3. Hiring Committee Training

If they have not already received adequate training, Hiring Committee Members will be responsible for contacting an HR Representative and requesting the following training:

a. Principles of employment equity;

b. Recognizing and combating implicit and explicit biases;
c. General equity, including allyship, inclusive communications and workplaces, reconciliation, intercultural competence, accessibility and accommodations.

6. Job descriptions

6.1. Student Staff

The Executive Committee must approve all substantive changes to job descriptions of Student Staff. All Student Staff job descriptions will be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members.

6.1.1. Job descriptions of Student Staff will be reviewed yearly by the position’s Supervisor, in consultation with the corresponding Student Staff member, to ensure accuracy and transparency. Amended job descriptions will be reevaluated for payscale.

6.2. Permanent Staff

All substantive changes to the job descriptions of Permanent Staff must be made in consultation with the position’s Supervisor, the General Manager, the Human Resources Department, and Human Resources Committee, and then subsequently approved by the Board of Directors. All Permanent Staff job descriptions will be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members.

6.3. Contents

When possible, and in addition to any mandatory administrative details, Job Descriptions will include the following:

a. a detailed “Position Summary,” which gives an accurate snapshot of the day-to-day and long-term duties of the position;

b. robust and all-inclusive “Responsibilities,” reflecting both the actual and potential responsibilities of the position;

c. details regarding “Supervision,” including both the positions’ Supervisor and any supervision the position is required to provide;

d. an overview of “Working Conditions” including, but not limited to, the physical, political, emotional, and psychological demands of the position; and

e. “Qualifications” which Supervisors will ensure are job-specific and avoid requiring general skills or extraneous qualifications that exclude potential candidates.
7. Institutional Memory

7.1. Employment Contracts

Copies of all employment contracts and employee-related documentation, including job descriptions and candidate comparison grids, must be filed with the Human Resources Department for archiving.

7.2. Archives of Supervisors

It is the responsibility of all Supervisors to provide organized electronic and paper files to their successors, along with a detailed exit report outlining the significant events of their tenure and advice in navigating critical areas of responsibility in their role. Exit reports will also be created for projects and events under the responsibility of the Supervisor. All exit reports will be considered confidential. It is the responsibility of all Supervisors to ensure that exit reports from outgoing Student Staff are transmitted to the incoming Student Staff within their portfolio.

7.2.1 Guides. All Supervisors will develop and maintain Guides on routine projects and processes within their portfolio, where applicable. These will be separate from the Supervisors’ exit reports and will include, but not be limited to, reports on events, reports on large-scale projects, and details regarding routine administrative processes. It will be the responsibility of the Office of the General Manager to distribute templates that Supervisors can use for this purpose.

8. Training

8.1. Documents

It will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to distribute the following documents to new Student Staff:

a. the Student Staff Training Checklist; and
b. the Employee Manual.

New Permanent Staff and elected Officers will receive:

a. the Employee Manual;
b. the position’s Training checklist; and
c. the two (2) most recent exit reports for their position, where applicable.
8.2. Orientation

It will be the responsibility of each Supervisor, with the support of the Human Resources Department, to ensure that all Student Staff receive sufficient orientation in their position to fulfill their roles to the best of their abilities. This orientation will include, but not be limited to:

a. going over documents distributed by the Human Resources department with incoming Staff in advance of the academic year;

b. providing Student Staff with an orientation to the SSMU office and introducing them to the Permanent Staff.

8.3. Additional Training

Each Supervisor will ensure that the Permanent Staff under their supervision are informed that requests for additional training may be made at any point during the year, within reasonable time constraints and financial constraints.

8.4. Integration

Supervisors will consult the Human Resources Department when a Student Staff is hired outside of the regular recruitment period.

8.5. Mandatory Training

During orientation, all Supervisors will attend training on Mental Health, Gendered and Sexual Violence, and Equity before commencing their supervision of any Staff. This training will be arranged through the Office of the President, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department. It will serve to ensure that the SSMU is a mental health-positive and equitable workplace free from oppression and violence.

9. Reporting

New and renewed job descriptions will include the requirement to report regularly to the relevant Supervisor regarding the status of work-related projects and activities with a frequency as negotiated with the Supervisor.

9.1. Commissioners must report at least once per semester to either the Legislative Council or the Board of Directors, depending on the nature of their work. These reports may be submitted either verbally or in writing.
9.2. In addition to reporting to the General Manager of the Society, Director-level Staff must report at least once per quarter to the Board of Directors. Director-level Staff have the option of reporting as a bloc.

10. Vacancy

10.1. Notification of Vacancy

The Board of Directors or Legislative Council, depending on the nature of the position, will be notified if a Commissioner or Supervisor position becomes vacant.

10.1.1. The Membership will be notified, barring legal constraint, if an elected Officer vacates their position or is otherwise prevented from fulfilling their mandate as outlined in the Constitution and its Internal Regulations.

10.2. Filling Vacancies

In general, a new Commissioner or Supervisor will be hired or elected as the case may be. Notwithstanding this, the body to which that position reports reserves the right to halt the hiring process, for reasons including, but not limited to, the obsolescence of the position or the lateness of the academic year.

11. Compensation

11.1. Payscale

The Human Resources Department will set and adjust the annual pay scale for Student Staff, maintained by the Human Resources Department of the Society. The scale, including the range of rates and the method for determining each pay rate, will be made available to any inquiring Members.

11.1.1. Supervisors are encouraged to consult their Staff regarding the pay scale assigned to their positions. Staff members will be entitled to review their job descriptions for omissions or inaccuracies, in consultation with their Supervisor, if they feel that their labour is undervalued.

11.1.2. If the job description is found to be inaccurate or incomplete, the Supervisor will be responsible for amending the job description accordingly and having it reevaluated for pay scale. If the amendments to the job description result in a change in its pay scale, the new hourly rate will be implemented once approved by the Executive Committee.
12. Conflicts

12.1. General

All Staff may consult their supervisor for issues with another coworker or the Human Resources Department or Human Resources Committee if they have a conflict or issue with their Supervisor.

12.2. Complaints

All Staff may file an official complaint with the Human Resources Department or Human Resources Committee if a conflict or issue cannot be resolved informally. The Human Resources Department will typically be responsible for investigating such complaints. A detailed report of the findings of HR investigations, including recommendations for corrective measures, will then be communicated to the Human Resources Committee for approval. Depending on its nature, a complaint may instead be referred to the Equity Commissioners or Anti-Violence Coordinators for investigation or resolution. The President and any other Staff may also be involved on a case-by-case basis. All parties to the conflict will be informed of the outcome of the investigation or mediation, along with any corrective measures imposed, as soon as this information becomes available.

12.2.1. Complaints will be investigated by no fewer than two members of the Human Resources Department, typically the Human Resources Director and Human Resources Manager.

12.2.2. Where a complaint involves Supervisors, the Human Resources Committee will report cases to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may, in this case, choose to assume the investigatory or disciplinary responsibilities of the Human Resources Department. The responding Supervisors will have no oversight over the investigation or resolution of the complaint.

12.2.3. Where a complaint involves the Human Resources Department or members of the Human Resources Committee, the respondents will recuse themselves from the investigation and resolution process. The Human Resources Committee may, in this case, choose to pursue a third-party investigation. Where the respondent is a member of the Human Resources Committee, the Board may appoint an alternate member to serve in their absence.

12.3. Corrective Measures

The Human Resources Committee or the Board of Directors may approve the implementation of corrective measures by the Human Resources Department. This will include both administrative and disciplinary measures, the severity of which will escalate progressively depending on the disciplinary
record of the respondent and the severity of the complaint. There will normally be four categories of corrective measures, in order of ascending severity:

a. counselling and a verbal warning;
b. a formal written warning;
c. paid administrative or unpaid disciplinary suspension and final written warning;
d. recommendation for termination of employment to the Board of Directors.

12.3.1 The Human Resources Department will recommend corrective measures in consideration of the nature of the complaint and the disciplinary history of the respondent. Such recommendations will be tailored to appropriately address the complaint and may not necessarily conform to the categories outlined above. Where the recommended corrective measures do not conform to the escalating categories, the Human Resources Department or the Human Resources Committee is encouraged to consult with the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors.

12.4. Dismissal of Complaints

All complaints received under this Policy will be investigated. However, the Human Resources Committee may dismiss complaints that are found to be frivolous or intentionally false. Such complaints will be recorded, but will not count towards the disciplinary records of the respondent.

12.4.1 Malicious complaints. Where reasonable belief exists that a frivolous or intentionally false complaint was filed with malicious intent towards the respondent, corrective measures may instead be taken against the complainant as outlined in this Policy, notwithstanding 12.5.

12.4.2. The dismissal of a complaint and any corrective measures taken against the complainant will be reported to the Board of Directors for approval.

12.5. Reprisals

No Staff member, acting as a complainant or witness, will suffer any retaliation including, but not limited to, termination, excessive work assignments, harassment, negative performance evaluations, or loss of hours. Moreover, any Staff member who is found to have attempted a reprisal, as outlined above, will be subject to administrative or disciplinary measures under the direct oversight of the Board of Directors through the Executive Committee.

12.5.1. An Equity Complaints Committee, in its capacity as an investigative body, will be convened and made available as an alternative point of contact for any Staff member who suspects they are the targets of a reprisal. Following the procedures outlined in the Equity Policy, the Equity Complaints Committee will be empowered to receive complaints of reprisals and recommend appropriate corrective measures to the Board of Directors.
12.5.2. Where a reprisal involves the issuance of unfounded or otherwise unprompted performance evaluations, Staff members will be empowered to appeal such evaluations to the Equity Complaints Committee. Upon the receipt of an appeal, the relevant evaluation will be nullified, effective immediately, pending investigation by the Equity Complaints Committee.

12.5.3. The refusal or reluctance of the Human Resources Department or Human Resources Committee to investigate or resolve HR complaints will constitute a reprisal under this Policy and will be dealt with as otherwise outlined above.

12.6. External Referral

On the recommendation of the Human Resources Department, Human Resources Committee, Anti-Violence Coordinators, or Equity Commissioners, the Board of Directors may choose to pursue a third-party investigation and, when appropriate, external mediation. The Board of Directors may also choose to do so, of its own accord, at any time following the receipt of a formal complaint or where reasonable suspicion of a conflict exists.

12.6.1 Where external investigation or mediation is pursued, the Human Resources Department and Human Resources Committee may be relieved of their investigatory or disciplinary responsibilities.


13.1. General

There will exist Employee Manuals to support the Student Staff, Executives, and Permanent Staff. These Manuals will contain internal information and procedures regarding recruitment, office rules, probationary periods, training, attendance, holidays and personal days, compensation, benefits, and other policies as are relevant to the Society’s Staff.

13.2. Scope

These Manuals will apply to all Student Staff, Executives, and Permanent Staff. The Employee Manuals will be considered public and made available to all inquiring Members, and up-to-date digital copies will be made available on the Society’s website.
13.3. Maintenance

It will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department to keep the Employee Manuals updated and to propose amendments as necessary, and at least once annually as a part of this Policy’s review cycle.

13.4. Amendment

Amendments to the Employee Manuals must be approved by the Board of Directors.

14. Hereafter

14.1 Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Human Resources Committee, in consultation with the Human Resources Department, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee.

14.1.1 The Student-Run Service Members’ Union (SSMUnion) will be invited to suggest amendments to this Policy for consideration, in good faith, by the Human Resources Committee.

14.2. Progress

The Human Resources Department, in collaboration with the Human Resources Committee and any relevant Staff, Governing Body, or Student Group, will continue to explore new solutions to address inequity and inaccessibility including;

a. collecting and comparing self-identified Staff and community demographics to identify potential areas of injustice and goals for equitable representation;
b. developing alternative evaluation formats for candidates who may not present well in the standard interview format; and
c. undertaking robust research and discussion with Staff on SSMU’s equitable employment practices.
Appendix A: Employment Equity Guidelines

Preamble

Employment equity involves addressing systemic barriers so that each candidate may access employment opportunities, benefits and promotions based on having appropriate qualifications rather than accessing or being denied opportunities due to belonging to an advantaged or disadvantaged group.

The federal Employment Equity Act states that its purpose is:

To achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

This creates four designated groups for the consideration of employment equity namely women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and visible minorities.

The Quebec Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies (2001) creates employment equity standards for the federally designated groups in addition to “persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English and who belong to a group other than the aboriginal peoples group or the visible minorities group.” This provincial legislation applies to public bodies such as McGill University.

McGill has taken a broader approach to employment equity than is legally required by including LGBTT2SQ* people as a designated group in its Employment Equity Policy.

While recognizing that different groups face systemic barriers to fair and equitable employment, providing employment equity requires a comprehensive problem-solving approach. There are special measures required to address the principles of employment equity such as:

1. Identifying and eliminating barriers in an organization's employment procedures and policies;
2. Establishing policies and practices to ensure the effects of systemic barriers are eliminated;
3. Ensure appropriate representation of "designated groups" throughout their workforce.
Hiring Committee

Training

In addition to any mandatory training they might have received, members of a hiring committee are encouraged to educate themselves on:

1. General principles of Employment Equity;
2. How to recognize and combat implicit and explicit biases;
3. General equity including, but not limited to, allyship, inclusive communications and workplaces, reconciliation, intercultural competence, accessibility and accommodations.

Composition

Representation from designated groups that have been historically oppressed, marginalized, and/or sidelined based on, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability, language, size, or social class, should be prioritized on the hiring committee.

Recruitment

- Requirements in the job posting must not create unnecessary barriers to candidates.
- Essential qualifications and optional qualifications (“assets”) should be distinguished and specific to each position. These should be indicated as such on the job description/posting.
- Job postings should use inclusive, unbiased, ungendered language (e.g. all genders, usage of they/them).
- Equity and inclusivity commitments should be included in communications with candidates.
- Job postings should be kept open for at least 2 weeks with a clearly indicated deadline.
- Job postings should be targeted to designated groups and marginalized communities through established channels (utilizing departmental partners, student associations, student groups and services, community listservs etc).
  - Examples of groups that should be contacted include SSMU, faculty associations, Branches, the Black Students’ Network, First Peoples’ House, Queer McGill, the Muslim Students’ Association, the Union for Gender Empowerment, the Indigenous Students’ Alliance, and the McGill International Student Network.
Interviewing

Before an Interview

- In the interview invitation, the candidate should be given the opportunity to request accommodations. All accommodations should be made if possible.
- All interviews should be held in accessible locations.
- Candidates to be interviewed should be selected based on merit, fairness and equity.
- Time should be scheduled after each interview to debrief and review to avoid bias.
- A standardized candidate comparison grid with accompanying guidelines should be used.
  - Selection criteria should be clear yet flexible, to adapt to each candidate.
- A standardized interview guide including all interview questions, based on job requirements, should be used.
  - The order of questions should be kept consistent to avoid bias.
- Interviews for a given position should be conducted by the same interviewers.

During an Interview

- Follow-up questions should be posed to allow for enough information to be gathered.
- Questions should be rephrased to elicit an appropriate response if the questions are not answered appropriately.
- Candidates should be given time to reflect on the questions and to answer uninterrupted.

Post Interview

- Responses provided by a candidate in an interview should be scored against pre-set criteria using a standard candidate comparison grid.
- Accommodations should be given to cultural differences, language styles, and non-verbal communications that may differ from speakers whose primary language is English or French or who come from similar backgrounds.
- Evaluation and debrief should be guided by the set criteria and ability to perform the job, rather than “fit” or subjective criteria to limit unconscious or biased assessments of candidates.
- Reasoning and feedback should be recorded for each candidate and made available upon request.
Staffing

- Demographics of current staff and demographics of the community should be examined to determine any equity goals for staffing.
- Candidates should be asked for any accommodations required to fulfil their duties only after selection is completed.
- Consider a self-identification survey to ascertain representation rates and identify areas of potential inequity.