

Complete Policy Title:
Human Rights and International Activities

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Approved by:
Senate

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Responsible Executive :

Enquiries:
[University Secretariat](#)

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At one time international scholarly contacts were pursued almost exclusively at an individual level. In recent years, McMaster University has become increasingly involved at a corporate level around the world in exchange agreements, institutional linkages and externally-funded projects. Such activities clearly involve McMaster's corporate name and reputation. The governments of some of the countries in which linkages or projects have been initiated or are being planned may violate to varying degrees our institutional ideals of freedom of enquiry, due process and respect for human rights as these are defined in McMaster's documents and in relevant international protocols. Freedom of enquiry is this university's lifeblood, but may not be respected in every country that seeks our scholarly collaboration. Respect for human rights is emphasized in many university documents and is demonstrated regularly by the care with which our constituted bodies examine all research on human subjects. Respect for human rights extends also to ensuring the consent and participation of the people and communities affected by our international activities. Situations may arise in which judgements must be made on the ethical appropriateness of McMaster continuing or initiating an international programme with institutions or governments which violate our institutional ideals.

With these considerations in mind, the following guidelines are recommended for all international activities:

1. That such activities adhere to existing university policies and agreements, including research policies and academic freedom.
2. That such activities will not directly or indirectly violate, or assist in the violation of any international law, covenant, or convention or declaration.

3. That such activities be undertaken from their commencement in a spirit of equal partnership with the people affected, so that all parties are fully informed of the impact of the project in terms of their basic needs and any possible consequences.
 4. That such activities when undertaken in the name of McMaster University be referred to the appropriate existing Ethics or Human Rights committees of the University.
 5. That the right of the University to select its own personnel for which it is responsible be guaranteed.
 6. In exceptional circumstances where there are difficulties in applying these guidelines, the matter will be referred to the Provost for appropriate action.
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