



UW MSA Code of Conduct

Preface

The purpose of the club is to gather University of Waterloo students, staff, faculty, and members of the UWaterloo community at large to serve Allah in the best way possible through the principles laid out in the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood through the Sunni tradition. The MSA will encourage and facilitate the practice of Islam on campus, as well as promote a traditional understanding of Islam among the Muslim community on campus. The MSA will organize events (social events, academic & career development, educational, etcetera based on needs of the community) and services in accordance with the Shari'ah. Any interference on the pretext of "modernization" based on liberal, secular values, or any such ideas that subvert traditional Islamic interpretations will not be accepted; as Islam is a way of life for all times and places and hence is not subject to being outdated or needing reform. Where differences of opinion arise on Islamic thought and practice, the MSA shall adhere to principles recognized by the majority of Sunni Muslims in Canada.

Who Has To Comply?

Any member of the MSA, whether they are an Executive, Lead, Advisor or Volunteer, must adhere to the following guidelines both virtually and in person. Failure to follow the code of conduct and its principles can result in dismissal from the team and its communication channels.

Article A: Values

1. **Sincerity:** The work done in the MSA is done with the intention of pleasing Allah and serving the ummah. Any corrupt intentions such as impressing people to inflate one's ego and bolster their reputation are discouraged.
2. **Integrity & Honesty:** Any task, communication or activity relating to the MSA should be carried out with integrity and honesty. Being a member of the Muslim community is an amanah, not just to other Muslims who trust us, but to the rest of the world who see its members as representatives of Islam.
3. **Humility & Self-Improvement:** Members should practice unwavering humility in all their actions. It is critical to realize that we are surrounded by brothers and sisters who want the best for us, and who will give naseehah that is beneficial. Similarly, the MSA is for Muslims from all walks of life, and one should not consider themselves a better Muslim than another.
4. **Open-Minded Learning:** As a club under an academic institution, our mindset should be to not narrow our minds. Not only should we keep an open mind to learning new skills at the MSA, but to also learn to be respectful of the diverse perspectives that fall within the bounds of the Shari'ah.
5. **Anti-Sectarianism:** The Quran [2:143] labels us as "Ummatan WasaTaa", meaning the nation of the 'middle path'. As the UW MSA, we strictly practice Sunni Islam and do

not restrict ourselves to one specific intra-Muslim label or affiliation.

6. **Non-Liberal:** The UW MSA is committed to creating a safe environment by following the teachings of Islam. Everyone must be treated with dignity and respect. The UW MSA will not tolerate any member of the public being discriminated against by UW MSA personnel. However, members can express the Islamic position on matters such as secularism and LGBT+ relationships and should not promote any position which opposes the Islamic position on such matters. UW MSA personnel must not express hatred and discriminate against any member of the LGBT+ community. The UW MSA rejects the false notion that articulating a moral position on something leads to discrimination, hatred, and violence (this excludes hate speech that promotes or can inspire acts of hate, violence and discrimination). The UW MSA will continue to improve relations with the wider community, as one of our main objectives is to call humanity to the Creator without prejudice.

Article B: Teamwork Etiquette

1. **Proactivity & Punctuality:** Members are expected to be present, punctual and proactive in meetings, relevant events, and any relevant task they are performing and assigned to. Members should also be proactive in responding to the messages of their teammates and avoid causing bottlenecks in team communication.
2. **Communication & Transparency:** Members should communicate their progress on work with direct stakeholders. In the event that a member is unable to complete a task beforehand or do so punctually, they should notify relevant stakeholders beforehand to prevent a backlog or setback in tasks.
3. **Accountability & Ownership:** Members should feel a sense of ownership over their assigned projects. Lack of punctuality or low quality of work is an indication of a lack of ownership or accountability. As Muslims, we must carry out our work with Ihsan.
4. **Conflicts & Disputes:** All parties must conduct themselves in a civilized manner, as the Sunnah instructs. For instance, no backbiting, dishonesty or slander will be tolerated. Naseehah should be given as the sunnah permits, not in a degrading or condescending manner, but rather in a compassionate and caring manner to ensure beneficial outcomes. In the event of an escalated conflict, the President or an Advisor must be involved to resolve the issue and mediate the matter between involved parties.
5. **Gender Interactions:**
 - a. Purposeful: Conversations must be purposeful and relevant (i.e. related to club matters or other pressing matters that require the brother and sister to communicate)
 - b. Public: Conversations should take place in the public eye with witnesses. If there is a need to message each other, ensure there is at least a 3rd person in the conversation (i.e. a group chat)
 - c. Limited: Conversations should be limited to what is necessary and nothing

beyond (i.e. extended pointless banter)

Article C: Community Conduct

Improper behaviour also counts as a violation of the code. Improper behaviour encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behaviour, including but not limited to:

1. Physical assault or mental abuse.
2. Physical damage to UW MSA property
3. Unwelcome sexual advances, comments, insinuations or jokes
4. Improper, rude, profane or abusive language.
5. Heated argument or quarrel or any other disruptive behaviour.
6. Racial insults or derogatory ethnic slurs.
7. Suggestive or inappropriate behaviour or language (i.e. unwelcome jokes or comments)
8. Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade a member of the team or community
9. Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following
10. Harassive photography or recording
11. Sustained disruption of talks, presentations or other events
12. Display of offensive or un-Islamic materials
13. Circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group
14. Abuse of authority - when a senior member uses their position of authority to intimidate, bully, threaten, and express unreasonable demands. This can also include suggestive or threatening behaviour, any form of discrimination and favouritism
15. Advocating for or encouraging any of the above behaviour

Social Media provides an immediate vehicle for 'viral' transmission of important information. It is a tool that allows one to communicate with millions of people. It has been to our advantage that the UW MSA can make good use of Social Media to share the message of Islam and to promote the club. However, there are many elements which require attention in order to safeguard UW MSA, its personnel, and the wider public:

1. Members must be mindful not to share anything that could be used against them, threaten their personal safety or the safety of others
2. Members must never express any support to an extremist group, extremist views, and/or their methodology that will pose a legal and reputational risk to the UW MSA
3. Members may not use foul language.
4. Do not post any content that puts UW MSA into disrepute and violates the club's objectives.
5. Do not post anything that can be perceived as sectarianism (Sectarianism is a form of prejudice, discrimination, or hatred arising from attaching relations to a sect)
6. Do not defame any other organization, scholar, or speaker (unless there is a legal and/or ethical obligation to do so).
7. Do not post content/ material that contains vulgar, obscene and/or indecent language and/or images.
8. Do not post content/material which defames, abuses, or threatens others.
9. Do not post statements that are bigoted, hateful, or racially offensive.

10. Do not post content/material that advocates illegal activity or discusses illegal activities with the intent to commit them.
11. Do not post defamatory content (content that may be untrue and that could harm the reputation of an individual or organization)
12. No Flaming; there is a difference between voicing a legitimate concern or grievance and simply badmouthing or some other form of written abuse of someone or some service
13. Members should interact with the opposite gender in an appropriate and respectful manner on social media platforms. They should also try to apply the three primary principles of gender interactions:
 - a. Purposeful: Conversations must be purposeful and relevant (i.e. related to club matters or other pressing matters that require the brother and sister to communicate)
 - b. Public: Conversations should aim to take place in the public eye, with witnesses. If there is a need to message each other, ensure there is at least a 3rd person in the conversation (i.e. a group chat, unless urgency and discretion require otherwise)
 - c. Limited: Conversations should be limited to what is necessary and nothing beyond (i.e. extended pointless banter)

The UW MSA has adopted an **anti-extremism policy** to enable it to comply with its duties under the law. UW MSA community members must:

1. Ensure that you do not promote, advocate or endorse hatred, violence and intolerance against anyone, or any group, faith or community
2. Not promote, endorse, glorify or praise terrorism in any form.
3. Not express support for any proscribed terrorist group (according to the Government of Canada).
4. Not break any laws, at home or when traveling abroad.
5. Not promote, advocate or endorse the breaking of any laws at home or abroad.
6. Ensure any quotes from the Qur'an, Prophetic Sunnah and Islamic Scholars are clearly placed in context and not left for the public, audience or media to infer support for hatred or violence.
7. Not promote or endorse any political party or candidate during or at any UW MSA events. [Applicable to UW MSA executives only]

Violation of the Code

Stakeholders:

- Complainant: the individual/party who has submitted the report
- Subject: the individual/party that the report has raised a concern about
- Investigating Committee: the VP Internal & The President
 - If the subject or complainant is the VP Internal or the President, the Investigating Committee will be the MSA Advisory instead
- Grievance Committee: The MSA Executive team
 - In the case where the subject or the complainant is on the MSA Executive Team, they will be excluded from the Grievance Committee

Violations of this Code, or failure to cooperate with them, may constitute grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the UW MSA and barring from holding a position in the organization. Disciplinary action will only be taken upon the agreement of a two-thirds majority of the Grievance Committee.

Reporting & Disciplinary Action

MSA Code of Conduct [Issue Reporting Form](#): can also be found on the MSA website

If you believe your situation is severe and worth reporting to a higher authority such as the university, please refer to the following support resources:

- [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Support Form](#)
- [University Incident report Helpline](mailto:gethelp@uwaterloo.ca) (gethelp@uwaterloo.ca)

What to Expect

The Investigating Committee will investigate and act upon each allegation. The investigating committee will conduct a thorough and fair investigation of the allegations to validate the complaint and determine whether the conduct of the accused violated the MSA Code of Conduct. Once the investigation is complete, the Investigation Committee will present the findings to the rest of the Grievance Committee, who will then vote on the conclusion in a meeting organized by the Investigating Committee.

The Grievance Committee will decide (via vote) what the nature of the allegation is:

- **Factual Allegation:** there is beyond reasonable doubt that the allegation has truth
 - This results in disciplinary action upon the subject
- **Mistaken Allegation:** there is a misunderstanding between the complainant and the subject
 - This results in no disciplinary action
- **False Allegation:** the complainant intentionally accuses the subject of a baseless complaint
 - This results in disciplinary action upon the complainant

If disciplinary action is determined by the committee, it can be one of 3 things:

- Naseehah – formal statement to the accused regarding the lack of compliance with the MSA Code of Conduct.
- Censure – formal restrictions placed on the member as determined by the investigating committee (e.g. prohibited from attending events for a period of time)
- Dismissal – Either temporary suspension of membership or termination of membership. In the case of permanent dismissal of an MSA Executive(s), their impeachment process is outlined in the MSA Constitution.

No Retaliation

No executive, lead, volunteer or member of the community who in good faith reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences. An MSA representative who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline similarly as the procedure outlined above. The structure of our Code of Conduct is intended to encourage and enable community members and others to raise serious concerns within the MSA.

Guidance to MSA Community Entities

MSA representatives may be the first ones to hear about potential violations of the MSA Code of Conduct. Accordingly, guidance for MSA representatives is as follows:

- Take claims seriously
- Take steps to ensure safety of the victim (as appropriate)
- Refer claims to the MSA President or VP Internal, either via direct contact or via the complaint form on the MSA website. All claims will be investigated completely, fairly, and discretely.
- All stakeholders are obligated to maintain confidentiality and not discuss these matters with anyone outside the Investigating Committee and Grievance Committee. Most importantly, the identities of the complainant and subject should not be externally shared.

Guidelines to the Investigating Community

1. Outline the article(s) and clause(s) of the MSA Code of Conduct that the subject/complainant has allegedly violated
 2. Compile evidence and investigate the validity of the report:
 - a. Consult witnesses (especially the subject and complainant) and compare their accounts
 - b. If available, collect graphic evidence (pictures, videos, screenshots, etc.)
 - c. Do not accuse anyone or display any element of bias or unfairness - the Investigating Committee is strictly neutral
 - d. Compile all the evidence into one neatly formatted and comprehensive report that can be presented to the Grievance committee
 3. Ensure confidentiality of all stakeholders:
 - a. The complainant's identity should be protected, as well as the identity of any other witnesses
 - b. Only the Investigating Committee and the Grievance Committee should know the private details of the report and its investigative findings
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