SexGen York

Terms Of Reference

**1. MISSION**

SexGen York aims to   foster an accessible, inclusive, affirming intersectional environment for sexual and gender diversity among students, staff, faculty and community members at York University. We engage in advocacy, education and campaigns, and we support campus services and resources for gender and sexual diversity.

**2. VISION**

We strive for York University to be free from prejudice and discrimination towards sexual and gender diversity as these intersect and interact with oppression in all its forms.

**3. VALUES**

3.1 Accessibility

We commit to understanding and addressing barriers to both visible and invisible disabilities, including linguistic and financial barriers. We aim to make resources and support available to all, striving to go beyond accommodation and towards universal design. We will work towards creating access to safer spaces for all who need them, as well as access to information regarding those resources.

3.2 Affirmation

We are open to new ideas and experiences, and supportive of others and their differences. We acknowledge the reality of different identities, and we aim to validate the experiences of others without judgment. We commit to validating rather than questioning people’s experiences of oppression, and we recognize and accept that everyone has the right to identify as they choose.

3.3 Inclusivity

We commit to creating, sustaining, and embracing spaces that are welcome to all. We acknowledge and accept differences within these spaces, and we commit to refraining from assumptions about the experiences and identity of individuals, recognizing that identities can change and evolve over time. We believe inclusivity requires that we listen to all voices, and that we strive to be conscious of who is – or isn’t – part of conversations, while recognizing that some voices may be prioritized in certain contexts, and that this may shift over time. We believe inclusivity goes beyond tokenizing, and we commit ourselves to thinking and rethinking power and privilege as these affect our efforts.

3.4 Intersectionality

We recognize multiple sources of oppression, and their role in creating complex social identities. This includes recognition of the impact that colonization and colonialism have had on sexual and gender identity, and ongoing awareness of structural and systemic forms of oppression as these create and affect institutional spaces (e.g. PIC or Prison-industrial Complex). We commit to reflecting on these multiple forms of oppression as they affect our relationships within York, and York’s relationship to community spaces.

**4. ESTABLISHMENT**

SexGen York, formerly known as the Sexual and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee, was created following the establishment of a President’s Task Force on Homophobia and Heterosexism in 1994. The mandate of the Task Force was to prepare a report that would describe York’s culture of sexuality and gender diversity, homophobia and heterosexism, compare it with the situation at other universities, present the concerns of York staff, students and faculty, and make recommendations to improve the situation. The final report and recommendations of the Task Force were reviewed in May 1997 by the President and Vice Chancellor of York and the President’s Advisory Committee on Human Rights [PACHR]. One of the recommendations that emerged from the Task Force was the creation of an advisory committee to monitor and improve York’s culture of sexual and gender diversity: SexGen York.

**5. COMPOSITION**

5.1 The ideal size for the committee is considered to be 16 members, with representation as follows:

1. Chair: position held by a tenure-stream faculty member.
2. Director or Representative from the Centre for Human Rights (ex-officio).
3. 6 student members, including at least 1 graduate and 1 undergraduate student, with designated spots for a representative from TBLGAY[[1]](#footnote-1) and a representative from GLGBT.[[2]](#footnote-2)
4. 5 staff members.
5. 2 faculty members (ideally one full-time faculty and one contract faculty).
6. 1 community member.

5.2 Membership on SexGen York is open to all campus community members who demonstrate interest in and commitment to issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, as they intersect with broader human rights issues.

5.3 The committee strives to center the diversity of York University’s community, including, but not limited to, a diverse representation of self-identified members of

LGBTTIQQ2SA[[3]](#footnote-3) communities, as well as diversity in terms of ability, race, religion, ethnicity and class, and to be sensitive to the intersection of marginalized identities.

5.4 The Committee will strive for representation of all York University constituent groups, namely, staff, faculty and students.

5.5 The Committee will strive to ensure representation from both Glendon and Keele campuses.

5.6. Membership on the Committee must include at least six (6) student representatives, preferably at least one undergraduate and at least one graduate student.

5.7 All members, with the exception of ex-officio members, are considered voting members. The chair will vote only in case of a tie among other members.

**6. OFFICERS**

6.1 Chair

6.1.1 The Chair is recommended by the Committee and is appointed by the

President.

6.1.2 The Chair is responsible for:

* Directing and coordinating the work of the Committee.
* Preparing and distribution the agenda with input from the Committee.
* Ensuring that minutes are taken at each meeting, and are subsequently distributed to all committee members and appropriately archived.
* Reporting on progress of the Committee’s work to PACHR on a periodic basis.
* Chairing all meetings and working with the Centre for Human Rights
* [the Centre] in matters related to the committee.

**7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

7.1 Committee members are expected to:

7.1.1 Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in meetings of the Committee.

7.1.2 Actively contribute to on-line discussions of the Committee.

7.1.3 Chair and/or serve on sub-committees of the Committee.

7.1.4 Complete a Positive Space training session (if they have not done so before).

7.2 While it is expected that a member’s level of contribution would fluctuate over time, it is expected that members would contribute to the operation and activities of the Committee.

7.3 The Chair and those responsible for recruitment will prioritize the representation of York’s diversity among the voting membership.

**8. TERMS OF OFFICE**

8.1 Members are normally be appointed for a term of three years – or two years, in the case of student members – with the possibility for consecutive terms. The two student groups with designated positions on SexGen (TBLGAY and GLGBT) are each responsible for choosing an executive member to hold that position, each year.

8.2 The Chair is a two-year term with opportunity for renewal to a maximum of two consecutive terms.

8.3 Committee members shall be considered members in good standing as long as they are contributing members to the Committee. It is expected that any discussion and decision on removal of any member from the Committee would be done in a collegial and considerate manner and in good faith. The Committee may vote to remove a member from the committee by a vote of 2/3 majority at a Committee meeting, with advance notice of at least 2 weeks.

**9. QUORUM AND VOTING**

9.1 Quorum for decision-making at meetings shall be a simple majority of the voting members of the Committee in good standing. In the absence of such a majority, decisions of significance shall either be tabled for further discussion at the next meeting or shall conducted by an electronic vote.

9.2 While the committee strives to make decisions based on consensus, simple majority of voting members in good standing in attendance is required for motions to carry at meetings.

9.3 When e-voting, a simple majority of voting members in good standing is required for motions to carry. The Chair will only vote to break a tie.

**10. MEETINGS**

10.1 Committee meetings are called by the Chair and are normally held monthly or as

required, exceptions to this may be made during the summer months (June, July and

August). Any member of the committee may ask the Chair to call a meeting.

10.2 A draft meeting agenda and relevant material will be sent out sufficiently in advance of the meeting (a minimum of one week) to ensure that all Committee members have the opportunity to add to the agenda, offer feedback on existing items, and send remarks on relevant items to the chair, in advance of the meeting.

**11. SUB-COMMITTEES**

11.1 The Committee may strike sub-committees to manage specific projects and responsibilities of the Committee.

11.2. The sub-committees will report regularly to the Chair and the Committee.

**12. REPORTING AND SUPPORT**

12.1 The Committee reports annually to PACHR through the Centre for Human Rights. The Chair of the Committee is a member of PACHR.

12.2 The Committee will post reports on its activities on its website.

12.3 Note: The Committee has traditionally received funds and administrative support through the Centre for Human Rights, such as support for Pride@York/York@ Pride activities, and an annual 0.5 course release for the Chair of the Committee.

**13. EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The Terms of Reference [ToR] are to be reviewed periodically by the Committee, normally no less than every five years.

**14. TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date of initial adoption by: SexGen York: September 2005

Date of amendments by: SexGen York: June 7, 2010 (major revision)

Date of amendments by: SexGen York: August/September 2015 (major revision)

1. Trans, Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay, Asexual @York. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Glendon Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Two-Spirited, Asexual. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)