

2025 Free Speech Annual Report

Submitted to the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)

Georgian College is pleased to submit this institutional report on its Free Speech policy (CS-001). The report covers the period from August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025, and is structured as a response to the questions presented by HEQCO in its memorandum.

Section A: Institutional Policy

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.

Georgian College's Free Speech Policy was scheduled for review and re-approval by end of year 2024. While the existing Free Speech Policy provided a sound foundational base, greater clarity of the College's stance and parameters on freedom of expression was desired. The College's freedom of expression policy was updated to clearly articulate encouragement of healthy debate and expansion of critical thinking, while clearly upholding mutual respect and safety for all. It was also incumbent on the College to put forth a policy that welcomes freedom of expression while holding at its core the psychological and physical well-being of all college constituents in said expression.

A revised Freedom of Expression Policy (formerly Free Speech Policy) was developed using a best practice review and cross-departmental working group under the leadership of Campus Safety Services. The working group included representation from the following portfolios and functional areas: Academic, People & Culture, Student Success, Non-Georgian Drive campuses, Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, Legal and Risk Management and Integrated Planning & Strategy.

The working group met on various dates in 2024 and in September conducted a final review of the draft Freedom of Expression Policy designed to complement a newly written procedure for Protest, Demonstration, and Civil Disobedience.

Material changes to the current policy content includes:

- Expanded definition of freedom of expression
- Inclusion of definition for Hate Speech
- Broadened policy scope that connects the central tenets of freedom of expression with that of mutual respect and consideration of impact on others
- Clearly articulated position on the right to assemble

(Continued from previous)

Unchanging from the current policy is the expectation for those wishing to assemble to work with the college do so. The process to follow is included in the new procedure Protests, Demonstrations and Civil Disobedience. This procedure is a new operational procedure for the college. It is aimed at providing direction to the Georgian College community when responding to protests, demonstrations and civil disturbances occurring on Georgian campuses or properties.

The new procedure is an end-to-end protocol that addresses before, during and after-event activities related to a protest or demonstration, including response actions to any potential or realized civil disturbance. The procedure addresses planned and unplanned assemblies in the form of a protest or demonstration, rally, march, and occupation protest.

The procedure further outlines the expectations of event leadership (those organizing a protest or demonstration event) to communicate with college their plans within a minimum of 72 hours prior to the event.

The procedure thoroughly outlines the criteria that indicates a “threat to safety” and lists the appropriate steps to take for immediate and safe intervention.

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.

Members of the institutional community (or guests) may contact Georgian College Security at 705-721-5100 or security.office@georgiancollege.ca who will then notify a member of Campus Safety Services.

Existing college mechanisms and processes will be used to address complaints and ensure compliance with the policy. These mechanisms can be found in the Student Code of Conduct, the Employee Code of Conduct or the College’s Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Policy.

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?

There are no known instances where a non-curricular event did not proceed at Georgian College due to security concerns or their related costs.

The college's Conference & Event Services Department regularly consults with Campus Safety Services regarding events that may raise security concerns.

The current procedure specifies that when planning a protest or demonstration on Georgian College property, event leadership should communicate their protest or demonstration plans in writing at least 72 hours prior to the event, to Georgian College department of Campus Safety Services and/or any other departments identified and/or targeted by their activities.

When engaging in any activities on college properties, students and employees should be mindful that their conduct is subject to the Student or Employee Codes of Conduct.

When engaging in any activities on college properties, visitors should be mindful that Georgian College is private property and that they may be trespassed from the site if their conduct is deemed to be disruptive to college operations or may affect the health and safety of the Georgian College community.

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 on campus? If yes, please provide a general description that protects the privacy of complainants.

No official complaints about free speech were received between August 1, 2024, and July 31, 2025.

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.).

Not applicable

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?

Not applicable

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.	0
Number of official complaints reviewed that did not proceed.	0
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.

From August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025, Georgian College's Conference Services department hosted 79 internal events and 70 external event groups.

Signed



Executive Director, Campus Safety Services