



# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE MUSLIM STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

McMaster University

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*“Let there arise out of you a community of people inviting [others] to [do] all that is good, enjoining what is right, commanding what is proper and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to prosper and attain felicity. Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs; for them is an awful torment.” (Al-Qur’an 3:104)*

**Established at McMaster University in 1967.  
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## **ARTICLE I: MSA DECLARATION**

Whereas the Muslim Students' Association (MSA) shall be the response to every McMaster University Muslim students' request and need for an entity to fulfill the duty of providing the aforementioned with the proper facilities and services necessary to practice Islam, and carry out their normal Islamic duties; and whereas the MSA shall take on the duty of representing and conveying the true nature of Islam as a message for all humanity; and whereas the MSA shall carry out its duties through cooperation and organization with the relevant entities and organizations at McMaster University and the community at large, to educate and promote Islam to the public, and through enjoining what is right, commanding what is proper and forbidding what is wrong; and whereas the MSA and its members shall always have the main goal to be serving and obeying "Allah" (subhana wa ta'ala – the sacred and the mighty), the one God and Lord of creation, in the best way possible; The Muslim Students' Association has been established by the Muslim students of McMaster University as a McMaster Students Union (MSU) constituted association to carry out the representation and duties aforementioned serving the Muslims of McMaster University at large.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

As in the declaration, the main aim of the MSA is to facilitate the practice of Islam for Muslim students of McMaster University in particular, and for Muslims in the McMaster University community at large. In doing so, the MSA seeks to interact with other clubs and associations that it may elucidate the true message of Islam to McMaster students and the surrounding communities. The means taken by the MSA to fulfill this mandate shall, in no way, violate any Islamic principles as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace). The MSA must, at all times, subject itself to the judgement of Islamic jurisprudence. Moreover, it is the policy of the MSA to be the voice of those who, in accordance with the Islamic laws, are denied their freedom, human rights and dignity by any regime or power. Therefore, the objectives of the McMaster MSA can be summarized, but not limited, by the following:

1. To provide facilities for daily as well as Friday congregational prayers.
2. To organize activities of an educational nature which may be beneficial not only to Muslims, but also to non-Muslims.
3. To organize activities of a social nature for the interaction of Muslims so as to alleviate the pressure of University.
4. To establish an organization that may fulfil any needs a Muslim may have on the McMaster campus, be it social, moral, financial, educational or any other.

### **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the MSA will require the following qualifications, in addition to any requirements added by the general membership in the By-Laws.

1. Membership in the MSA shall be open to all recognized members of the McMaster community who support the purpose of the association.
2. Membership shall be granted to an interested party upon the request of the same to the Executive Board of the association.
3. Membership in the association is not open to individuals outside the campus community except on an honorary basis (i.e. may hold executive positions within the association and may have voice but no vote at meetings).

### **ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS**

The Executive Board of the MSA have the responsibility of seeing that the MSA purposes and goals are being met. Officers of the Executive Board shall consider their positions as a trust and shall carry out their duties to the best of their abilities. Officers of the Executive Board shall work collectively and individually towards improving: (i) their own knowledge and practice of Islam; (ii) the MSA members knowledge and practice of Islam; and (iii) the image of Islam and Muslims in the public. The Executive positions are designated by elections.

#### **A. GENERAL**

1. The Executive positions shall be seven, namely the: President, Vice President Brothers, Vice President Sisters, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Officer and Media Officer.
2. In the case of absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, leadership of the association shall be transferred to the Executive Officer with maximum seniority, unless otherwise specified by the President, until the President is back or elected.
3. Urgent, non-financial, decisions outside the Executive Board meetings shall be taken after approval of at least two out of three Officers. Of these three should be the Presidents and the Officer whom the decision relates the most. A review of the situation and the decision should be scheduled on the agenda and discussed at the following Executive Board meeting.
4. The Executive positions shall be held ONLY by a Muslim.
5. Only MSA members, that have fulfilled all the membership requirements, may hold an Executive position within the MSA.
6. Because of the MSA nature as a MSU constituted association, the executive positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary are restricted to MSU members.

7. The incumbent Executive Board shall file a list of the succeeding Executive Board with the MSU Secretary.
8. Executive Board members shall be elected to positions by the membership for a one calendar year term.
9. Any executive member may be recalled by power of two thirds (2/3) majority vote at a general meeting with quorum present.
10. Except for the President, the Executive Officers shall perform duties that are from time to time assigned to them by the President.
11. Officers and Coordinators are expected to have a budget planned and accompanying any proposed activity, presented to the Executive Board at the time of the proposal.
12. The Executive Officers shall perform duties that are from time to time assigned to them by the Executive Board or the general membership.

#### **B. PRESIDENT**

The President shall be elected from amongst the MSA members. The President shall:

1. Carry out all the roles and duties expected in Islam of the leader of a Local Muslim Community, including the leading of regular and Friday Congregational Prayer, and shall have been a member of the MSA for at least one year before being elected.
2. Preside over all meetings of the association and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees within the association, co-ordinating the day-to-day operations of the association.
3. Be responsible for holding Executive Board and general membership meetings, and facilitating each meeting including providing an agenda for the meetings.
4. Coordinate, monitor and maintain direction of the entire association to achieve the overall purpose and goals of the MSA at the maximum possible efficiency.
5. Maintain contacts with the executives of other associations, societies and organizations.

#### **C. VICE PRESIDENT BROTHERS**

The Vice-President for Brothers shall be responsible for linking all the brothers in the MSA to the Executive Board and shall:

1. Be the informant of all brothers members, on the individual level, regarding all events and issues.
2. Be responsible for maintaining the communication and representation of McMaster MSA among the other MSA's and Islamic organizations on both the national and international levels.

3. Be responsible for coordination of events with organizations, entities, and invited speakers external to the campus according to the Executive Board and general membership directions, and with the relevant executive member if appropriate.
4. Be responsible for facilitating and programming all MSA members' development in relation to Islamic education and knowledge. This is in cooperation with the Vice-President Sisters.

#### **D. VICE PRESIDENT SISTERS**

The Vice-President for Sisters shall be responsible for linking all the sisters in the MSA to the Executive Board and shall:

1. Be the informant of all sisters members, on the individual level, regarding all events and issues.
2. Be responsible for coordination of events with entities, organizations, and invited speakers from within campus according to the Executive Board and general membership directions, and with the relevant executive member if appropriate.
3. Be responsible for facilitating and programming all MSA members' development in relation to Islamic education and knowledge. This is in cooperation with the Vice-President Brothers.
4. Be responsible for any sisters specific needs and issues including extra committees and activities and the facilitator to carry out these demands in accordance with the Executive Board decisions.

#### **E. SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall:

1. Perform the duties of the President in the latter's absence and generally assist the President as and when required.
2. Keep the minutes of all official meetings, and be responsible for all correspondence and files of the association.
3. Keep and maintain the most up to date list of members at all times and follow up on members fulfillment of their membership requirements.
4. Be responsible for coordinating the MSA office and library and its serving committee.
5. Be the facilitator and coordinator of the Friday Prayer and its committee.

## **F. TREASURER**

The treasurer shall:

1. Understand the great accountability of his/her post in Islam, and that the funds of the MSA are a trust.
2. Keep accurate and timely account books of the association.
3. Arrange for the custody and distribution of the funds pursuant to the regulations, Executive Board, and general memberships direction.

## **G. SENIOR OFFICER**

The Senior Officer shall:

1. Provide a link between the senior students, members, and graduate students, at one side and the general membership at the other side.
2. Lead the meetings and congregational prayers in the absence of the President or delegate the leadership if not already delegated by the President.
3. Be the coordinator if the University Affairs Committee (UAC).
4. Have the responsibility for ensuring that the MSA Executive Board is operating according to the constitution and the different levels of governing laws.

## **H. MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

The Media and Public Relations Officer shall:

1. Be the MSA official speaker, and responsible for monitoring and responding to any Islamic issues in all media.
2. Be responsible for the advertising and announcement of MSA activities in all forms of media to both the membership and the public.
3. Be responsible for coordination of educational seminars, lectures, programs, and events, according to the Executive Board and general memberships directions.

## **ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES**

Committees are formed under the MSA to help delegate and organize the activities of the MSA members, and to divide the services between members in an equal pattern so these services may be carried out appropriately and efficiently. Committees also help in

providing each active member with the proper environment to excel in his/her field of interest and strength in an Islamic atmosphere. The MSA committees are as follows:

1. There are three main committees within the MSA which are:
  - i. Friday Prayer – Responsible for the full organization of the Friday congregational prayer.
  - ii. MSA Office and Library – Responsible for the MSA office and Library logistics and operational organization.
  - iii. University Affairs – Responsible for coordination and follow up on issues relevant to the MSA and its members with the MSU, the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), McMaster University administration and regulating bodies.
2. The Executive Board may form new committees and appoint its coordinators, including coordinators of the aforementioned committees, as is deemed appropriate.

#### **ARTICLE VI: FINANCES AND SPENDING POLICIES**

The financial affairs of the MSA are the backbone of its activities. Each officer and committee coordinator should keep in mind the limited financial resources of the MSA. In addition, they should understand the fact that they are controlling a trust. Moreover, it is highly encouraged that the activities be self-supportive and that spending be kept to a minimum. The financial affairs shall be regulated as follows:

1. Each officer or committee coordinator can spend from previously authorized funds to cover the proposed activity.
2. All receipts documenting any type of spending shall be brought in and reported about in the following Executive Board meeting.
3. Urgent financial decisions, outside the Executive Board meeting, can be made only after approval of both the Treasurer and the President. Certain maximum limits can be set by the Executive Board to form a cap of spending, under which any two officers or a committee coordinator and an officer can be sufficient to make the decision of spending. All decisions made outside the Executive Board meetings are subject to review at the following Executive Board meeting.
4. The association may solicit financing from the MSU.
5. The association may determine an annual membership fee if it is desired.
6. Monies received from a source other than that of 1 and 2 of the article shall not involve and obligation on the part of the MSU.
7. The association may use any means consonant with its constitutional purpose and its membership (other than 1 and 2 of this article) to raise funds for its program upon the advice of the association commission and according to Islamic Laws.
8. The association's books shall be subject to annual audit by the MSU and shall be filed with the MSU auditor no later than April 1st annually.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

Meetings shall be carried out regularly to maintain effective communication within and to facilitate the execution of the MSA tasks. The Executive Board shall hold regular meetings within, and with the general membership as deemed reasonable.

1. All decisions made at a general meeting shall be binding on the executive as long as these are not contrary to Islamic principles.
2. Executive Board meetings are open to the members with permission granted by any Executive Officers and the President. The member would be an observer and has a voice but no vote in a meeting. The member would have to be given the spot of an Executive Officer to speak during the Executive meeting.
3. Minutes of the Executive Board meeting are open for the members after approval by the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

This constitution can be amended if the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. Motion to amend the constitution shall be served to the general membership at a meeting preceding the meeting where the voting will take place.
2. Passage of amendments to the constitution shall be by 2/3 affirmation vote of a general membership meeting containing 30% of the total membership.
3. Each amendment shall be referred to the MSU through the proper channels according to the MSU constituted procedure for approval.

## **ARTICLE IX: DISCLAIMER**

The views of the MSA (Muslim Students' Association) and its executive and membership do not necessarily depict the views of the MSU (McMaster Students Union).