

Frequently Asked Questions – Cannabis Use at McMaster

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General Questions

Now that cannabis use is legal in Canada, can I smoke cannabis at McMaster?

McMaster University is a smoke free campus. This eliminates the use of all tobacco products and includes cannabis and any oral smoking device.

The Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus policy applies to all land boundaries owned, controlled and leased by McMaster University, inclusive of buildings, learning places, public places, and workplaces. This means that individuals are not permitted to smoke or use tobacco or oral smoking devices while on McMaster property.

Where can I find more information about McMaster’s Tobacco and Smoke Free policy?

Additional information, frequently asked questions and resources related to McMaster’s Tobacco and Smoke Free Policy are available [here](#).

Does the duty to accommodate extend to medical cannabis?

Yes. The duty to accommodate extends to individuals with a need to use medical cannabis. These employees are to be accommodated in accordance with human rights legislation and [McMaster’s Workplace Accommodation Policy](#).

What if I’m a medical cannabis user?

- Students who need to use medical cannabis can work with Student Accessibility Services on an accommodation plan.
- Employees who require medical accommodations can contact Employee Health Services

What should I do if I suspect someone is having an extreme reaction to Cannabis?

Cannabis is an allergen and could potentially cause an anaphylactic reaction. If you suspect someone is having an allergic reaction or needs immediate care, contact security or Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) by dialling 88 if you are on the main campus. Dial 911 if you are off campus or at a satellite location.

I want to learn more about cannabis use. Where can I find additional information?

McMaster offers a number of educational resources and support services on cannabis. Visit mcmaster.ca/cannabis to access these resources.

Does McMaster offer any support services to address substance misuse or addiction?

The [Student Wellness Centre](#) (SWC) is available to students for substance misuses. The SWC will refer students with an addiction to appropriate services.

Addiction support services are available to employees through [Homewood Health](#), the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

Can I have my online cannabis purchase shipped to my work location at McMaster?

McMaster Mail Services will not receive or deliver cannabis products on or off-campus.

My role at McMaster includes some travel to other countries. Will consuming cannabis impact my ability to travel?

Some countries may have restrictions for travellers who have ever consumed cannabis. Consult the [Government of Canada Travelling Abroad site](#) for additional information.

Can I carry cannabis on an airplane or across the Canadian border?

Although recent legislation has provided the opportunity to lawfully use cannabis in Canada, it remains illegal to take cannabis across the Canadian border, whether you're leaving or coming to Canada. This applies to all countries, whether cannabis is legal there or not.

In general, and as with any travel, you need to adhere to the laws and customs of your intended destination as well as the restrictions provided by the airline.

Employees travelling on University business continue to have an obligation to work in a safe manner, and to be fit for duty regardless of their work location.

This also extends to students who are travelling for University purposes to be fit for study.

Students

Can I consume cannabis before class?

Any students wishing to consume legal substances are expected to do so in a safe and responsible manner (and in accordance with other laws and policies, e.g. McMaster's Smoke-Free policy) while on University premises, or at a University-authorized event occurring on or off University premises, or when representing the University.

Even in spaces where cannabis use is permitted, the legal age for consumption is 19. Students are not permitted to consume or be intoxicated by any legal controlled substance, in a public space (e.g. classrooms, libraries), regardless of age.

For more information about the expectations of students, please refer to the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Can I consume edibles while on McMaster campus?

Students are not permitted to consume or be intoxicated by any legal controlled substance, in a public space, even if they meet the legal age requirement of 19. This includes edibles. For more information about the expectations of students, please refer to the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Can I prepare edibles in my residence room at McMaster?

Most students in residence are under the age of 19 and therefore do not meet the legal age requirement to consume cannabis. As stated in the updated residence agreement contract, students 19 years and older are permitted to consume pre-made edible cannabis products in private residence spaces. It is not permitted to cook, bake or otherwise create cannabis products for consumption in residence. Home cultivation and growing of cannabis is not permitted in residence. No resident or their guests can consume cannabis in hallways, stairwells, elevators, bathrooms, study rooms, games rooms, laundry rooms and/or building common rooms.

Can I have my online cannabis purchase shipped to my residence at McMaster?

McMaster's Residences and Mail Services will not accept cannabis deliveries and will not deliver cannabis products on or off campus.

What if a student appears to be intoxicated during an exam?

If you are concerned that a student is impaired, please see the [protocol for responding to students in distress](#). Students who appear impaired during an exam, whether due to cannabis or not, could be a disruption to others or could hurt others or themselves.

Leader / Manager Questions

Can an employee consume cannabis before work?

The health and safety of employees remains a key priority at McMaster. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) requires that employees work in a safe manner, and that the employer take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers. The OHSA also prohibits employees from using or operating any equipment, machine, device or thing, or working in a manner that may endanger themselves or any other worker.

Can I consume edibles while on McMaster campus?

Employees performing work when they are unable or unfit to do so safely may introduce a hazard to the workplace, to themselves or to others. Consuming edibles may result in becoming unable or unfit to work. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* prohibits employees from using or operating any equipment, machine, device or thing, or working in a manner that may endanger themselves or any other worker. The health and safety of employees and students remains a key priority at McMaster.

I'm a manager and suspect one of my employees is impaired. What should I do?

As a leader, if you suspect an employee is impaired and unable to carry out the requirements of their role, ensure the behaviour is addressed with empathy and without judgement:

- Address any immediate safety concerns
- Speak to the employee in a private area to discuss the signs of impairment you have noticed
- Indicate your concern for the safety of others and the employee themselves, and ask for an explanation
- Based on the employee's response, discuss options, where applicable and available
- Refer to appropriate policies and/or collective agreements, as required. Contact Employee/Labour Relations for consultation and support. If required, provide information on our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), encourage use, and reassure the employee that the services are voluntary and confidential
- Document your findings and interactions

What should I do if I think a student or employee's substance use may be problematic?

McMaster has resources for different community members.

See the **Toolkit for Leaders** if you supervise a student or employee whose substance use may be problematic. You don't have a duty to diagnose impairment, but you are expected to ask questions if someone seems unable to safely perform their work.

For students who are not employees, see [McMaster's protocol for responding to students in distress](#).

The [Student Wellness Centre](#) offers a [range of services and resources](#), to support students.

For employees and their dependents, McMaster's [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) offers [confidential services and resources](#). It also offers services to address many of the underlying issues that can lead to substance use.

Where can I get some advice on how to approach the topic of cannabis use with my employee/team?

Contact the [Employee & Labour Relations team](#) for advice or support.