

Mount Saint Vincent Students' Union  
Employee Handbook



## Welcome!

Congratulations on your employment with us and welcome to the team at MSVU Students' Union! We are excited to have you join our team and look forward to a long, happy, and successful partnership together.

**MSVU Student Unions' VISION** is to provide a healthy, supportive learning environment for all/to provide every student a place to learn and grow.

**MSVU Student Unions' MISSION** is to create a meaningful experience by helping, empowering, and advocating for students.

**MSVU Student Unions'** values guide the way we work with our members, within our community and with each other. Our values are:

**Accountability:** We show up and set out to accomplish the things we've said we'd do. We take personal responsibility for our Student Union work. We have trust in our teammates and know we can count on each other to get things done.

**Community:** We share the common interest in being successful while in higher education. We are an interacting population of diverse individuals in a common location and/or all connected to Mount Saint Vincent University. We support and encourage connection amongst our community members.

**Equity:** We believe in justice, rightness, and fairness for all, regardless of gender, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or age. We put equity at the centre of every decision to help members feel empowered, and to level the playing field for every member.

**Inclusion:** A strong sense of belonging comes from having equal access to all opportunities and resources. We support freedom from discrimination, which is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. We help give traditionally marginalized groups, like those based on gender, race, or those with physical or mental disabilities, a means to feel equal.

**Service:** We believe that everyone else in the room is just as important as us. In order to dignify everyone we serve, we leave our personal agenda behind and elevate the importance of each person we are serving on behalf of the Students' Union. We are intentional in the way we build relationships. We listen, we care, and we help, knowing that we are not the whole solution.

## **Introduction**

This Employee Handbook is a reference document for all employees of MSVU Students' Union, as a permanent, full-time employee, a term, part-time employee, and as a term, elected official, part-time employee of the Students' Union. You will note that this document will encourage you to speak with your "supervisor". The term is used in general to refer to a supervisor, manager, President, and Strategic Operations Manager – whomever is responsible to give you clear direction.

This Handbook is also a good reference for the volunteers who work with MSVU Students' Union. Appendix A is designed to help you understand your roles and responsibilities. You are encouraged to read this Handbook in its entirety, as much of it applies to you as well.

Every effort has been made to outline all aspects of the policies and guidelines of MSVU Students' Union and we reserve the right to amend, alter, change, or delete programs, policies and/or guidelines to meet the organization needs of the MSVU Students' Union at any time. Every effort will be made to inform you of any official changes in the Handbook. To ensure you have the latest version, you are encouraged to check first with your supervisor.

If there is a conflict between the information here and that in your employment contract, the conditions set out in your employment contract take precedence.

You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the information provided in the Employee Handbook and sign off on the last page indicating that you have read and understood the policies and procedures. This Handbook contains important and confidential information. Please keep this in a safe place for future reference.

The five policies which direct the practices that impact our employees are:

**1. The Employment Relationship**

In order to foster a positive employment relationship, MSVU Students' Union will maintain fair and equitable employment practices and meet or exceed labour legislation and regulations. Employees contribute to MSVU Students' Union by advancing our vision and by making a positive contribution to the work environment.

**2. Safe and Healthy Workplace**

MSVU Students' Union will maintain a safe and healthy workplace and meet or exceed all legislated requirements. A safe and healthy workplace includes a wide range of practices, initiatives and resources designed to ensure that workplace health factors are understood and managed to optimize the well-being of our employees and all those who come to MSVU Students' Union, in Halifax.

**3. Supporting and Developing our Employees**

MSVU Students' Union will support employees by providing clear direction, tools, training/skills, and feedback that are required for success.

**4. Personal and Professional Conduct**

MSVU Students' Union will ensure a work environment where employees maintain appropriate standards of personal and professional conduct towards everyone with whom they interact.

**5. Total Compensation**

A total compensation package may include benefits such as wages, group health and insurance programs and paid and unpaid leaves. It is the policy of the MSVU Students' Union to provide a total compensation package which contributes to attracting, retaining, and developing talented staff; compensates staff fairly for the work they do; is competitive in the Nova Scotia marketplace; and can be supported by the financial position of the organization.

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# The Employment Relationship

In order to foster a positive employment relationship, MSVU Students' Union will maintain fair and equitable employment practices and meet or exceed labour legislation and regulations. Employees contribute to the organization by advancing our vision and by making a positive contribution to the work environment.

## 1.1 A Respectful Workplace is a “Safe Place”

MSVU Students' Union has a strong belief in the need for responsible social and ethical behaviour from all employees. This includes integrity, fairness, respect, inclusion, and the spirit of cooperation between co-workers, and must be evident in our relationships with our members.

It is very difficult to work effectively as a team when the ego of 'I' is involved. But it is also difficult to feel part of a team if you are not seen and valued for who you are, when you are not included, especially because of your identity. Each of us brings a unique contribution to the team, needed to create maximum strength. Without a variety of contributions, the team would be weaker. When we learn to value diversity, we understand the power of unity built on mutual respect of unique contributions.

We strive to ensure our workplace to be one where everyone's role in the success of MSVU Students' Union is recognized and valued, and where there is understanding and respect for each person's judgment in their area of expertise. We want it to be a workplace where everyone feels safe in expressing their ideas and opinions and asking for help without fear of reprimand or ridicule. We want our workplace to be one where you not only feel respected, but also valued. We want our workplace to be a safe place, both emotionally/psychologically and physically.

Everyone has a role to play! You are encouraged to build trust with your colleagues and supervisor, and with the members we serve. Building trust is a step-by-step process that takes time. Building trust requires you to set and respect your own boundaries as well as those of the people around you. It means being reliable – doing what you say you will do. It means being accountable, owning up to mistakes, apologizing and doing better. It means respecting the confidentiality of the information that is shared with you. It involves showing others your integrity.

Conflict is bound to arise when there is a difference of opinion. You are encouraged to keep in mind that each other's differences are not about one being right and the other being wrong, they are just differences. Building trust means doing our best to be non-judgmental. It means being generous and giving others the benefit of the doubt when we are trying to understand another person's behaviour. We know that we provide better service to our members if we make the most of our differences. As an employee you deserve to work in a safe workplace, and our members deserve to feel safe when they are in our workplaces.

You are encouraged to share your suggestions about a respectful workplace with your supervisor. Everyone has an important role to play in supporting a respectful workplace and there will be times when there is a need for changes to ensure that everyone is feeling respected. This may be a simple conversation, or it may be a more involved conflict resolution process.

## **1.2 Your Responsibilities and Cooperation**

Employees contribute to MSVU Students' Union by making a positive contribution to the work environment. It is important that you completely understand your job duties and responsibilities. If you do not, or if you do not feel that you have sufficient knowledge or skill to successfully complete every part of your job, it is your responsibility to talk to your supervisor.

While it makes sense for each employee to have their own responsibilities, it is also very important that each employee work in the spirit of cooperation and helpfulness, especially when you have free time or when a co-worker is away from the workplace. When you have free time and you cannot think of other meaningful work to do, ask for your supervisor's help or offer your assistance to a co-worker.

### **1.2.1 Position Descriptions**

Each different position within MSVU Students' Union has its own description of duties and responsibilities so that there is a clear understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and the lines of communication. The position descriptions also help to ensure that work is appropriately distributed and that the goals of the organization can be met in a systematic manner. Your supervisor, in consultation with other team members, will determine what is to be included in each position description.

You will have received a copy of your position description with your offer letter. Position descriptions will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. A copy is also kept in your personnel file.

### **1.2.2 Personnel File**

A personnel file will be created to store your employment history, to assist in maintaining positive professional working relationships and to fulfil fiduciary duties. The confidential nature of all documentation will be respected.

Personnel files will be accessible to you upon request, within normal working hours, with 2 working days' notice. You may request that information in the file be corrected or supplemented in cases of error or inadequacy.

The conditions in which you can examine the personnel file will be defined for you to ensure security of the records and to minimize disruption of work.

## **1.3 Recruitment**

MSVU Students' Union recognizes that a robust and professional approach to recruitment and selection helps us to attract and hire individuals with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfill our aims and support our organization goals. When there is a vacancy or a requirement for a new position, it will be advertised internally and externally.

## **1.4 Conflict of Interest**

Conflict of interest arises whenever your personal, professional, or organizational interests are potentially at odds with the best interests of MSVU Students' Union. You are required to act in good faith towards MSVU Students' Union. This not only means that you do not have a conflict

of interest with the organization or any of our members, but it also involves any other employment relationships you may have.

You are permitted to work at other employment if you are able to meet the performance requirements and standards associated with your job, and there is no conflict of interest. Any work you produce while working on MSVU Students' Union's time remains the intellectual property of MSVU Students' Union and is not to be shared with other organizations or individuals.

As it is impossible to define all potential areas of conflict of interest, when you are in doubt if a conflict exists, you should discuss the matter with your supervisor.

Examples include:

- If you are coming to work at the Students' Union and you are tired from working at your other place of employment, that is a conflict of interest.
- If you are doing the work of your other employer on the Students' Union's time or with the Students' Union's equipment, that is a conflict of interest.
- If you leave early from your Students' Union job to attend your other place of employment, that is a conflict of interest.

## **1.5 Open Communication**

MSVU Students' Union believes strongly in the need for open communication, and we encourage the sharing of ideas, comments, and concerns to improve operations. You are encouraged to talk to your supervisor to seek advice and to offer suggestions and solutions. When you identify a problem within the workplace, take a minute or two to determine the best solution to the problem, rather than just presenting the problem to your supervisor.

If your supervisor appears to be busy when you want to speak with them, take a minute to reflect on how important and urgent your concern is. Quite often important issues are not necessarily urgent. It's those times that you may want to book a meeting with your supervisor rather than interrupting them.

# **Health and Safety**

MSVU Students' Union will maintain a safe and healthy workplace and meet or exceed all legislated requirements. A safe and healthy workplace includes a wide range of practices, initiatives and resources designed to ensure that workplace health factors are understood and managed to optimize the well-being of our employees and all those who come to MSVU Students' Union.

## **2.1 Occupational Health and Safety**

MSVU Students' Union is dedicated to the well-being of all employees and others who come to our offices and facilities by ensuring a safe and healthy working environment. We are committed to working together proactively to prevent illness, injuries, and accidents.

Under the *Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act* “every workplace must have on site someone certified in first aid” and “every workplace must have a first aid kit.” Security staff have access to the first aid kits should you need supplies, and are trained in Emergency First Aid, CPR and AED. Mental Health First Aid training will be offered to you on a regular basis. You are encouraged to participate in the training and reap the benefits in your personal and professional life.

You are not only directly responsible for health and safety and required to control the potential for accidents, but you are also responsible for ensuring your own behaviours are healthy and respectful to your body. This includes things like walking around or standing up on a regular basis, lifting heavy objects properly and so on.

As a small workplace, we are required to have an *Occupational Health and Safety Representative*. This responsibility is part of everyone’s job and each of us will have a role to play, at one time or another, for minimum of one year. You will have some flexibility as to when you take your turn. It is a wonderful learning opportunity and will give you the skills and knowledge to make a difference in every one of your workplaces, your home, and your community.

Safety is always a priority. If you have a concern about a health or safety practice within the workplace, or if you are aware of a concern of others, you have an obligation to report it to your supervisor.

Examples:

If you have a concern about a member or co-worker’s behaviour that is threatening your sense of safety, you have a responsibility to report this to your supervisor so they can facilitate a positive solution.

If your co-worker shares with you a concern about a member or co-worker’s behaviour that is threatening to their sense of safety, you too have a responsibility to encourage them to report this to their supervisor, if applicable, as well as a responsibility to report it to your supervisor yourself.

You have the legal right and responsibility to refuse unsafe work. The organization has an obligation to provide a safe working environment, but you must remain vigilant to ensure that you are neither creating nor participating in unsafe work practices.

## **2.2 A Respectful Workplace Impacts your Health**

MSVU Students’ Union believes that respect and the spirit of cooperation in the workplace can have a positive impact on your health and productivity. Current research (as of 2022) is indicating that employees who work in a toxic environment are 35% - 55% more likely to be diagnosed with a major disease or cardiac disease, stroke, diabetes.

Psychological safety is as important as physical safety. Conflict and disagreements can happen in most relationships and may need support to be resolved. Errors can occur in the administration of

policy and benefits and in general work-related activities. We must all support a respectful workplace and be knowledgeable about and willing to address issues as they arise.

Creating and maintaining psychological safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility and it involves simple day-in-day-out activities. These include ensuring there is a safe and trusting environment, initiating and welcoming open conversations between and amongst all "groups" and levels within the organization. Psychological safety includes receiving difficult comments or feedback with an open mind rather than reacting badly, listening to and showing appreciation for new ideas and taking the time to consider them, and accepting that we all have bad days, and it is okay to not be okay all the time.

### **2.2.1 Violence in the Workplace**

MSVU Students' Union has a policy of zero tolerance for violence in the workplace as defined by the Province of Nova Scotia's *Violence in the Workplace Prevention Strategy*, including violence by employees, members, or others. Please note that bullying and harassment are not deemed "violence" under the *Violence in the Workplace Prevention Strategy*.

### **2.2.2 Harassment in the Workplace**

Harassment is any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions such as touching, pushing, comments, jokes, name-calling, and offensive displays. It may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour that continues over time. It can include acts that are directed at no one person in particular but can create an intimidating or offensive work environment. For more detailed information please refer to the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

Two or more employees bantering back and forth is not harassment if everyone involved agrees. However, if you feel uncomfortable with this behaviour and the behaviour continues even after you have expressed your discomfort, or if the others involved should have known you were uncomfortable, then it is harassment. This type of harassment can create what is known as a "poisoned" work environment where employees do not feel safe and feel constantly humiliated.

If the behaviour continues or if you don't want to communicate directly to the person, you can speak to an authority with whom you feel comfortable. Complaints of harassments will be taken seriously.

### **2.2.3 Bullying in the Workplace**

Bullying, including cyber bullying, can have a serious impact on your productivity at work, as well as on your health and wellbeing. It can be subtle or obvious. Bullying behaviours include constantly criticizing a person, discounting another person's opinion, using the silent treatment, and clearly showing hostility. You could be bullied by your co-worker or your supervisor or by a member. If you believe you are being bullied, you are encouraged to communicate directly to the person or speak to your supervisor. You have a responsibility to speak up.

#### **2.2.4 Resolution for Disrespectful Behaviour**

Harassment, bullying, and violence are not respectful. If you feel that you have been wronged or treated in a manner that is not respectful by a co-worker, partner, or member you are expected to bring your concerns to the attention of your supervisor. They will provide you with the in-depth information of the resolution process and use the services of a mediator if need be. Appendix B in this Handbook provides a more detailed explanation of the resolution process.

#### **2.3 On-the-job Injuries**

When accidents and/or injuries occur on MSVU Students' Union premises it is critical that you or the injured employee or member receive immediate medical attention and the accident and/or injury is reported immediately to your supervisor.

MSVU Students' Union has workplace liability insurance. When you notify your supervisor immediately of a work-related injury or illness, this will help to ensure that the necessary services will be delivered on a timely basis for a full recovery. A full report of the accident or incident must be completed, signed, dated, and forwarded to your supervisor on a timely basis.

#### **2.4 Drug and Alcohol Usage**

According to Wikipedia, “A **controlled substance** is generally a drug or chemical whose manufacture, possession, or use is regulated by a government, such as illicitly used drugs or prescription medications that are designated a Controlled Drug.” For example, Tylenol 3, even though it is a prescription, is a controlled drug and may impair your abilities and pose a safety risk. MSVU Students' Union is committed to providing a safe, drug-free workplace. As such, the organization will not tolerate the abuse of controlled substances by any employee. Disciplinary action up to and including termination will be taken.

Should you be prescribed a controlled drug by your medical provider, you are required to advise your supervisor. They will determine if you are able to work safely, or if there are modified duties that you can safely be assigned.

#### **2.5 Scent Sensitive Environment**

Please follow Mount Saint Vincent University's Scent Sensitive Policy.

#### **2.6 Smoke-Free**

We are committed to protecting and promoting your health, safety, and well-being, as well as our members'. Whereas environmental tobacco smoke is recognized as a carcinogen, a serious and well-documented health hazard, and is a major airborne contaminant, smoking of tobacco or other products is prohibited in our workplace. This means you cannot smoke anywhere on the property, whether they are electronic cigarettes or traditional cigarettes. There are areas on campus that are designated for smoking. Please note, it is illegal to smoke on municipal property, this includes streets, roads, sidewalks, bus shelters, etc.

## 2.7 Closures Due to Bad Weather or Power Outages

Weather conditions and/or power outages can cause us to close our premises. We will always be closed when the university is closed. There may be times when we will close before the university does.

Once it is determined that the office will be closed due to inclement weather or a power outage, we will advise you as soon as possible. If the office is closed before you start your shift, you will be paid for your regularly scheduled day. If you can work from home, you are expected to work your regular hours.

- When the weather is bad, it is your responsibility to decide if it is safe to travel to work and to notify your supervisor promptly.
  - If we are open for business, and your job is such that you can work from home, please advise your supervisor that you will be working from home, and you will be paid accordingly.
  - If you choose to take a personal day or vacation time for that day rather than working from home, you will need to advise your supervisor so that your records can be adjusted.
  - If you choose to stay home and take it as an unpaid day, again please advise your supervisor.
  - If we are open for business even though the weather is inclement, and your job is such that you **cannot** work from home, please advise your supervisor that you will not be coming to work, and your pay will be adjusted accordingly.

If you decide to go home before the office is officially closed, you must get permission to leave. You will be paid for the time you worked. Again, if you decide to go home while the office is still open, and you can work, you will be encouraged to work from home, and you will be paid accordingly.

If the weather deteriorates or the power outage is extended once our workday has started, we will close, and you'll be paid for your full, scheduled shift.

# Supporting and Developing Our Employees

MSVU Students' Union will support employees by providing clear direction, tools, training/skills, and feedback that are required for success.

## 3.1 Orientation Process

We want to foster a positive work experience for you from the first day of employment. As a new employee, you will be guided through an orientation to MSVU Students' Union and to your role within. There will be a general orientation process for all employees as an introduction to the Students' Union. The orientation processes for each of the employee groups - full-time permanent employees, part-time term employees and elected officials - will include information specifically tailored to each group. It is your responsibility to ask questions for clarification and your supervisor's responsibility to do their best to get answers for you on a timely basis.

## 3.2 Probation Period for Permanent, Full-time Employees

The probationary period provides a period for both you and the organization to determine if the hiring decision was a mutually acceptable one. All new permanent, full-time employees will be on probation for at least six (6) months from the date of hire and as specified in your offer letter. The probationary period may be extended if certain levels of performance are not satisfactory, and this will be recorded in your personnel file.

During the probationary period, your supervisor will make every effort to communicate the organization's expectations to you and assist you in developing necessary skills. You will be informed of areas in which you need to improve and will be supported to do so, at least around the three-month mark as well as the 5 1/2-month mark.

The probationary period may be extended if certain levels of performance are not satisfactory. You may be terminated during the probationary period and pay and/or notice will be equivalent to the amounts provided for by the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*.

Depending on the length of your term, part-time employees will have at least a three-month probationary period. Term, part-time elected officials have a separate system that governs their probationary period, and that will be described.

## 3.3 Performance Conversations

As a new employee you will have an opportunity to review your performance with your supervisor. They will initiate informal conversations about your performance on a regular basis to ensure you have what you need to be successful. Formal performance conversations are held at least annually, depending on the status of your employment, permanent or term. The performance conversation is an opportunity for you to reflect on your performance in the previous period, as well as set new goals for the upcoming period.



The formal performance conversation includes these steps:

1. Thinking about the actual work that you do, both you and your supervisor review the job description and discuss both the areas for celebration and the areas for additional effort and/or training. Your ability to attend work regularly and meet the service standards is also reviewed and celebrated. Other questions & concerns are shared. The job description is adjusted as required.
2. Thinking about the typical behaviours that are required for success in your job, both of you share specific information, observations, and feedback, identifying areas for celebration and for additional development in terms of those typical behaviours.
3. You are then given an opportunity to answer these four questions and discuss your answers with your supervisor:
  - a. What do I think I am doing well?
  - b. What do I think I need to do differently?
  - c. What do I think my supervisor and the organization are doing well?
  - d. What would I like to see my supervisor and the organization do differently?
4. Your supervisor will then take the opportunity to share their perspective on these two questions:
  - a. What do I think you are doing well?
  - b. What do I think you need to do differently?
5. Both of you then look towards the future of the organization and for you as an individual as an employee.
  - a. Where will the organization be in 1 - 3 years?
  - b. What behaviours and skills will be required then?
  - c. What is the best way to get you those behaviours and skills?
  - d. By when do you need them?
  - e. Where do you want to be in your career in 1 – 3 years? What opportunities are you interested in while you are an employee?
6. Mutual commitments are agreed upon (who will do what by when with what resources) and follow up meetings are scheduled, as required. A document is prepared with all of the pertinent information regarding:
  - a. Past performance and what you need to stop, start, and continue for success;
  - b. Ways your supervisor has agreed to do things differently in support of your success;
  - c. Your training and development plans for the immediate future, for the next year, and/or to develop your career are outlined; and
  - d. The future direction of the organization and what you need to stop, start, and continue in order to be successful in the future.

### **3.4 Training and Development**

You are encouraged to participate in each performance conversation and to highlight any gaps in your skills or knowledge you believe you have so that you can close the gap as quickly as possible with appropriate training and/or development. You are required to fully participate in all job-specific training programs. Training includes internal on-the-job training as well as external training and courses. Safety training takes precedence.

### **3.5 Progressive Discipline**

You will be given clear direction in terms of the expectations of your responsibilities and your adherence to the policies and procedures. It is your responsibility to ask for additional clarification of any and all direction. If your performance is not acceptable, this will be brought to your attention as soon as possible in a private, respectful manner. You will be provided with information on the process to rectify the situation and your supervisor will work with you to help you to correct your performance.

### **3.6 Recognition and Appreciation**

MSVU Students' Union values all your contributions - your day-to-day efforts as well as the many times you go above and beyond the basic requirements to provide the highest possible quality of service. Our Mission and Values give you an understanding of the behaviours, attitudes, and acts, which deserve your appreciation and recognition to other employees and partners. There are numerous resources available to help you find meaningful ways to do this. Don't wait for someone else to recognize your excellence. Keep an eye on their performance and "catch them" delivering excellence.

# Personal and Professional Conduct

MSVU Students' Union will ensure a work environment where employees maintain appropriate standards of personal and professional conduct towards everyone with whom they interact.

## 4.1 What is Professionalism?

Professionalism can be defined as achieving and maintaining a standard of conduct that reflects the student members' and the public's expectations of the employees of MSVU Students' Union and engenders trust and confidence in members. In our society, we judge others and are judged by others by a variety of things. We judge others by their physical appearance, their behaviours including their verbal and non-verbal communication. Your professional appearance, behaviours and communication can instill trust and confidence in you and in the organization.

## 4.2 Code of Ethical Conduct

You have a right to choose to live and work by your own moral values if those values do not compromise, in any way, your effectiveness in your work. You have a responsibility to do your work competently and to refrain from any conduct that is unbecoming for an employee of MSVU Students' Union. You have a duty to conduct yourself ethically with integrity, fairness and honesty with every co-worker and member. If you require additional information to clearly define ethical conduct, please contact your supervisor.

The best definition of ethical behaviour is to imagine that something you said or did is now on the front page of your local newspaper. If your behaviour was ethical, you would be proud of what was reported. If your behaviour was not ethical, you would feel uncomfortable reading the article.

## 4.3 Confidentiality, Security of Information and Using MSVU's Information Resources

### *Please follow MSVU's Acceptable Use Policy*

While you work for MSVU Students' Union, you will have access to confidential information which is not in the public domain, as well as data, organization property, keys to premises or any other organization-related property/information in the performance of your duties. All of this must be protected and used only in the interests of the organization. You will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement on an annual basis. For employees that receive keys, a keyholder agreement must be signed prior to receipt of keys. Any employees authorized to use a union visa card will be required to sign a cardholder agreement.

Before you include confidential information in an email, think about the security of that information. Even if our server uploads attachments over a secure HTTPS connection, you have no control over your recipient's server, and they may download your attachment from an unencrypted HTTP connection or even from a public Wi-Fi network. Encrypting the files using

third party encryption technology may be an option for transferring the files digitally. You should also ensure that your email includes Copyright and Confidentiality Notices as this adds an extra layer of protection from unauthorized dissemination by serving as a reminder to the recipient. Delivering a hard copy of the files is often the best solution.

You may hear or see things of interest that you will be tempted to share with others. You should consider if there is a valid organization reason to share the information. It may be important information for one of your co-workers or members but gossip for another. It may even breach the confidentiality of your work. Respecting the confidential nature of your work is critical to your success at MSVU Students' Union.

You are not permitted to disclose any information that comes to your knowledge by reason of your employment with the organization during or after your employment without written consent, other than as required by law. This is particularly important in respect to information regarding our members.

Paperwork with confidential information must be disposed of by shredding or locked at night. You must ensure that your computer is "locked" whenever you leave your workstation (control/alt/delete) and "restarted" at the end of your workday.

Passwords are used for various purposes at MSVU Students' Union. Some of the more common uses include user level accounts, web accounts, email accounts, screen saver protection, voicemail password, and local router logins. All passwords are to be treated as confidential information.

#### **4.4 Using MSVU or the Students' Union's Tools and Equipment**

When using the organization's property at work, including tools, equipment, copy machines, printers and computers, care must be taken to maintain the property in good condition.

#### **4.5 Guidelines for Your Personal Use of Cell Phones**

Your cell phone usage cannot interfere with your work responsibilities. There will be times during your day when you will want to use your cell phone for your personal needs. You are more than welcome to use it while you are working as long it does not intrude or interfere with your duties and/or customer service, and you keep it to a minimum.

If you expect an urgent call or must make one while you are working on the Students' Union's time, you are certainly permitted to do so but the call must be brief. Using your device in private is a must so you don't distract others' productivity.

#### **4.6 Guidelines for Your Personal Use of Social Media**

When engaging in social media for your personal use it is important to remember that as an employee of MSVU Students' Union your behaviours reflect the organization. Your activity on social media cannot be offensive to anyone, even if you are engaging in social media when away from the workplace on your own time. Off-duty conduct can also be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Special care must be taken if you are “tagging” or “hash tagging” the organization in any post to ensure that you clearly state that any opinions are not those of the organization. Please note that this disclaimer does not mean that you are then free to post offensive or harassing material. A good rule of thumb is: if it would be inappropriate to express this at work, it should not be posted online.

MSVU Students’ Union will not tolerate any online harassment of members, co-workers, or management. The organization’s confidentiality policies apply to any online content.

When using social media for your personal purposes consider the following:

- Don’t share MSVU Students’ Union’s material in a personal space
- Do not use the organization’s branding that implies that you are representing MSVU Students’ Union
- Use a disclaimer anywhere there may be uncertainty about the capacity in which you are acting, such as: “The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the views or opinions of my employer”

If you become aware of social media content posted by a MSVU Students’ Union’ employee that does not comply with these guidelines, you are encouraged to report it to your supervisor.

#### **4.7 Professional Appearance**

Professional appearance is a social construct, and its definition will change as you enter different spaces. Please be aware of this and use your judgment when selecting your appearance for the day. The MSVUSU expects you to be clean and wearing clothing free of vulgarity, racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory content, and corporate logos that would contradict the MSVUSU's branding.

#### **4.8 Environmental Awareness**

You are encouraged to suggest earth-friendly/environmental initiatives for the organization and fully participate in the initiatives as they are implemented.

To minimize your paper usage and reduce environmental waste, please use electronic documents or, when printing, print in monochrome (black) and on both sides of the paper. The designated paper recycling bins are used for shredded documents.

You are encouraged to separate the garbage into the appropriate bins for paper (with non-confidential information), cardboard, bottles, cans, plastic, etc. You are encouraged to turn off lights, equipment, etc. when it is feasible.

You are asked to reboot your computer when you leave for the day so that your software can be updated as required. When you are going to be away from the office for an extended period of time, you can shut your computer down and turn the power off completely.

#### **4.9 Theft**

Theft of any property, whether it is the organization's time, property, your co-worker's property or that of a member or visitor, will result in discipline, up to and including, termination of employment.

MSVU Students' Union does not assume responsibility for your loss of money and/or personal possessions. It's best to leave valuables at home. Keep your personal property secure while at work.

## Total Compensation

A total compensation package may include benefits such as wages, group health and insurance programs and paid and unpaid leaves. It is the policy of the MSVU Students' Union to provide a total compensation package which contributes to attracting, retaining, and developing talented staff; compensates staff fairly for the work they do; is competitive in the Nova Scotia marketplace; and can be supported by the financial position of the organization.

### 5.1 Employee Status

**Permanent, full-time employee:** an employee who works a normal schedule of the fully prescribed hours of work for a position, who has completed the probationary period and is entitled to all benefits as outlined in this employee handbook.

**Term, part-time employee:** an employee who is employed for a fixed term on a part-time basis and maybe entitled to certain benefits outlined in this employee handbook, depending on the length of the term.

**Council Executive (Elected official):** an employee who is employed on a part-time basis in a leadership position on the Council's executive for a period or term.

### 5.2 Hours of Work

The office is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. The Hub is open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Your hours of work were spelled out for you in your offer letter. As a part-time employee your hours of work will be scheduled on a weekly basis. It is essential that you are ready to work at the start of your workday, until the end of your workday.

To minimize the negative impact on your co-workers, you need to contact your supervisor as soon as possible if you are going to be late starting your shift. Their contact information is posted in your work area.

If you know you are going to be unable to work a shift, you must find another staff member who can work your shift, and advise your supervisor accordingly, on a timely basis.

These incidents of being late for work and switching shifts will be tracked to ensure they are not happening too frequently. If they are, this will be brought to your attention so you can make the necessary changes.

#### 5.2.1 Breaks

*Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* dictates that employees must have a half-hour unpaid break after 5 hours of work. If you are regularly scheduled to work a day longer than 5 hours, there will be direction in your offer of employment regarding when or if you must take your break and the length of the break.

If your shift is less than five hours, you are not entitled to a break. Having said this, we know that everyone is more productive after they have had a break, even if it is only a 5-minute

minibreak. Working cooperatively, together decide when it is okay to take a break. Working cooperatively, encourage everyone to take a break.

### **5.3 Flextime and Flexplace**

MSVU Student Union recognizes that sometimes you may benefit from flextime, that is, a variation of your usual start and end times, to meet your personal responsibilities. For example, you may be able to vary the time of your lunch break in order to attend medical appointments. Some days, working at home is the best option for you.

All employees who are not providing face-to-face services, that cannot be delivered from an off-site location, are permitted to work from home up to two (2) days each week. The number of hours you will be approved to work from home may vary from others as it is determined according to the job/role. It is up to you to meet our standards for working from home. If you fail to do so, you will lose this privilege.

#### **5.3.1 Expectations for Flextime and Flexplace**

All policies and guidelines in this Employee Handbook are in effect while working from home. Any changes have been described below.

##### ***5.3.1.1 Hours of Work and Location for Flextime and Flexplace***

It is your responsibility to record your expected hours of work using the Deluxe Time website or application and ensure all information is up to date at the end of every pay period. It is your responsibility to reach out to your supervisor by the end of the pay period (every second Thursday) to correct any errors.

You are required to track your time and attendance as you would while in the office. We want both you and the organization to benefit from this arrangement. If you or your supervisor are finding that you are not as productive working from home, your supervisor and you will strategize together and get you the support you need.

You are expected to work your full hours as spelled out in your offer letter. However, the specific hours that you are working when you are working from home can vary from early morning to late at night as long as you are available between the hours of 10 am and 2 pm (unless you have classes during this time). This means, for example, if the definition of your day is 8 hours, you could work from 6 am to 8 am, then start working again at 10 am until 2 pm (with a lunch break), and then finish your workday by working from 8 pm to 10 pm.

You are expected to take rest and meal breaks whenever they are required to maintain your productivity. Many find it difficult to work only their prescribed hours of work each day. This can have a negative impact on your work/life balance and your emotional and physical health.

It is your responsibility to make all arrangements for childcare, elder care, pet care, repair persons, etc. so as not to interfere with your regular work schedule.



### **5.3.1.2     *Your Flexplace Workspace***

It is your responsibility to designate a space in your home as your workspace. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure they have the necessary equipment and technology to work from home. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all of the equipment, furniture, and adequate internet services you need to ensure you have safe, healthy, productive, and ergonomically friendly work habits, at your expense. The organization is not responsible for any expenses related to your working from home.

Working from home is not to be used instead of taking sick leave. If you are feeling unwell due to an illness or injury, you may be eligible for a limited number of paid sick leave. Taking sick leave will typically mean that you will recover faster and be able to return to your typical productivity sooner. Should you experience any injuries as a result of working from home, it is your responsibility to notify your manager immediately.

All files – both electronic and hard copy - must be kept secure while in your home office, and when you are disposing them. This is not only secure from other people's access but also secure from virus and/or online threats. All organization information must be kept confidential. Steps include regular password maintenance, locked file cabinets and desks to store sensitive information, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment of the designated workspace.

If, while working from a designated workspace, you experience technical issues with your computer or internet access that prevent you from working remotely, notify your manager immediately. Interruptions to work caused by internet outages may require the employee to work from their regular office space for the remainder of the day, or until the outage is fixed.

### **5.3.1.3     *Maintaining the Lines of Communication for Flextime and Flexplace***

When you are working from home, you are required to provide information to your supervisor, Strategic Operations Manager and the President as to your online availability while you are working from home.

We will continue to use text messages for the brief, informal messages between members of the organization, as appropriate. Emails are required when you are going to be late or not able to attend that day. Emails are more appropriate when the messages are longer and/or need to be sent to the whole team and/or a member. If the thread of communication in text messages or emails is getting too frequent, you are encouraged to speak on the phone with your colleague rather than continuing with text or email conversations.

We will continue to use Microsoft TEAMS to meet with each other. The dress code is in effect whenever you are utilizing TEAMS to conduct organization communication. It is your responsibility to ensure your audio, lighting, camera, etc. are enhanced and fully functioning while on TEAMS calls, your background is appropriate, and personal interruptions are kept at the absolute minimum.

Emails and phone messages received from your supervisor/manager during your set working hours, must be returned within two hours, even if it is only to acknowledge the receipt of the email or phone message. All emails and phone messages received outside of this time period must be acknowledged within 24 hours except on weekends, holidays or during leaves when staff are not required to check for email or phone messages. Labor Day is a work day for staff, and the holiday premium is paid.

#### **5.3.1.4 Evaluation of Flextime and Flexplace Guidelines**

The success of these guidelines will be monitored on a regular basis and the appropriate adjustments will be made as required. You are encouraged to share your feedback on how this is working for you, both as a participant as well as a colleague who is impacted by these guidelines.

### **5.4 Total Compensation Review**

All components of the compensation strategy including wages will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **5.5 Payroll**

### **5.5.1 Procedures**

Payroll is processed bi-weekly and pay day is every second Friday for the pay period that ended on the previous week on the Thursday . Your pay will be delivered to your bank account via direct deposit.

You will receive an email with your pay notice, and you can access the information by entering your Social Insurance Number. It is your responsibility to ensure your questions about your pay are answered. You must review it, verify the net amount, and bring any concerns to your supervisor on a timely basis.

Prior to your first day of work, you must provide your supervisor, or their designate, proof of your Social Insurance Number, either on a card or official documentation from the federal government. You must also provide a voided cheque or an official statement with your banking information on it to be set up on payroll. Should your banking information change at any time, please submit changes to your banking information to Payroll at least one month before you need the deposit to be made to your new account.

You are required to complete a new federal and/or provincial TD1 form upon hire and when there is a change in your life that affects your federal or provincial personal tax credit amounts, in accordance with government regulations.

### **5.5.2 Payroll Deductions**

Deductions will be made from your pay in accordance with federal and provincial government regulations.

### **5.5.3 Recording Your Time and Attendance**

It is important that you are paid accurately for the time you have worked. It is also important that the time you have worked, is reported accurately so that the Students' Union can account for the time you are away from work when you are on vacation, on unpaid leave, jury duty and so on.

#### **5.5.3.1 Permanent, Full-Time Employees**

You will find your attendance tracking in Advanced Tracker or the designated time and attendance software as directed by the Payroll Administrator. As a permanent, full-time employee, you will be required to record the time you work, overtime, and time off according to the terms set out in your offer letter.

#### **5.5.3.2 Term, Part-time Employee and Council Executive (Elected Officials)**

When you were offered the term, part-time position, your offer letter indicated your hours of work, and that these hours may vary from pay period to pay period. Your offer letter may have indicated a maximum number of hours that you are permitted to work without approval. For some employees, the supervisor will communicate the schedule of your hours of work on a weekly basis. For others, it is up to you to plan and organize your work within the limits of your hours of work, as indicated in your offer letter.

You may be a term, part-time employee who is in a leadership position. You are supervised and take direction for your work from members of the Council Executive. All requests for working additional hours must be authorized not by members of the Council Executive, but rather by the Strategic Operations Manager as they have the fiscal responsibility for the Students' Union's budget. In the absence of a GM, the president, CFO, and Payroll Administrator must approve additional hours.

As a member of the Council Executive, you have a maximum number of hours as set out in your terms of employment/offer letter. You can work any day, any time that is convenient to you and this must be recorded. If you must work additional hours in one week, you are encouraged to schedule your work so that you are working fewer hours the following week, so that the total number of hours within the pay period is not over your regular hours of work for a pay period.

For example: If your regular hours of work are 20 hours per week, then your bi-weekly hours are 40. If you work 30 hours in the first week of the pay period, then you should aim for working only 10 hours in the second week of the pay period, so the bi-weekly hours are 40.

Once the maximum hours of work have been reached, you will need to have written approval to be paid for the additional hours worked. The additional hours will not be paid unless they have been approved before they are worked.

As a member of Council's Executive, the request to work your additional hours will be authorized by the Strategic Operations Manager. Members of the Executive take their direction regarding what they are spending their paid hours on from the Council as a whole, but the fiscal responsibility for the salary and wage budget lies with the Strategic Operations Manager or their designate.

When you work more than your regularly scheduled hours, your payroll information will come to the attention of the Budget Committee. It is their responsibility to determine if you require additional resources or a reduced workload in order to let you resume working just your regularly schedule hours of work.

As a part-time employee you must enter your hours worked in Deluxe Time using the website or app. It is your responsibility to record your hours accurately and you must reach out to your immediate supervisor for adjustments needed to clocked time.

**Note:** Your supervisor is responsible for authorizing your pay before payroll is generated. No one is permitted to authorize their own pay. This authorization to work additional hours will be filed with the pay period records.

If you are absent and cannot record your attendance, your supervisor will have to determine if it is appropriate to authorize your pay without the review. When you return to work, you are required to ensure the payroll records accurately reflect your attendance and absences.

## **5.6 Paid Leave**

### **5.6.1 Vacation Pay**

As a term, part-time employee you are entitled to 4% of your gross pay to be paid on each pay. When you reach 8 years of service with this employer, that rate of vacation pay is increased to 6%. Unless you are authorized by your offer of employment or your supervisor to work during the two Reading Weeks and/or the time between Christmas and the New Year, this time is unpaid. Full Time employees are compensated according to their employment contract.

#### ***5.6.1.1 Vacation Entitlement for Permanent Employees***

The vacation year for the permanent employees is May 1 to April 30, the same as the fiscal year for MSVU Students' Union. As a permanent full-time employee, you are entitled to a specific amount of paid vacation to use at a mutually agreed upon time, as well as paid time-off for certain times in the school year, including the two Reading Weeks and the time the Student Union offices are closed for the holiday break, as per your contract.

#### ***5.6.1.2 Vacation Entitlement for Part-Time Employees***

Each part-time staff member is required to take two weeks of vacation during the summer term. This vacation must be scheduled at least 4 weeks in advance and agreed upon with your supervisor and the President.

#### ***5.6.1.2 Using Your Vacation Entitlement***

You are encouraged to schedule and take all your allotted vacation leave within the fiscal year in which it is earned, preferably in at least one-week increments. The *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* requires employees to annually take at least two full weeks' vacation, or three weeks after 8 years, and the employee must receive at least one unbroken week of vacation. If you do not schedule your vacation leave, MSVU Students' Union will schedule the required vacation time and provide a minimum of one week's notice.

To ensure a fair distribution of blocks of vacation leave and to minimize impact on the operations, you are required to submit your vacation leave in writing. Vacation leave is subject to approval and decisions will be made within 10 days. Changes to scheduled vacation leave will be entertained as required.

In cases where more than one employee has requested the same or overlapping vacation dates and it is not convenient for MSVU Students' Union to approve all requests for that time frame, the date of the request, followed by seniority (seniority in the position, followed by length of service) will be the deciding factor in determining which employee receives approval. Every effort will be made to accommodate all requests.

#### **5.6.1.2 Vacation Carry-over**

You are entitled to carry-over up to two weeks of your vacation into the next vacation year, provided you have taken the minimum number of weeks' vacation as per the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*. All vacation that is carried over must be used in the next vacation year so that there is no carry-over of previous years' carry-over.

#### **5.6.2 Holidays**

The Students' Union recognizes both the statutory holidays and the public holidays. This means that as a permanent, full-time employee you are entitled to these paid statutory holidays: New Year's Day, Heritage Day, Good Friday, Canada Day, Labour Day, and Christmas Day. In addition, you are also eligible for these paid public holidays: Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Natal Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, and Boxing Day. Caritas Day which falls on the last Wednesday in January is also a paid holiday for you as a permanent, full-time employee.

Note: If a statutory holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day proclaimed as a holiday by the federal, provincial, or municipal authorities will be observed.

The Student Union recognizes the requirements for six paid statutory holidays throughout the calendar year as per the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* described below. This information applies to you if you are a term, part-time employee, including Council Executive.

*The Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code spells out who is eligible for paid holidays. "First, during the 30 calendar days right before the holiday, the employee must be entitled to receive pay for 15 of those days. This does not mean that the employee must have worked 15 out of 30 days. The important words to remember are "entitled to receive pay." For example, if an employee is sick and the employer has a paid sick time policy, or if the employee is attending a course and is being paid wages for attending, or if the employee has recently taken vacation time, the employee may still qualify for the paid holiday.*

*Second, the employee must have worked on his/her last scheduled shift or day before the holiday and on the first scheduled shift or day after the holiday. The important word to remember is "scheduled." Many people believe this means that if the employee does not work the day after*

*the holiday then the employee does not qualify to receive holiday pay. If the day is one when the employee is not scheduled to work, then he/she may still qualify for the paid holiday.*

***Note:** If an employer tells an employee not to report for work on his/her last scheduled work day immediately before the holiday, or the next scheduled work day after the holiday, then the employee is still entitled to receive holiday pay if he/she meets the first qualification.”*

Eligible employees who are required to work these days, will be paid according to the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*:

*An employee who works on a holiday and who qualifies to be paid holiday pay is entitled to receive both of the following:*

- *a regular–or average–day’s pay (see *Paying an Employee for a Holiday*, previous section), and*
- *one and a half times the employee’s regular rate of wages for the number of hours.*

If you are not working, and eligible for holiday pay, then it is a paid day. If you are not eligible and not working, you will not be paid. If you are not eligible and working, you will be paid your regular rate of pay.

Easter Monday , Victoria Day, Natal Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, and Boxing Day are public holidays but not paid holidays for our term, part-time staff. Truth and Reconciliation Day is a paid holiday for term, part-time staff as passed by the Student Representative Council. All term, part time employees will receive a day's pay as calculated based on their maximum approved hours per week (ex. If an employee is allocated 25 hours maximum per week, the employee would receive 5 hours of paid time). As a term, part time employee you are not authorized to work on these holidays.

### **5.6.3 Personal Leave**

As a permanent full-time employee, you are entitled to paid personal leave days. You can use them at your discretion, and we appreciate it if they can be scheduled rather than last minute absences.

You should not be at work when you are too ill or injured to be fully productive. This time off will help you have a speedy recovery and ensures that, if you are contagious, your co-workers and our members do not succumb to the same condition. Your paid personal leave can be used for medical appointments, caring for a loved one or the illness of a pet if no other arrangements can be made. All employees are entitled to unpaid leave or may use their paid vacation leave instead.

If you are unable to attend work on short notice, contact your supervisor by phone or text message before the start of your workday indicating if you are ill or injured and when you expect to return to work. If you are leaving a phone message or sending a text message you must confirm the receipt of the message. If you are not able to return to work when you expected, contact your supervisor regularly, until you have returned.

### **5.6.3.1 Personal Leave Entitlement**

As a permanent employee you are entitled to ten (10) paid personal leave days per calendar year. These days will not be carried over into the next year.

Should you require additional days off these will be granted as per the direction under **5.7 Unpaid Leave of Absence**. As per section **5.8.1 Paid Sick Benefits**, you are encouraged to investigate the federal *Employment Insurance Sick Benefits* and your own short-term and/or long-term sick leave insurance policies.

### **5.6.3.2 Leave for Family Illness**

In the case of illness of your parent, spouse, or child, you may be permitted to use your paid personal leave for the purpose of caring for your family member provided no one other than you can provide it. MSVU Student Union may require proof of the need for the leave as considered necessary.

### **5.6.3.3 Medical and Dental Appointments**

Medical and/or dental appointments should be scheduled outside of the regular hours of work. If this is not possible, you are encouraged to flex your time in a way that minimizes the impact on the operations of MSVU Student Union. If that is not possible, you may use your Personal Leave.

## **5.6.4 Medical Certificate**

MSVU Student Union reserves the right to request that you provide a medical certificate from your doctor for absences due to illness or injury of three consecutive days (paid or unpaid) or more, at your expense. MSVU Student Union may also require a medical certificate from a medical practitioner of our choice, at our cost.

Depending on the nature and length of the absence, a medical certificate indicating that you are healthy enough to return to work with or without accommodation may be requested. If the medical certificate indicates that you are unable to return to your full job responsibilities in the short or long term, MSVU Student Union will accommodate this request to the point of undue hardship. It is important for both of us that you return to work as soon as possible after an absence. This accommodation may include a gradual return to work, a tool or piece of equipment, a change in your hours of work and/or even a change to your responsibilities. MSVU Student Union will do whatever it takes to get you back to work as soon as possible, to the point of undue hardship.

### **5.6.4.1 Excessive Absenteeism**

Each of us is responsible for doing whatever is necessary to maintain our health with proper nutrition, exercise, stress management, rest, and relaxation. While you are encouraged to stay home when you are ill or injured, the truth of the matter is that when you are absent from the workplace both the members and your co-workers are negatively impacted. You are encouraged to arrange your personal matters so that you can attend work on a regular, recurring basis.

At the beginning of every academic semester, your supervisor will review everyone's availability for work. If your availability changes after this review, it is up to you to communicate any changes with your supervisor. Specific religious or spiritual observances and any requested

accommodations for such must be communicated to your supervisor at the beginning of every semester, within two weeks of the start date. If you have had a higher-than-average incidence of not being available for work over an extended period you will be encouraged to make whatever changes necessary to improve your availability. Your employment contract with MSVU Student Union is based on the notion that you will attend and be available for work on a regular recurring basis. If you are not able to do this, your continued employment may be jeopardized.

### **5.6.5 Bereavement Leave**

You are encouraged to take time off to attend services for deceased friends and relatives.

As a permanent, full-time employee you can take paid leave of up to five working days in a row if their spouse, parent, guardian, child/child under your care, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law dies.

Should you require additional paid or unpaid leave to attend services, your supervisor will determine on a case-by-case basis if your workload can be accommodated by your co-workers.

As per *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*, and as a term, part-time employee, you are eligible to take unpaid leave of up to five working days in a row if their spouse, parent, guardian, child/child under your care, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law dies.

Should you require additional unpaid leave to attend services, your supervisor will determine on a case-by-case basis if your workload can be accommodated by your co-workers.

### **5.6.6 Leave for Attending Court**

As a permanent, full-time employee you will be granted paid leave if you are required to serve on a jury. Paid leave will also be granted if you are required by subpoena or summons to attend as a witness in a court proceeding.

As a term, part-time employee you will be granted unpaid leave if you are required to serve on a jury. Unpaid leave will also be granted if you are required by subpoena or summons to attend as a witness in a court proceeding.

## **5.7 Unpaid Leave of Absence**

Once you have successfully completed your probationary period, as a permanent, full-time employee you may submit your request for substantial unpaid leave to your supervisor in writing at least one month before the start of the leave. Ensure you state the reason for the leave, the length of time required, the date upon which the leave would commence and the date of return.

Approval will be based on the following factors: the reason for the leave, your length of service, the length of the leave, the cost to the organization in covering the absence and any operational requirements.

You will be notified in writing whether the request for leave has been granted or denied. If the leave is approved, you will need to provide 100% payment for any eligible benefits you wish to



continue during the absence. Should you wish to extend your leave, your request must be made in writing to your supervisor at least one month prior to the end of the leave.

At least a week before returning to work, please confirm in writing to your supervisor, your intention to return to work. While you are on leave, you will not accrue vacation leave.

## **5.8 Other Legislated Paid Leave**

### **5.8.1 Paid Sick Benefits**

If your illness was severe enough to keep you away from work for a period, you may be eligible to apply for Employment Insurance (EI) Sick Benefits. You should familiarize yourself with the terms of the EI Sick Benefits found on the *Service Canada* website so that you are not risking your financial security if you become ill or injured.

Buying both short and long-term disability insurance is something you may want to consider. Short-term disability insurance can replace the need for applying for EI Sick Benefits. Long-term disability insurance generally has a long waiting period (120 days is common) and may provide you with an income for an indefinite period, should you qualify.

Should you be off for a period of extended sick leave, it is important that your supervisor be updated on a regular basis regarding your return-to-work date. You are expected to do whatever must be done to regain your health and return to work as quickly as possible.

### **5.8.2 Family Illness Leave**

You may be entitled to Compassionate Leave under the Employment Insurance program. You are encouraged to contact *Service Canada* and *novascotia.ca* for up-to-date information on these benefits.

### **5.8.3 Maternity, Parental and/or Adoption Leave**

MSVU Student Union, in accordance with federal and provincial legislation, provides employees who have been employed by MSVU Student Union for a minimum of one year, an unpaid leave of absence for the purpose of caring for their newborn infant. You are advised to consult *Service Canada* for your maternity, parental and/or adoption leave entitlements.

It is appreciated if you advise your supervisor in writing at least three months before the beginning of your expected leave. Your supervisor will contact you regarding your benefits coverage during your leave as you will have the option of maintaining your group insurance premiums by either paying your portion in full before the leave begins or by providing post-dated cheques to your supervisor prior to the leave and for the duration of this leave.

It is appreciated if you give written notice to MSVU Student Union at least 4 weeks before you plan to end your leave and return to work. Upon return to work, MSVU Student Union guarantees you a position equivalent, but not necessarily identical, to the position held at the beginning of the leave, unless a restructuring results in the elimination of that position. If the position no longer exists, you will be notified, and reasonable efforts will be made to secure a comparable position for you.

#### **5.8.4 Reservists' Leave**

The *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* provides for two types of unpaid leaves for Canadian Forces Reservists: training leave available to all reservists and a deployment leave for reservists who accept a deployment for active service. Please check the provincial website for more information.

#### **5.8.5 Other Legislated Leaves**

There may be other legislated leaves that are of interest to you. You are encouraged to check both the federal and provincial government websites for more information.

### **5.9 Group Benefits**

The group insurance plan is offered to all permanent, full-time employees. This is fully paid by the employer. Participation in the group insurance plan is not mandatory. Information relating to the benefits in the group insurance plan is found in the benefits booklet. Please refer to the booklet for information concerning coverage and limits, etc.

The group insurance plan may include these benefits for the employee and family members:

- Extended Health and Dental Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

If you wish to continue your group insurance coverage during an extended unpaid leave, you will have the option of maintaining your group insurance premiums by either paying your portion of the premium in full before the leave begins or by providing post-dated cheques prior to the leave and for the duration of this leave. The group insurance plan ceases upon termination.

#### **5.9.1 Reimbursement of Expenses**

You will be reimbursed for any work-related travel and other reasonable expenses that you have been authorized for either in your offer of employment, or specifically by your supervisor. All expenditures must be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer within 30 days of the expense occurring to be eligible for reimbursement. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the Financial Policy.

### **5.10 Ending the Employment Relationship**

#### **5.10.1 Resignation**

When you have decided to end your employment with MSVU Student Union your notice of termination must be in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* or as specified in your Offer of Employment. As a courtesy, it is appreciated if you provide at least two weeks written notice to your supervisor.

#### **5.10.2 Dismissal**

MSVU Student Union may terminate your employment at any time for *just cause* – that is for doing something severe enough to end your employment such as stealing, lying, failing a drug or alcohol test, falsifying records, embezzlement, insubordination, deliberately violating MSVU

Student Union policies and/or rules, and other serious misconduct related to your employment. In such cases, the organization is under no obligation to provide a notice period or pay in lieu thereof other than that equivalent to the amounts provided for by the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code*.

### **5.10.3 Your Final Pay**

Upon termination of your employment, arrangements will be made for payment of your outstanding vacation or other earnings, if applicable, on your final pay.



## Confidentiality Agreement

### Guiding Principles:

1. Confidentiality is important in establishing and maintaining trusting and lasting relationships among employees and guests.
2. Confidentiality is the cornerstone to ensuring that privileged information is accessible only to those authorized to have access.
3. Confidentiality acknowledges respect for an individual's right to privacy and includes information that may be inadvertently shared or overheard.

I understand that confidential information must be protected and used only in the interests of MSVU Student Union and that respect for the confidentiality of personal and business information must be considered when sharing information electronically, when sharing hard copy documents, when storing and/or destroying hard and soft copies of documents and when verbally sharing information.

I understand that the discussion of personal information about employees and guests of MSVU Student Union without authorized consent is unethical. I will abide by this Confidentiality Agreement to ensure respect for the information, employees, and members of MSVU Student Union.

### Acknowledgment and Agreement

I also acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies and guidelines as outlined in this Employee Handbook. I have had opportunities to ask questions for clarity and I agree to adhere to the Employee Handbook in its entirety.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Employee (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This signed acknowledgment will be placed in your Personnel File.



## **Appendix A**

### **MSVU Student Union: Volunteer Handbook**

As a volunteer you will be working alongside our members and the MSVU Student Union's employees. You are encouraged to read the Student Union's Employee Handbook in its entirety as some of the information also applies to you as a volunteer, such as Occupational Health and Safety, and personal and professional conduct. You are required to sign the confidentiality agreement as well as the acknowledgement that you have read and understand the contents of the Handbook as it applies to you as a volunteer.

#### **Volunteer Bill of Rights**

As a volunteer with MSVU Student Union you have the following rights:

- To be informed and understand MSVU Student Union 's mission, vision and values
- To understand how your volunteer service contributes to the overall goals of MSVU Student Union
- To be given a suitable assignment, your volunteer schedule, and identify reporting relationships
- To receive, as appropriate, adequate information, preparation, orientation, training, or resources to meet the responsibilities of the position
- To be given sound guidance, support, direction, and supervision
- To have volunteer service records maintained
- To be recognized for your service
- To be respected for your skills and individual needs
- To express, in the appropriate forums, your opinions, ideas and constructive criticisms for positive change and to have these expressions received and considered
- To work in a safe, secure, and respectful work environment

## **MSVU Student Union: Volunteer Responsibilities**

As a volunteer with MSVU Student Union you have the following responsibilities:

- To accept and work within MSVU Student Union 's vision, mission, and values
- To demonstrate commitment to MSVU Student Union and to believe in the purpose of the work assigned
- To carry out your volunteer responsibilities, as representatives of MSVU Student Union, with professionalism, dignity, and integrity
- To participate in orientation and training programs as needed
- To carry out volunteer responsibilities promptly, reliably and to the best of your ability
- To provide adequate notice when unable to meet your scheduled hours
- To be responsible with the use of MSVU Student Union 's resources
- To accept the guidance and decisions of your supervisor
- To participate in any review of, or feedback on, your performance
- To appropriately display MSVU Student Union volunteer identification and insignia as required
- To treat MSVU Student Union staff, members, and other volunteers with respect and dignity



## **Appendix B**

### **Resolution for Disrespectful Behaviour**

Harassment, bullying, and violence are not respectful. If you feel that you have been treated in a manner that is not respectful by a co-worker, partner, or member you are expected to bring your concerns to the attention of your supervisor. Should you feel disrespected by another person while in the workplace (colleague, member, visitor, or vendor) it is your responsibility to speak with the other person on a timely basis and in a respectful manner and ask them to stop the behaviour that you have found to be disrespectful to you.

If you are not comfortable doing this by yourself, you are encouraged to find a colleague who will accompany you on one or any of the resulting meetings where this conflict is discussed. They are welcome to attend but they cannot contribute anything but moral support to you or the conversation.

If you are still not comfortable with this first step, you must take your concerns to your supervisor/manager/Strategic Operations Manager/President, with or without a colleague accompanying you. If your complaint is with the Strategic Operations Manager or the President, you must take your complaint to the other. If your complaint is with the GM, you would take your complaint to the President and visa-versa.

If, at any time, you decide not to pursue this conflict resolution any further, that is your choice. Don't hesitate to ask for what you need to have an acceptable resolution. Working with your supervisor (and your colleague), you will work your way through this process:

1. Describe and explain your experience and the behaviour that caused you to feel disrespected.
2. Determine if this event was a one-off as opposed to a major, significant event.
3. Identify what your desired outcome of this conflict resolution to be.
4. Fully describe in writing what happened and your response/reaction to the behaviour and again, in writing, confirm your desired outcome.

Your supervisor is committed to getting this resolved with you on a timely basis. It is their responsibility to determine the next steps, which includes conducting the investigation themselves or contracting with a third party to conduct the investigation.

Once the investigation has been conducted by interviewing all of those involved or witness to the event, recommendations for resolution will be made to the Strategic Operations Manager, President and/or Executive Committee. They will decide the best way forward and implement it accordingly. You will be informed of the decision before the implementation begins. Their decision is final.

## **Appendix C**

### **Continuing to Work During the Pandemic**

As you are aware, safety is always priority, and both the employer and the employees have a direct responsibility to ensure our workplace is safe for all employees, members, and visitors. This is an extensive responsibility and due to the pandemic, there must be additional guidelines in place.

There are many important perspectives on our commitment to safety. We want everyone to be safe at work, so we can all go home at the end of the workday. We also want to ensure that no one is taking home the COVID-19 virus to our family and friends.

We want to continue our success as an organization, and your continued employment. We can only do this if everyone feels safe at work, and everyone shows up for work on a regular recurring basis, healthy and ready to work.

Since March 2020 our governments – both federal and provincial – have made difficult decisions around restricting our personal activities. The COVID-19 protocols have been issued and fine-tuned depending on how the virus is spreading in our communities. We have no other choice but to follow these protocols, as individuals and as an employer. We have an obligation to protect ourselves and others.

None of us can successfully do our jobs from home in the long run. Therefore, we will continue to come to work and abide by the Nova Scotia provincial government's COVID-19 protocols that are currently in place. These mandatory directives describe when we must wear masks, maintain a 6' physical distance, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces, and encourage us to wash our hands often.

In keeping with our underlying obligation to you, your co-workers, and others in the workplace in providing a healthy and safe workplace, all employees are required to follow the MSVU guidelines for COVID. You may be required to provide proof of vaccination according to your role. You are encouraged to visit the provincial website for updates on the COVID-19 protocols, as they have changed several times since March 2020.

As per the COVID-19 protocols, if in the previous 48 hours you have had, or you are currently experiencing:

A cough (new or worsening)

OR

2 or more of the following symptoms:

- fever (chills, sweats)
- headache
- runny nose or nasal congestion
- sore throat
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

You must immediately adhere to the MSVU COVID-19 policies at all times. If you are unsure what these are, please contact your supervisor.