

May 24, 2024

McMaster's Response

Some members of McMaster's student, staff, faculty and alumni communities have been deeply impacted by the continued horrific attacks in Gaza. An encampment focused on the crisis began on May 5th, and participants wish to see the university take action.

McMaster has considered the actions the encampment has asked the university to take. In his [May 16 statement](#), President David Farrar shared the university's core principles along with areas that it felt required additional discussions with student leaders.

Thanks to these productive conversations the details of these areas for further discussion are now in place and the encampment has agreed that all tents and components of the encampment will be taken down and removed beginning immediately and completed within 24 hours, and will not return to any university location. There will be no disruptions by encampment supporters to any university business, including convocations. And any future protests will abide by McMaster's [Freedom of Expression guidelines](#).

1. McMaster's International Strategy Advisory Committee (ISAC) will develop a framework for human rights considerations in international agreements. The first Committee meeting to discuss this issue is to occur before the end of May. A working group comprised of ISAC members and a member of the MSU and GSA will develop the framework beginning in the fall 2024. Student members of the working group will be selected by the chair of ISAC and from nominations made by the respective student union Presidents. Nominees will be selected based on their education and experience.
2. A meeting with the university's Chief Financial Officer will occur in June to share information about McMaster's investment strategy. Members of SPHR's negotiating team and up to three faculty advisors will attend.

Disclosure

3. McMaster will continue to be a signatory to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing, and will uphold these principles, which include human rights as part of the integration of environment, social and governance considerations. These principles are embedded in the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures – Investment Pool (section 5). The "Social Responsibility and McMaster's Investment Policy" will be reviewed and amended as required to align with Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) considerations.
4. The university will disclose annually a report of all direct investments and the names of the pooled funds held in the university's Investment Pool to the Board of Governors at the first meeting in the Fall of 2024. The report will be made available on the Financial Affairs website.

Divestment

5. SPHR will be invited to make a presentation on divestment to the Board of Governors at its October 2024 meeting.
6. An open process will be implemented to allow any McMaster community member to raise questions or concerns about McMaster's investments, including direct or pooled investments, divestment, and investment policies. The information will be shared with members of the Investment Pool Committee who will review and assess based on applicable Board policies. Concerns will be forwarded to the Board of Governors as appropriate. This process will be in place by the end of October.

Support

7. The university's current Scholars-at-Risk Program and Students-at-Risk Bursary will make up to \$200,000 available from its annual funding to support qualified academics and students from Palestine for as long as the programs exist.
8. The university will extend the contracts of its Palestinian psychotherapists to the end of December 2025 and the Student Wellness Centre will seek to add a male Muslim-Palestinian psychotherapist by the beginning of the Fall 2024 term with best efforts made to convert these positions to ongoing roles.
9. There will be a series of stories about McMaster students impacted by conflicts and crises around the world to be published on The Daily News during the 2024/25 academic year. The initial story will reflect the impact of the crisis on Palestinian students. Subsequent stories will bring a range of lived experiences to the series.