



# POLICYTHON

## 2021

### Challenge the System

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A student led organization at the University of Toronto

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# Land Acknowledgement

UTP acknowledges this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work in the community, on this territory.

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# *A Word from the President*

## **Dear Policython Participants,**

My name is Miu Hu, and I am the founding president of the University of Toronto Policython. It is nice to finally meet you all (virtually) at Policython 2021. I am excited to have the opportunity to welcome you here, held for the first time in Canada and at the University of Toronto. You are one of the first to attempt this event in this country, and I hope that brings you a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue further with your involvement in politics, government and advocacy.

As youth, we are often excluded from politics and formal institutions that nevertheless dictate our daily lives. We have powerful and valid insights on current issues and on our societies in the future. I founded UTP with the hopes that I can strengthen young voices in the field and build on the set of skills necessary to challenge the system. We all have the responsibility to support our peers, and, little by little change the space around us to a better, safer place for all. Policython encourages you to develop skills necessary to accomplish this goal. I sincerely admire your courage challenging our federal institutions and yourself.

My amazing team and I have worked to create an event and a community here at U of T where you can put your skills to the test. Thank you sincerely for your interest in UTP. We hope that you find your experience with us valuable and, most of all, fun.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miu Hu', written over a horizontal line.

**Miu Hu, Founder/ President**

# POLICYTHON 2021

FRIDAY, MARCH 19TH- SUNDAY, MARCH 21ST

In Eastern Standard Time

## DAY 1

11 AM opening ceremony

**12 PM prompts emailed: event begins**

## DAY 2

**12- 2 PM equity check**

3 PM drop in office hours with mentors open

4:00 \*duration differs by stream

5:00

6:00 office hours close

8 - 9 PM participant social

## DAY 3

3 PM drop in office hours with mentors open

4:00 \*duration differs by stream

5:00

6:00 office hours close

7:00

8:00

**9 PM prompts submitted, event ends**

# Day 1: 03/19/21

11AM - 12PM Opening Ceremony

Please use the following information to access the opening ceremony.

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/86489990460>

Meeting ID: 864 8999 0460

Passcode: UTP2021

12PM: Prompts will be sent via email to primary and secondary contacts.

# Day 2: 03/20/21

12PM - 2PM: Equity Check (see p. 8).

3PM - 6PM: Office Hours

Office hours will be held on Day 2 and Day 3. Please use the following information to access Office Hours:

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/81367196303>

Meeting ID: 813 6719 6303

Passcode: 022448

HUMAN RIGHTS: 3:00 - 6:00 PM

ENVIRONMENTAL: 3:00 - 4:00 PM

PUBLIC HEALTH: 3:00 - 4:00 PM

ECONOMICS: 3:00 - 5:00PM

FOREIGN POLICY: 3:00 - 5:00PM

8PM - 10PM: UTP Social

# Day 3: 03/21/21

3PM - 6PM: Office Hours

HUMAN RIGHTS: 3:00 - 5:00 PM

ENVIRONMENTAL: 3:00 - 4:00 PM

PUBLIC HEALTH: 4:00 - 5:00 PM

ECONOMICS: 3:00 - 5:00PM

FOREIGN POLICY: 3:00 - 5:00PM

9PM: ALL COMPLETED BRIEFS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE DEADLINE.

## Closing & Awards Ceremony: 04/06/21

11AM - 12PM: Winners will be announced. Zoom links will be sent to all teams by email as well.

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/87684076453>

Meeting ID: 876 8407 6453

Passcode: UTP2021

# 2. The Policy Brief

The brief must provide a solution to the problem introduced in the prompt. It should include:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Approach and Results
- Conclusion
- Implications and Recommendation

Your brief must be a maximum of four pages double spaced + bibliography. You may use any citation format, as long as it is consistent.

Each section should be separated with a header. Subheaders are not required.

Please write your brief for politicians who are involved in the field but not necessarily informed on this matter.

Please refer to Section 5: Resources for the rubric.





# 3. Submissions

Please read these instructions carefully.

Submissions are due at 9:00PM EST on Sunday, March 21st. No extensions will be granted unless in the case of an emergency or discussed before the start of the event.

Submissions will occur through Google Form. Please use the following form to submit your finalized policy brief:

- [UTP 2021 Final Submissions](#)

Policy briefs must be submitted in PDF form. Do not include your name or identification number anywhere on the document.

## 3.1. Judging Process

UTP has invited U of T professors and industry professionals for each stream to judge submitted policies based on a designed rubric. Judges will grade each brief, and UTP will rank the briefs in a stream according to the total points given. Participants will remain anonymous.



## 3.2. Awards

The highest graded team from each stream will receive an awards package that includes coupon codes to local restaurants and brands, exclusive resources, and other goods and services to be used on and off-campus. Briefs may also be submitted to U of T journals for publication. If judges find an exceptionally well-written brief, UTP will support the team in forwarding the brief to a real policymaker. Please refer to <https://www.uoftpolicython.com/sponsors> for a list of our contributors.

UTP will also send out certificates and honourable mentions for notable briefs that did not get the highest mark. All participating teams are encouraged to include their experience in their resume/ CV.



# 4. Equity

We have updated our Equity policies. Please find attached to the same email our most recent Equity Policy. Notably, it has been updated to state that reaching out to any of the judges before graded briefs are returned to participants qualifies a team for disqualification.

If you or a member of your team wishes to raise an accommodations concern with us, please fill out this form and we will fulfil it to the best of our abilities: <https://forms.gle/o9aSKmRjcZJFpVvy9>.

## 4.1. Equity Check

UTP Equity Commissioners ensure that our Equity Policy is followed.

At the beginning of the event (Friday, March 19th at 12 pm EST), you must share a blank Google Doc with [equity.uoftp@gmail.com](mailto:equity.uoftp@gmail.com); please include your identification number as the title. Please input a draft of your brief into this Google Doc by Saturday, March 20th 12pm EST. Equity will conduct an equity check on all drafts to ensure that they abide by our equity guidelines. Failure to do so will result in a potential disqualification. If material on the Google Doc shared with us violates our Equity Policy, UTP will be reaching out to you/your team.

If you have any questions, you may contact your Equity Team at [equity.uoftp@gmail.com](mailto:equity.uoftp@gmail.com).



# 5. Resources

## 5.1. Office Hours

UTP Mentors have volunteered their time to hold office hours for participants looking for help on their research or brief. We strongly urge you to utilise all available Office Hours to write a complete policy brief. Each participant (individual or team) is allowed a maximum of 1 (one) Office Hour visit per day, for a maximum of 2 (two) Office Hours session during the event. Teams in Environment and Public Health can attend office hours for a maximum of 10 minutes each day. Teams in Foreign Policy, Economic Policy, and Human Rights Policy can attend for a maximum of 15 minutes each day.

Office hours will be held on Day 2 and Day 3. Please use the following information to access Office Hours:

<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/81367196303>

Meeting ID: 813 6719 6303

Passcode: 022448

Once you have been admitted to the call, you will be able to enter the necessary breakout room for office hours. To enter a breakout room, click on “Breakout Rooms” at the bottom of your screen. Hover over the breakout room for your respective stream and click “Join.” Please ensure that you have updated Zoom to its latest version; if your Zoom is not updated, you will not be able to move freely between breakout rooms.



# Office Hours Schedule

## Day 2: Saturday, March 20th

HUMAN RIGHTS: 3:00 - 6:00 PM  
ENVIRONMENTAL: 3:00 - 4:00 PM  
PUBLIC HEALTH: 3:00 - 4:00 PM  
ECONOMICS: 3:00 - 5:00PM  
FOREIGN POLICY: 3:00 - 5:00PM

## Day 3: Sunday, March 21st

HUMAN RIGHTS: 3:00 - 5:00 PM  
ENVIRONMENTAL: 3:00 - 4:00 PM  
PUBLIC HEALTH: 3:00 - 4:00 PM  
ECONOMICS: 3:00 - 5:00PM  
FOREIGN POLICY: 3:00 - 5:00PM

## 5.2. Writing the Brief

Whether you are suggesting a policy amendment or proposing a new one, your policy brief should be on the policy you identify as most relevant. This means that you must identify an active policy and demonstrate its relevance in your brief. Your brief should mostly state facts and evidence that makes the facts collected credible, and include only necessary information. For explanation on each section, please check this document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bcem45Eg6Qo-0zyod4wMqxhgl5tnJixi/view..>



## 5.3. Tips + Tricks

What is a policy brief?

- Written to provide insight and recommendations to informed, non-experts (such as politicians, policymakers, journalists, etc.) on a specific policy issue
- Tries to be a catalyst for change, convinces the reader of the urgency of the particular issue
- Evidence-based, non-academic pieces of professional writing
  - No jargon, should be clear, concise, and informative
- Can either be a series of amendments to a pre-existing policy or an original policy brief proposal

What are the different parts of a policy brief?

- Executive summary
  - A description of the problem
  - A statement on why the current approach/policy needs to be changed
  - Your recommendations for action
- Introduction
  - The problem (What is the problem? Why is it important?)
  - Background (What happens, where, who is involved?)
  - Context (What are the current policy prescriptions?)
  - Causes of current situation (Why? Give evidence or examples)
- Research findings
  - Briefly mention research methods and procedures
  - You may use a synthesis of existing research/literature
  - Provide a general summary and analysis of the research findings
  - Illustrate the effects of the current policy
  - What is working? What is not working?



- Policy recommendations
  - A breakdown of specific measures/practical steps, 1-2 recommendations (maximum 3)
    - Ensure they are relevant, credible, and feasible
  - Be sure to explain how this policy can overcome the problem at hand
  - Consider potential benefits, costs, and side-effects/unintended consequences
  - Reminder to use evidence produced by your research

What sources to include in my research?

- Open source data
- Government publications
- Credible newspaper articles
- [Peer-reviewed journal articles](#)

Are there any relevant resources?

- [Policy Brief Basics](#)
- [Writing Tips](#)
- [Research Guides](#)



# 5.4. Rubric

## PART 1: BRIEF

	AREA	EXCELLENT (-0 to -1)	GOOD (-2)	WEAK (-3)	INADEQUATE (-4 to -5)
<b>Proposal/ 'Recommendation' in Implications and Recommendation (15)</b>	<b>Creativity (/5)</b>	It is original and has not been attempted before.	Similar policies have been attempted with a positive impact.	Similar policies have been attempted with a negative impact.	This policy has been implemented before.
	<b>Improves Well Being (/5)</b>	All unintended negative side effects have been considered and addressed adequately. Considers the impact on marginalized communities.	All side effects were briefly addressed but solutions incomplete.	Some side effects are not considered.	Side effects are not addressed at all.
	<b>Feasibility (/5)</b>	It is realistic and can be implemented with current federal resources.  Provides a step-by-step procedure backed with proper scholarship and evidence  Successfully compares and evaluates proposal with current and proposed policies to illustrate what works, what might not be addressed, and shortcomings	Addresses realistic assumptions of outcomes to a moderate degree, is somewhat grounded in reality  Step-by-step procedures are mostly grounded in reference to realistic assumptions of policy outcomes and consequences  Mostly proper-evident based approach  Evaluation of	It is somewhat grounded in reality, however does not address any situation or realistic/feasible level of resources available to the government  Provides some step-by-step procedures, however, are not grounded in reference to realistic assumptions of policy outcomes  Some proper-evident based approach	Not practical or possible to achieve given the current situation and level of resources; does not address realistic goals  Does not provide detailed and accurate step-by-step procedure required to address the issue  Lack of proper-evident based approach  Does not provide sufficient comparisons to other proposed or current policies



			policy is in comparison to mostly current and major policies that addresses some shortcomings and some positive outcomes	Some evaluation of proposed policy in comparison to some policies, however, these policies are not referring to any modern or realistic policies	
<b>Comprehension (10)</b>	<b>Prompt</b>	Policy brief correctly addresses the prompt.	One criteria is missing.	Two criterias are missing.	Three or more criterias are missing.
	<b>Accurate</b>	Correct and most important info included in the brief.			
	<b>Evidence</b>	Relevant evidence included from credible and accessible sources.			
	<b>Accessibility</b>	No jargons (if used, used appropriately); brief is fit for intended audience.			
<b>Clarity (10)</b>	<b>Style</b>	The policy brief is written in a clear and concise manner, and explicitly outlines the proposed policy.	The policy brief is generally well written and concise, and outlines the proposed policy.	The policy brief is adequately written and concise. It does not explicitly outline the proposed policy.	The policy brief is not written concisely and is poor in quality. It does not outline the proposed policy.
	<b>Structure</b>	The thoughts expressed in the policy brief follow	The thoughts expressed in the policy brief follow	The thoughts expressed in the policy brief do not	The thoughts expressed in the policy brief do not follow a

		a logical progression.	a logical progression.	consistently follow a logical progression.	logical progression.
	<b>Language</b>	Language used is articulate and eloquent, and technical terms are used properly with explanation.	Language is used effectively and technical terms are used properly without explanation.	Language is mostly effective, but not consistently so and technical terms are not always used.	Language used is inarticulate and technical terms are not used properly.

## PART 2: SECTIONS

	<b>Excellent: -0 to -1 pts</b>	<b>Good: -2 pts</b>	<b>Weak: -3 pts</b>	<b>Inadequate -4 to -5 pts</b>
<b>Executive Summary (5)</b>	Consistent with the information followed in the brief  Includes most important information	Missing one important piece of information	Summary inconsistent with the brief  Missing more than one important information	All criterias are missing  Section missing
<b>Introduction (5)</b>	Explains the significance/urgency of the issue  Describes the research objective  Gives overview of findings, conclusions	One criteria is missing	Two criterias are missing	All criterias are missing  Section missing
<b>Approach and Results (5)</b>	Describes issue and context, background  Describes relevant research and analysis that has been conducted  Not overly technical	One criteria is missing	Two criterias are missing	All criterias are missing  Section missing
<b>Conclusion (5)</b>	Use section to interpret data  Express ideas using strong assertions  Ideas are balanced and defensible	One criteria is missing	Two criterias are missing	All criterias are missing  Section missing
<b>Implications and Recommendation (5)</b>	Implications (what could happen) accurate and feasible  Both flow from conclusion  Both must be supported by evidence	One criteria is missing	Two criterias are missing	All criterias are missing  Section missing
<b>Bibliography (5)</b>	Consistent with brief citations  Includes all sources cited	One criteria is missing	Two criterias are missing	All criterias are missing  Section missing

	Credible, accessible sources			
	Unbiased			

Overall Score: \_\_\_/35 + \_\_\_/30 = \_\_\_/65

Comments:



UTTP

**Thank you**

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For more information, reach out to  
[uoftpolicython@gmail.com](mailto:uoftpolicython@gmail.com)