

Subject: Working Groups Policy

Synopsis: This policy establishes the guidelines for applying to be a working group, as well as the expectations of working groups.

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Ratified: September 2012

Amended: October 2019

Policy:

OPIRG Peterborough works to create and sustain community engagement about social and environmental justice issues through action, research and education. One vital way OPIRG Peterborough meets this objective is by offering on-going support for the creation and maintenance of ‘working groups’. These groups form from the self-guided interests of the Trent and Peterborough communities, thereby fostering action and awareness around specific social and environmental justice issues.

1. Working Group Application Process

1.1 – Membership

Members of working groups are to be members of OPIRG Peterborough. An OPIRG member is anyone who has paid the membership fee.

1.2 – Proposal Submission

To establish an official OPIRG working group, an application package which is available at the OPIRG office or on OPIRG Peterborough’s website, must be submitted to the OPIRG’s coordinator (either in person or online via email at opriglistings@gmail.com). The application package involves a short-written proposal which must include:

- A group title
- A mission statement
- A group description
 - which goals and issues the group will be focusing on
 - reasons for applying for working group status within OPIRG
- An informal action plan
 - how the group will contribute to OPIRG’s goals and follow its mission statement
 - how it plans to involve (and be accessible to) members of the Trent and Peterborough communities
- A designated contact person (not necessarily a group leader)
- The signatures of at least 3 committed group members

1.3 – Proposal Review

Submitted proposals will be reviewed by the OPIRG Board of Directors as soon as possible following submission. OPIRG will inform applicants of the date of the meeting at which their proposal will be discussed; applicants are encouraged to attend this meeting. The Board will reach a consensus decision about the proposal, based on whether it meets the requirements outlined in section 1.2. If the proposal is not approved in its first draft, applicants will be notified of the reasons why and suggestions for amendments maybe made. The potential working group may resubmit the proposal after appropriate changes have been made. Proposal will undergo reviewal outlined above until proposal is approved.

2. Benefits to Working Groups

OPIRG Peterborough will support the Working Groups in the following ways:

- A stipend of \$100 per working group (upon proof of receipts/expenses) per school semester (September- December first semester and December- April second semester).
- Use of OPIRG resources upon previous arrangement (i.e. contacts, information, office equipment (i.e. Printer, button-maker and/or computers), help with room bookings and meeting space.
- Assistance with promotions (i.e. access to OPIRG’s mailing list, events calendar, logo)
- Assistance from staff and board members (Working group members have the right to approach the Board of Directors with ideas, or with challenges in working as a group)
- Collaboration with OPIRG in the form of events
- Upon request, resources and training in meeting facilitation, campaign planning, strategic planning, group sustainability
- We offer anti-oppression, consensus-based decision making, and other trainings for all Working Groups.
- We can facilitate other workshops or trainings on-demand for your Working Group, such as campaign strategy, long-term planning, or more.
- We can connect your group to others across the province or across the country who are doing similar work.
- provide dedicated space on our website for your group to use as a homepage or to post news or blog articles.
- Provide our Green Dishes for use at your group’s events
- Other reasonable requests

3. Responsibilities of Working Groups

3.1 – Mission Statement, Policies and Training

It is the duty of OPIRG Peterborough’s Working Groups to be guided by OPIRG Peterborough’s mission statement and applicable policies (i.e. Harassment Policy). Working groups have the duty to operationalize OPIRG’s commitment to employing consensus decision-making processes and to fostering non-hierarchical working environments. Working Groups shall be committed to organizing in an anti-oppressive manner, which includes (but not limited to) addressing all racist,

sexist, classist, ableist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic and/or any other oppressive language or actions in meetings, at events, and so on. As such, working groups will be encouraged to attend training sessions which will help them to do so. OPIRG will inform all current working groups of any upcoming training sessions that may be made available to them.

3.2 – Representing OPIRG

OPIRG Peterborough cannot endorse illegal activity or action that is discriminatory in any way.

Board or Full-time Staff approval must be obtained beforehand for all materials produced for public viewing, for any outside sources of funding, and for any activity that newly affiliates OPIRG with any person, political figure or organization. Furthermore, while representing OPIRG during meetings and events, as well as in written and promotional publications, working groups must:

- Promote diversity within OPIRG and the larger community
- Maintain the credibility of the organization (i.e. ensure that factual claims are supported by research)
- Make use of the OPIRG logo when representing the organization in print
- Strive to operate in a non-hierarchical manner, and will employ a consensus decision making process
- Use the OPIRG office respectfully and responsibly. This includes cleaning up after yourselves, keeping the office tidy and not removing/taking items from the office without asking permission, or returning.
- Working Group members will attend a mandatory Working Group orientation meeting at the beginning of each year.
- Every working group will present their work at the Annual General Meeting
- All working groups will provide a year-end report that will be published in the annual newsletter

3.3 - Communication

Working groups are responsible for maintaining regular communication with OPIRG in the following ways:

- Notifying OPIRG of all meetings, events and other planned activities
- Recording minutes at all meetings
- Maintaining a folder in the OPIRG office containing copies of minutes, posters, media and contact information (to establish institutional memory)
- Forwarding relevant emails to OPIRG
- Sending a representative to at least one OPIRG Board meeting per semester to report on the group's activities (Representatives are also encouraged to attend OPIRG's Annual General Meeting to provide an annual summary of their activities)
- Designating a contact liaison from the working group

3.4- Year-end Reflection

To help the working group, reflect on achievements and setbacks throughout the year, to consolidate the group's relationship to OPIRG and to assess the next steps for the groups,

working groups are responsible for submitting the following materials before the Annual General Meeting:

- self-assessment of the group, reflecting on the group vision and goals submitted in the application
- list of group description, activities, events, achievements, campaigns and group members to be submitted for inclusion in OPIRG's annual report

4. Maintaining Working Group Status

4.1 – Annual Statement of Intent

To maintain their status, established working groups must submit a statement of intent at the beginning of each school year in September. The statement of intent should briefly declare:

- An on-going interest in maintaining working group status
- Any significant changes to the mission statement and/or objectives of the group
- An updated contact list of group members

4.2 – Working Group Review Process

A working group may be put under review if they are accused of not adequately following this working group policy. Participation in the following responsibilities are mandatory to follow the working group policy:

- Adhering to OPIRG's mission statement and values
- Representing OPIRG in a reputable manner
- Communicating with OPIRG on a regular basis

Initial Meeting:

If a working group is put under review its members must meet with OPIRG Board and/or Staff members to discuss the concerns. OPIRG will generally aid working groups in employing agreeable solutions to concerns raised, in order for them to be in compliance with this policy. However, if those present determine that the working group cannot or will not operate under this working group policy, then their status will no longer be recognized by OPIRG.

Follow-Up Meeting:

Upon the initial review meeting a second review date will be set, for the purpose of assessing whether or not proper changes have been instated. If changes have not been successfully introduced and the working group continues to lack compliance with this working group policy then their status will no longer be recognized by OPIRG.

5. Changes to Policy

This working group policy will be reviewed and updated by the OPIRG Board at least once every two years, upon which time the Board may agree to change any provisions. Working groups will be notified of policy changes, which will be considered in effect for all working groups immediately upon their Board approval.

Working Group Application

Working Group Application Title of Working Group: _____

Contact Persons:

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signatures – Minimum of three:

Only active members of the group should sign this application. If more space is required, please attach a separate sheet.

Name (Please print)	Signature	Date

Has this Working Group/Project been funded by OPIRG-Peterborough in the past? YES NO

Is this Working Group/Project currently being funded by other sources? YES NO If Yes, by who?

Is this Working Group/Project affiliated with other organizations and/or groups on campus, in the greater community or internationally? YES NO

If yes, which one(s)?

Proposal – Minimum of one page, single spaced:

The written proposal is to be attached to the above form and must include:

- A mission statement
- A group description
 - o Which issues/goals the group will focus on
 - o Reasons for applying for working group status

An informal action plan about how the group plans to:

- o Contribute to OPIRG's goals and follow its mission statement
- o Involve and be accessible to Trent and Peterborough communities
- o Recruit new members