



**SCIENCE**  
UNDERGRADUATE  
SOCIETY

**Science Undergraduate Society of McGill University**

Burnside Hall, Room 1B21,  
805 Sherbrooke St. W.,  
Montréal, QC H3A 2K6

# SUS Equity Committee By-Laws

Adopted March 2019  
Amended March 2024



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## Article 1: Background

The Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) has a commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and fair treatment for all members, however this is currently not solidified within the constitution or bylaws. The following equity policy aims to define the role of equity within the SUS and support the formation of a standing committee to address all equity concerns.

The following motion was passed in September 2013 to support the formation of an ad hoc equity policy committee.

### **Resolution to Support the Creation of an SUS Equity Policy and an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee**

**Whereas**, the SUS has a commitment to promote the welfare and interests of all its members

**Whereas**, social equity is an integral method of promoting student welfare

**Whereas**, the SUS does not currently have an equity policy

**Whereas**, an equity policy shall be an important framework expounding the SUS's commitment to equity, inclusion, and non-discrimination, and explaining how any complaints concerning issues of equity shall be handled.

**Whereas**, a resolution passed by SUS council supporting the creation of an equity policy provides the affirmation necessary for undertaking such a task.

**Resolved**, that SUS General Council support the creation of an SUS Equity Policy

**Resolved**, that an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee be created as part of the social welfare mandate of the SUS

**Resolved**, that an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee will explore the process of hiring practices as it relates to equity in the SUS

**Resolved**, that an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee's membership will include the SUS VP External and four members at large selected through an application process conducted by the SUS VP External

**Resolved**, that an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee hold a consultation process that is open to all SUS members

**Resolved**, that an Ad Hoc Equity Policy Committee be charged to with the writing of the SUS Equity Policy for discussion and possible adoption at a SUS General Council in Winter 2014.

Moved by:

Emily Boytinck, SUS VP External



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Shannon Herrick, SUS Executive Administrator  
Bryan Zimmerman, SUS VP Communication  
Danielle Toccalino, SUS President

The passage of this resolution demonstrated the affirmation necessary to move forward with the creation of the policy. An ad hoc equity policy committee was formed, comprising the SUS VP External, Emily Boytinck; one SUS councilor, Sarah Southey (Science Representative to SSMU); and four members-at-large: Monika Girnius, Anvita Kulkarni, Andrew Su, and Naïm Afeich. The committee received advice from Justin Fletcher, the president of the Arts Undergraduate Society and creator of the AUS Equity Policy, Justin Koh, the SSMU equity commissioner, and the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office.

The following policy is the culmination on the work of the ad hoc equity policy committee over the Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 academic semesters. The SUS hopes this policy will ensure the best possible experience for SUS members during and beyond their experience at McGill.



## Article 2: Definitions

2.1 *Accessibility*: The quality of being easy to reach, approach, or use, especially ensuring that environments, systems, and resources can be independently utilized by people with a variety of disabilities.

2.2 *Active Listening*: A communication technique that involves giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, remaining *respectful*, and responding if appropriate.

2.3 *Appeal*: A formal request for a higher authority to review and change the outcome of a decision.

2.4 *Bias*: An inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. It can manifest in both *conscious* and *unconscious* patterns of thought or behaviour.

2.5 *Claimant*: The person or group who has experienced the alleged incident(s).

2.6 *Complaint*: a formal written declaration of a violation of the Equity Policy to the Equity Committee.

2.7 *Conflict of Interest*: A situation in which a person's interests may affect their ability to make a fair decision, such as the presence of pre-existing social relationships or the possibility of advancement.

2.8 *Consent*: Giving permission for something to happen. It is explicit, mutual, continuous, enthusiastic, and is given for every act.

2.9 *Culture of consent*: A social environment that values and practices consent, where individuals are empowered to make informed and voluntary choices about their involvement and participation.

2.10 *Disadvantage*: A circumstance or a situation that puts an individual or a group of people in an inferior or less favourable position compared to others, resulting in compromised access to resources or opportunities.

2.11 *Disclosure*: Act in which someone chooses to share sensitive information about themselves or someone else, often pertaining to a trauma or stress-inducing situation, or any other challenges that may have caused some form of distress or unease.

2.12 *Discrimination*: The differential treatment of an individual or group, typically to their disadvantage, whether it is prejudiced or unprejudiced.

2.13 *Diversity*: The existence of differences among members of a community based on gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, mental and/or physical abilities, language, size, social class or any other socially salient characteristic.

2.14 *Equity*: In the context of this Policy, Equity refers to the respect of and equality of opportunity, with a consideration of factors that might create difficulties or obstacles specific to certain groups or individuals.

2.15 *Groupthink*: A phenomenon that occurs within a group of people when the desire for



conformity in the group results in a dysfunctional decision-making outcome.

2.16 *Harassment*: Any behaviour, act, comment, or display that demeans, belittles, and/or causes personal, psychological, or social harm to an individual or group, including an act or acts of intimidation or threat.

2.17 *Harm Reduction*: A set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with various human behaviours.

2.18 *Hostility*: A state of antagonism, unfriendliness, or opposition towards individuals, groups or ideas, which can result in aggressive behaviours, confrontational attitudes, or conflict.

2.19 *Incident*: The instance of alleged violation of the Equity Policy by the Respondent addressed in the Complaint.

2.20 *Indigenous*: Grouping of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals.

2.21 *Investigation*: A formal Resolution process involving research and collection of supporting evidence to make recommendations on how to resolve a Complaint.

2.22 *Investigators*: Persons who will investigate the complaint. The investigators are members of the Equity Committee. If the complaint is against one or more members of the Equity Committee, these last shall not be investigators.

2.23 *Land Acknowledgement*: A formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as stewards of this land.

2.24 *Marginalization*: The relegation of certain persons and social groups to positions of lesser agency, power, and participation within society.

2.25 *Mediation*: The initiation of a proactive dialogue between all parties concerned in an equity issue, to be facilitated by at least one member of the Equity Committee.

2.26 *Microaggression*: A statement, action, or incident that promotes or upholds indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a group, primarily marginalized groups. Often based on stereotypes or false beliefs about a community or individual.

2.27 *Minority*: A group of people who, because of their characteristics, face differential and/or unequal treatment from others in their society, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.

2.28 *Obstacles*: Any financial, personal, educational, geographical, religious, cultural, or other barrier preventing an individual or group from accessing a support, aid, event or other initiative of the SUS and its member departments.

2.29 *Oppression*: Means the exercise of power by a group of people over another group of people with specific consideration of systemic, cultural, historical, and living legacies.

2.30 *Structures of Oppression*: Systems and conditions that perpetuate discrimination, inequality, and disadvantage, often embedded in social, legal, political, and institutional norms.

2.31 *Private Space*: A mutually agreed upon location where Mediation can take place that allows for the respect of confidentiality.



2.32 *Privilege*: An exclusive benefit, right, advantage, or immunity maintained by a group of persons, sometimes to the direct or indirect disadvantage of others. Privilege can be gained or inherited.

2.33 *Reconciliation*: The journey to advance towards a future that actively acknowledges past and neo-colonization, as well as the repercussions, ongoing issues, and intergenerational trauma that affect Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation includes right recognition, respect, cooperation and partnership, and requires active efforts to acknowledge common history and the current social state before moving forward.

2.34 *Respondent*: Party against whom a Complaint is brought.

2.35 *Sanction*: Penalties or coercive measures implemented to ensure compliance with laws, rules, or regulations. These may include punishments or other forms of enforcement designed to incentivize adherence and discourage violations.

2.36 *Safe(r) Space*: A space in which marginalized identities are protected, uplifted and supported, free of potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversation, including hate speech, harassment and violence. A safe(r) space is a deliberate creation and requires a commitment from all parties involved.

2.37 *Science Context*: Any interaction, activity, event, initiative, or other context happening under the Faculty of Science, extending to any context involving a SUS member within their McGill responsibilities. More information found in 4.1.

2.38 *Stereotype*: Unfounded, false belief or overgeneralization about a group, community or individual, often harmful, which promotes a culture of oppression.

2.39 *Status Quo*: The existing state of affairs, especially regarding social or political issues.

2.40 *Stigma*: An environment or culture of prejudice associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person. Stigma is not mutually inclusive with stereotypes, but may be related.

2.41 *Support Person*: A person whom the Claimant or the Respondent selects to assist them throughout the Resolution process. The support person's role is not to present or respond on behalf of either the Respondent or Claimant; rather, they may take notes and give advice to the party they are supporting.

2.42 *Systematic*: Done or acting according to a fixed plan or system; methodical. 2.43

*Systemic*: Relating to or affecting the entire body or an entire system, often referring to issues embedded within and spread throughout an entire system, such as an organization or society.



## Article 3: Policy Statement

3.1 The SUS acknowledges that McGill is on the unceded and unsundered territory of the Indigenous People, Kanien'keha:ka (Ga-niyen-ge-haa-ga). This island known as Montreal is known as Tio'tia:ke (Gio-Jaw-Gé) in the language of the Kanien'kehá:ka, and has historically served as a meeting place for many Indigenous nations. Tio'tia:ke operates under the Great Peace of Montréal treaty, which was signed with 39 First Nations.

It is not enough to just acknowledge the keepers of this land and McGill's status as a settler-colonial institution. Silence and inaction will only contribute to erasing the history, the culture, and the realities of Indigenous people. As such, it is important that individuals educate themselves on Indigenous matters and that they apply that knowledge to support Indigenous communities. The SUS should actively resist (neo)-colonialism in the many forms it takes, and in the diversity of forms that resistance can take.

### 3.2 Version française :

L'Association étudiante de la Faculté des sciences de l'Université McGill reconnaît qu'elle opère sur les terres traditionnelles et non cédées de peuples autochtones, notamment les Kanien'kehaka. L'île à laquelle nous avons attribué le nom de Montréal est connue sous le nom de Tio'tia:ke dans la langue des Kanien'kehaka et elle a longtemps servi comme lieu d'échange pour de nombreux peuples autochtones. Tio'tia:ke opère sous le Traité de la Grande paix de Montréal, un traité qui a été signé en partenariat avec 39 Premières Nations.

Ce n'est pas suffisant de reconnaître le statut territorial de Montréal et l'existence de McGill en tant qu'institution coloniale. La censure, le silence et l'inaction ne feront que contribuer à effacer l'histoire, la culture et les réalités des peuples autochtones. Il est donc crucial que chaque individu s'informe sur les enjeux autochtones afin d'utiliser ces connaissances pour mieux soutenir les communautés autochtones. L'AEFS s'engage à résister de manière active à la néo-colonisation dans toutes ses formes, en appuyant quelconque type d'action et de lutte.

3.3 The SUS has a responsibility as a leader, representative, and service provider to undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Science, a diverse membership, to conduct itself by the highest standards of respect, fairness, integrity, safety, and equitable treatment for all persons. As such, the SUS has a responsibility to uphold and promote its standards, both publicly and privately, through concrete as well as implicit actions and discourse.

3.4 Respect requires full consideration of human beings and upholding a high commitment to human dignity. By adopting this policy, the SUS strives to create a community that



exceeds social standards of equitable treatment, creating a safer space for all of our members where collegial debate and marginalized ideas and voices can ensue within a respectful atmosphere.

3.5 To support this responsibility as well as the SUS's commitment to representation and services, the SUS will promote a functionally anti-oppressive environment. We acknowledge that a functionally anti-oppressive environment is achieved through:

3.5.1 Recognition that systemic processes and cultural biases disadvantage certain groups of people;

3.5.2 Proactive steps to challenge and acknowledge the current and historical processes and biases that affect the safety and wellbeing of these disadvantaged groups;

3.5.3 Acknowledgment that certain groups of socially privileged people knowingly or unconsciously benefit from this process and do not have the same experience of disrespect and exclusion as those in disadvantaged groups;

3.5.4 Proactive steps to challenge the actions, attitudes, and assumptions that result from social privilege.

3.5.5 Understanding that equity aims to dismantle systems of oppression, an action that is necessary to uplift marginalized individuals.

3.5.6 Considering equity-based decisions as inherently political will promote stigma surrounding actions based on the SUS' commitment to supporting its students, and could result in hostility towards the SUS. Hereby on, the SUS shall recognize that supporting its students does not comprise an inherent political aspect. In the equity context, the SUS and its members shall be cautious to use the term political as the only reason to object a decision or a suggestion presented in an context of equity.

3.5.7 Committing to uphold principles of equity at all moments and in all endeavours.

3.5.8 Making active and conscious efforts to promote the destigmatization concerning at least one individual or group within the scope of the Faculty of Science. The SUS will work to promote an anti-stigma environment within both the Science community and SUS-affiliated communities.

3.6 The SUS understands that historically and culturally disadvantaged groups and persons are subject to systemic marginalization and oppression, based on ascribed or asserted characteristics related to personal aspects including, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, mental and/or physical abilities, language, size, or social class.



3.7 The SUS condemns harassment or discrimination of disadvantaged groups on the basis of, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexuality, sexual orientation, mental and/or physical abilities, language, size, or social class. The SUS regards harassment or discrimination on the basis of these considerations as serious offences that undermine its constitutional commitment to respect.

3.7.1 Condemnation of harassment or discrimination does not prevent any program or activity whose purpose is to improve the conditions of a specific disadvantaged individual or group. As such, the SUS agrees to stand by and offer support to, both publicly and privately, sub communities within the McGill student body, especially when current events threaten the existence and/or foster a non-accepting environment. It shall denounce any event, series of events or science contexts within that promote a culture contrary to its values.

3.8 The SUS will work to incorporate actively anti-discriminatory, anti-harassment, and anti-oppressive measures in its decision making and will focus on victim-oriented and trauma-informed approaches when relevant.

3.9 The SUS will work to actively reduce barriers that might be limiting involvement from certain members of the Science community.



## Article 4: Scope

### 4.1 This Policy shall apply to:

4.1.1 Members of the Executive Committee, elected representatives, stipended and non-stipended staff members, departmental associations, and internal groups of the Science Undergraduate Society of McGill University.

4.1.1.1 Internal groups of the SUS include all clubs, services, committees and subcommittees affiliated with the SUS and the SUS's departmental associations.

4.1.1.2 Stipended and non-stipended staff members include, but are not limited to, individuals selected to ensure smooth functioning of events, such as photographers and science orientation coordinators.

4.1.2 All activities and events hosted, funded, and/or promoted by the Society and SUS-affiliated departmental associations and internal groups.

4.1.2.1 The SUS shall ensure that all endeavours of external groups that receive SUS funding are in accordance with the SUS Equity Policy.

4.1.3 Written or graphic material, which is published, distributed, endorsed or funded by the Science Undergraduate Society, an SUS departmental association, or an SUS-affiliated internal group.

4.1.4 Activities, events, and promotions held in the spaces that the SUS manages, including but not limited to the SUS Office, Burnside basement and SUS departmental lounges.

4.2 Neither this Policy in general, nor its definitions in particular, are to be applied in such a way as to detract from the right of members to engage in open discussion of potentially controversial matters. No individual student or student group should have the effect of limiting dialogue on legitimate topics provided that such discussion is conducted in a respectful, non-coercive, collegial manner that conforms to the Policy on discrimination and harassment set out in Section 3 of this Policy.

4.3 If an Equity Complaint relates to physical or sexual assault—criminal offenses—or involves external parties like McGill Administrative units or the SSMU, the corresponding and appropriate legal policies take precedence. The Equity Committee may assist in directing claimants to appropriate resources, including the Quebec Human Rights Commission for harassment or discrimination issues. The Equity Commissioner role does not include adjudicating criminal accusations, despite the possibility of such complaints being internally documented as part of the Involvement Restriction Policy (IRP).



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4.4 Nothing in this Policy precludes either party from exercising any recourse available external of the SUS.

4.4.1 When the resources from SUS and McGill, alongside the collective expertise of the decision-making team, are insufficient, it is advised that the team seeks assistance from external sources.

4.4.1.1 Consultation and engagement with subgroups of students relevant to decision-making is encouraged. These groups may bring relevant lived experiences, identities, and insights to a particular issue.



## Article 5: Selection of the SUS Equity Committee

5.1 This policy shall establish an SUS Equity Committee, which shall be a Standing Committee of SUS General Council. Upon its formation, it will operate separately from the executive team, except for projects that require joint efforts.

5.2. The membership of the SUS Equity Committee shall consist of the following individuals:

5.2.1. Two (2) to four (4) Equity Commissioners at the discretion of the President

5.2.1.1. The Equity Commissioners shall be chosen through an application and interview process conducted at the end of the Winter semester. The interviewing committee shall consist of the incoming SUS President and, if available and free from conflict of interest, the Equity Commissioners from the previous year.

5.2.1.2. If an Equity Commissioner from the previous year is reapplying for the Equity Commissioner position, the interviewing committee shall consist of the incoming SUS President, the non-returning Equity Commissioners from the previous year, and up to two other incoming SUS Executives. The interviewing committee shall consist of three individuals.

5.2.2. Equity Committee members, at no minimum or maximum number,

5.2.2.1. The Committee Members shall be chosen through an application and interview process conducted at the beginning of the Fall semester. The interviewing committee shall consist of the Equity Commissioners.

5.2.3. An Involvement Restriction Policy (IRP) committee, composed of four to ten members.

5.2.3.1. The IRP Committee shall be chosen through an application and interview process conducted at the start of the Fall semester.

5.2.4. The SUS President shall oversee the operation and functions of the SUS Equity Committee.

5.3. SUS General Council must approve all Equity Committee members by a majority vote.

5.3.1. The motion to approve the Committee should be submitted at most two council meeting dates after the selection of the Committee.



## Article 6: Mandate of the SUS Equity Committee

The Equity Committee's mandate is:

- 6.1. To foster a culture of equity within the Science Undergraduate Society.
- 6.2. To serve as the mediating body for all Equity Complaints that fall under the Scope as outlined in Section 4 of these bylaws.
- 6.3. To promote engagement with the principles associated with equity among SUS members.
- 6.4. To promote safer spaces within all components that fall under the Scope as outlined in Section 4 of these bylaws.
  - 6.4.1. To communicate with event-planning executives throughout the SUS and its affiliated departments to ensure equitable event-planning, including being available for consultation on initiatives, operations, and equity resources
  - 6.4.2. Committee members that attend events as SUS Equity shall be exempt from attendance costs, provided that their primary responsibility during the event is upholding and fulfilling their equity mandate .
    - 6.4.2.1. To reduce the probability of conflict of interests arising in an investigation surrounding a SUS-affiliated event, Equity Committee members who do not deal with IRP cases shall be the favoured party to attend such events within an equity capacity.
  - 6.4.3. The Equity Committee can informally make recommendations to SUS and its affiliated departments and committees as it deems appropriate.
- 6.5. To host social and educational events centered around the principles of equity.
- 6.6. To serve as a resource for internal groups and individual members of the Science Undergraduate Society on how they can promote the principles of equity within their associations and activities.
  - 6.6.1. The Equity Committee shall be available to meet with such parties to go over concerns, recommendations and/or other types of equity-based consultation.
  - 6.6.2. The Equity Committee can provide a list of resources and best practices to promote the principles of equity. The Committee should review, update and share these resources to the internal groups and individual members of the SUS.
  - 6.6.3. In the spirit of supporting Indigenous people, the Equity Committee recommends that all SUS and SUS departmental communications include a land acknowledgement similar to the land acknowledgement in Article 3.1.
    - 6.6.3.1. Article 3.1 should only be used as a guideline. The Committee recommends that all land acknowledgements given in a SUS context be



personalized and updated to the particular context. Personalized land acknowledgements are more impactful and as such should be prioritized.

6.7. To give equity training to the SUS executives before 15 October, with training and timing up to the discretion of the SUS Equity Committee.

6.8. To give equity training to the First-Year Undergraduate Science Society (FUSS) and all executives selected after equity trainings, within two weeks of their appointment, with training and timing up to the discretion of the SUS Equity Committee.

6.9. To give equity training to all departmental executives and members from each department, including representatives, senators, commissioners, and council members before 15 October, with training and timing up to the discretion of the SUS Equity Committee.

6.9.1. Departmental executives that have undergone a similar training, namely interfaculty departments that may have received formal equity training from another faculty, may be excused from SUS Equity training, up to the discretion of the SUS Equity Commissioners.

6.10. The Equity Commissioners participate in the implementation of the SUS Involvement Restriction Policy (adopted on November 26th, 2018).

6.11. The Equity Commissioners shall ensure that all interviews concerning positions affiliated with the SUS or its departments are conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

6.11.1. Interviews shall be conducted with a minimum of two interviewers present.

6.11.2. Interviews shall be either conducted with the presence of an Equity Commissioner or shall be sent to the Equity Committee via audio recording.

6.11.2.1. Interviewers must ask for consent to record the interview.

Interviewees have the right to refuse, but they should be made aware that a lack of official interview transcript may make it more difficult for them to file an appeal after the decision has been made.

6.11.3. A hiring rubric shall be used for all positions, which shall also be shared with the commissioners at their request.

6.11.4. Commissioners shall be available to process an appeal if an interviewee feels the attribution of a position was determined inequitably.

6.11.4.1. In such a case, the commissioners shall go over the recordings of interviews to ensure that the process was conducted fairly.

6.11.4.2. Should the commissioners determine a decision as unfair or inequitable, they shall communicate with a superior of the hiring person(s) to share these concerns and determine a good outcome.



## Article 7: Accountability

All staff, volunteers, elected representatives and appointed representatives are accountable for the implementation of this Policy. SUS General Council is ultimately accountable for all aspects of the organization. To this end, the Council direction, policies, vision, and planning must integrate principles of anti-oppression and diversity. The Council is responsible for ensuring that all SUS Executives and Committees integrate, demonstrate, and communicate this commitment in their annual work plans. The Council is responsible for working with the Executive to ensure the development, implementation, and evaluation of all aspects of the agency against these principles.

7.1. In order to ensure accountability, SUS executives must be trained by the Equity Commissioners before the end of September.

7.2. In order to ensure accountability, FUSS executives and executives selected after equity trainings must be trained by the Equity Commissioners at the start of the Winter semester, but should be advised to direct any equity concern to the Equity Committee.

7.3. In order to ensure accountability, departmental executives must be trained by the Equity Commissioners before 15 October.

7.4. Failure to attend mandated equity training and inform the commissioners in a timely manner will result in an additional task involving reflection on the content of the equity training, at the discretion of the Equity Commissioners.

7.5. In order to ensure accountability, Equity Commissioners who simultaneously hold a position on another council shall not take part in decision processes pertaining to departments, with an exception noted in 7.5.1.

7.5.1. In the event that this would restrict the number of persons involved in decision-making to the extent that it would be detrimental to the work of the Equity Committee, as noted by the Equity Commissioners, any Equity Committee member may help with the decision process, at their discretion of the Equity Commissioners. In this case, the conflict of interest shall be communicated with the SUS President, who may impose any task to ensure accountability and fair decisions.



## Article 8: Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be respected at all times during the resolutions processes, either Mediation or Investigation. Trust in confidentiality also encourages individuals to come forward with their Complaint. However, those implicated in a Complaint have the right to be given enough information so that they are able to respond and defend their interests.

8.1. Confidentiality is different from anonymity. An individual Claimant who seeks informal or formal resolution must be prepared to be identified to the Respondent.

8.2. Everyone involved in a Complaint will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement that outlines their responsibility to ensure confidentiality in all their verbal, written and taped communication, formal and informal, to respect the right to fair process for the Claimant and Respondent.

8.3. Any electronic documents shared between the Equity Committee, Claimant and Respondent will remain confidential and must be deleted immediately after the investigation.

8.4. Personal information connected to a Complaint will only be shared in connection with those responsible for administering this Policy, investigating and processing the Complaint, determining appropriate remedies or sanctions, or for a consistent and related purpose.

8.5. When the resolution is discussed in SUS Council, as per Article 10.6, a confidential session will be declared, and all names and identifying features of the Claimant and Respondent will be removed from the report.

8.6. All confidential emails, reports, and other documents shall be deleted at the end of the term of the Equity Commissioners.



## Article 9: Complaints

All Complaints shall be submitted in writing, in either English or in French, to an Equity Commissioner, as defined in Article 3.2 of this Policy, or in the case that the Complaint is against an Equity Commissioner, to the SUS President.

The following guidelines shall be followed concerning the handling of Equity Complaints:

9.1. The Equity Committee must outline in writing to the Claimant the options they have to seek a resolution to the incident.

9.2. The Equity Committee must outline in writing to all implicated parties the Scope and the limits of the Policy.

9.3. Any individual who does not wish to participate in the resolution process is not obligated to. However, this does not prevent the ratification of recommended remedies by Council that could affect such an individual, such as dismissal from a position within the SUS.

9.4. While there is no official deadline for filing complaints, it is recommended that they be submitted within six months of the incident. Filing within this timeframe facilitates the most effective logistical processing, including the gathering of evidence and testimony from witnesses. Exceptions to this recommendation can be found in sections 9.4.1 and 9.4.2.

9.4.1. While Claimants should follow the time procedures stipulated in 9.4, they shall have the right to cite evidence that occurred outside of this timeframe.

9.4.2. In the eventuality that Claimants were not aware of an incident at the time of its occurrence, they shall have the right to file a complaint within one year in which the incident occurs or six months of the Claimant being made aware of its occurrence.

9.5. Throughout this process, the Claimant and the Respondent have the right to be accompanied at any and all times by a support person, who may take notes and give advice to the party they are supporting. Any interviewing or questioning may also be temporarily stopped to allow a support person and their party to discuss an issue or question privately. The support person may not be a supervisor of either the Claimant or the Respondent.

9.6. Regardless of any prior or ongoing measures the Claimant takes to resolve the conflict outside of the framework outlined in Article 8, all Claimants shall have the right to seek Mediation or an Investigation in concert with the Equity Committee.

9.6.1. The informal resolution process shall be Mediation (Article 10).

9.6.2. The formal resolution process shall be an Investigation (Article 11).



## Article 10: Information Resolution: Mediation

If an Equity Committee member or a qualified person from outside the organization (subject to the approval of the Equity Committee) agrees to act as a mediator, that person will begin to help the parties settle the Complaint within ten working days of the Complaint's submission and complete the Mediation within twenty working days, unless an extension is needed. The mediator should not be involved in investigating the Complaint, and should not be asked to represent SUS at any stage of any proceedings related to the Complaint. The Mediation will take place in a private space.

10.1. The mediator must comply with the confidentiality procedure illustrated in Article 8.

10.2. Either party has the right to refuse Mediation, without reprisal.

10.3. If either implicated party feels as though the informal resolution process has not produced a resolution, then a formal Investigation shall be initiated.



## Article 11: Formal Resolution: Investigation

The Claimant shall make a written record of the incident, including dates, times, locations and a detailed account of the incident. The Claimant will forward the written record of the incident as follows:

11.1. To the Equity Committee, unless it is a Complaint against one or more of the Equity Committee, the Executive, or a Council Member.

11.1.1. For such a Complaint, the Equity Committee shall begin an Investigation and respond to the Complaint within ten working days and complete the process within twenty working days, unless an extension is needed, in which case the claimant will be notified.

11.2. To the SUS President, if it is a Complaint against one or more of the Equity Committee, the Executive, or a Council Member.

11.2.1. For such a Complaint, the SUS President will forward the written record of the incident to the members of the Equity Committee who are not implicated in the Complaint.

11.2.2. The Equity Committee members who are not implicated in the Complaint shall begin an Investigation and respond to the Complaint within working days and complete the process within twenty working days, unless an extension is needed.

11.3. The Respondent will be made aware of the allegations made against them and has the right to respond to the Complaint in writing to the Equity Committee.

11.4. The Equity Committee will investigate the Complaint thoroughly. They will interview the Claimant, the Respondent, and any witnesses who agree to participate in the Investigation.

11.5. A detailed record shall be kept of interview minutes and sent to both the interview subject and the Equity Committee for confirmation of accuracy.

11.6. To ensure the minutes are most accurate, the Equity Committee reserves the right to record the interviews, with the consent of the interviewee. Audio recordings will be considered as evidence in the investigation, and must remain confidential.

11.7. Once an Investigation begins, all parties will be informed that they must not speak with anyone, even those also involved in the incident addressed in the Complaint. To preserve the integrity of the Investigation process, everyone involved is required to cooperate with the Investigation and maintain the confidential nature of the Complaint.

11.8. All parties involved in the Investigation process must sign a confidentiality agreement.



11.9. All witnesses must agree to the confidentiality procedure outlined in Article 8.

11.10. Either party has the right to refuse interviews, without reprisal.

11.11. Before a final report is given, the Equity Committee will give copies of a draft report to the Claimant and Respondent, so they can comment on the accuracy and completeness of the facts. The draft report shall not be shared with anyone other than the support persons, if any are involved. Within a week of completing the Investigation, the Equity Committee will submit the final report to the SUS VP Sustainability for addition to the Equity Log. The Claimant and Respondent will also be provided with a copy of the final report.

11.12. Should an Equity Policy violation be found, depending on the nature and severity of the incident(s), the remedies for Policy violation may include, but are not limited to:

11.12.1. Letter(s) of apology;

11.12.2. Suspension or dismissal of the Respondent from their position within the SUS and its affiliated internal groups;

11.12.3. Suspension of financial support by the SUS for internal groups that violate this Policy.

11.12.4. Barring of participation in SUS-related contexts, either specific or general; and

11.12.5. Sensitivity training in a field relevant to the incident, as determined by the Equity Committee.

11.13. Within ten working days of delivery of the report, the Claimant and the Respondent will be informed in writing of any decision taken.



## Article 12: Formal Resolution: Timeline

12.1 The Equity Committee must forward the complaint filed by the Claimant to the Respondent within two days from which the complaint was filed.

12.2. The Respondent must file a response to the Complaint within ten days of the filing of the Complaint by the Claimant.

12.3. If the Respondent fails to file a response within ten days of the filing of the Complaint they may file a response within an additional ten days, but must provide reasons for the delay which will be reviewed and evaluated by the Equity Committee. The Equity Committee in turn may reject or accept the response on the basis of the provided reasons.

12.4. Ten days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant, the Equity Committee may interview the Claimant and their witnesses. The Equity Committee has ten days to do so.

12.5. Ten days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant, the Equity Committee may interview the Respondent and the Respondent's witnesses, provided that the Respondent has provided a response.

12.6. Ten days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant, the Equity Committee may gather additional evidence, including but not limited to screenshots, screen recordings, photos, and audio recordings, from the Claimant and the Respondent provided that the Respondent has provided a response.

12.7. Thirty days following the filing of the complaint by the Claimant, the Equity Committee must provide all material gathered during the interview process to both the Claimant and the Respondent. Additionally, the Equity Committee must provide the Claimant with the response filed by the Respondent. The Respondent and the Claimant shall have ten days to respond to this material and file their responses with the Equity Committee.

12.8. Thirty days following the filing of the Complaint by the Claimant, the Equity Committee shall begin the review of all the material (complaint, interview, responses etc.) and draft a report containing, but not limited to, facts, reasons and recommendations regarding the complaint. The Equity Committee shall do so within thirty days of the start of this process. Accordingly, the Report must be issued within sixty days of the filing of the complaint by the Claimant.



## Article 13: Appeals Process

13.1 If either the Claimant or Respondent is unsatisfied with the result of an investigation, they have the right to file an appeal to the appropriate committee.

13.2. This Committee will comprise of: the President and two Equity Committee members not involved with the original Complaint who have been designated prior to the Complaint.

13.3. The Appeals Committee will operate under the same parameters as the Equity Committee, but they must make specific reference to the report in acquiring information.

13.4. Once a declaration of resolution has been made, the Claimant or the Respondent has twenty days to file an appeal.



## Article 14: Unsubstantiated Complaints

14.1 If the Equity Committee deems that there is insufficient evidence to support an allegation of the incident(s), they cannot recommend any remedies.

14.2. In the event that the Complaint was made in bad faith, that is, made deliberately and filed maliciously with the knowledge it had absolutely no basis, the Claimant will be subject to the same possible remedies as outlined in Article 10.5. The person unjustly accused of an Equity Policy violation will be given the benefit of any necessary remedies, including but not limited to a public statement from the Equity Committee, should the unjustly accused individual desire such a remedy.

14.3. Anyone who retaliates in any way against a person who has been involved in an Equity Complaint will be subject to the same possible remedies outlined in Article 10.5, at the discretion of the SUS President.



## Article 15: Conflicts of Interest

15.1 Upon receiving an Equity Complaint, the Equity Committee must declare a conflict of interest should there be one.

15.2. Any Equity Committee member who declares a conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint must abstain from all stages of conflict resolution, comprising both formal and informal resolution.

15.3. Failure of an Equity Committee member to declare a conflict of interest regarding an Equity Complaint will result in review or suspension from the Equity Committee, at the discretion of the other members of the Equity Committee, depending on the seriousness of the violation.



## Article 16: Documentation: Equity Log

16.1 Any formal or informal recommendation and/or action shall be documented in writing and provided to the Claimant and to the Respondent.

16.2. All material relating to a complaint, including but not limited to minutes, written records and responses, recordings and evidence, as well as documentation of any formal or informal recommendation or action shall be saved in the Equity Log.

16.3. The Equity Log will be a Confidential Document that is restricted to and to be maintained by the SUS VP Sustainability and the Equity Commissioners.

16.4. The VP Sustainability and the Equity Committee shall be the only individuals who may access the Equity Log.

16.4.1. Should Claimants articulate a wish to remain anonymous, their names in the Equity Log shall be removed or redacted before being passed on to the incoming SUS VP Sustainability, Equity Commissioners, and Coordinators.

16.5. The Equity Log will consist of:

16.5.1 an index of the past and current complaints handled by the committee;

16.5.2 for each given complaint, a folder containing all material related to the complaint.