UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POLICYTHON

UTP

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UTP wishes to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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WELCOME |
A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Policython 2022 participants,

Welcome to Policython! Policython 2021 worked with over 100 participants, 20 judges, and 6 sponsors, held for the first time ever at U of T and in Canada. I am so excited to be able to welcome previous participants back to Policython 2022, as well as many new faces. Growth is central to our mission here at UTP. Building on our past experiences, my team and I have worked endlessly these last few months to ensure you have a meaningful time with us here at the second-ever Policython in Canada and at U of T.

This past year has been a challenge for all of us as individuals and, specifically, as students, grappling with uncertainties and frustrations with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is at times like these when the power of governance, politics and advocacy become essential. Youth have historically been responsible for monumental social movements, and our generation is no different. We experience a dramatically different sociopolitical climate compared to our past counterparts, characterized by innovative technologies and influence a distinct digital culture.

Nonetheless, historical legacies continue to shape the Canadian political climate. Even the novel coronavirus impacted every community differently, especially exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. Highlighting this reality, we encourage all to recognize the deep roots of existing issues at Policython 2022 by setting the theme of our prompts to 'reflections'.

I am hopeful your experiences at UTP can strengthen your voice and build on the set of skills necessary to challenge the system that explicitly ignores and discounts young voices. Now, more than ever, it is important for us as youth to place ourselves as leaders and start creating positive change within our communities. On behalf of the UTP team, thank you for your interest in our event and we hope you have a fun and fulfilling experience.

Warmly,

Miu Hu (she/ her)
Founding President
University of Toronto Policython

SCHEDULE II

DAY 1

THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH
10AM - 12AM: Opening Ceremony
Meeting ID: 875 4284 4532
Passcode: POLICYTHON
While we highly encourage all participants to attend, we understand that there will be conflicting academic and personal commitments. The opening ceremony will be recorded and sent to all participants who could not attend.

11AM - 11:30 AM: Stream Breakout Rooms
All participants attending the opening ceremony will be placed in breakout rooms with the director for their respective stream, where the prompt will be announced. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions prior to beginning their brief. Prompts will also be emailed to ALL participants.

DAY 2

FRIDAY, MARCH 11TH
3PM: Equity Check #1
Please see Section 5.1 for instructions on how to complete your equity check.

DAY 3

SATURDAY, MARCH 12TH
3PM: Equity Check #2

8PM: Pub Night
RSVP For Pub Night Here

DAY 4

SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH
9AM: Equity Check #3

12PM: Submission Deadline
Due to the nature of the judging process, late submissions will not be accepted and extensions will not be granted.

12PM - 6PM: Q&A Period with Judges

7PM: Closing Ceremony and Awards
Meeting ID: 852 7560 5584
Passcode: POLICYTHON

BRIEF III

3.1 WHAT IS A POLICY BRIEF?

A policy brief is a concise and clear summary and proposal related to particular issues within the sociopolitical field. Policy briefs serve as a) a medium for exploring and determining the most pertinent causes and components within relevant issues impacting citizens and b) a vehicle for presenting policy advice and solutions on how to respond to the issue. Policy briefs should be topical, short, and clearly focused on one specific subject. The goal of UTP is to provide students with the opportunity to critically think about the issues that are impacting Canadians and determine possible solutions that will help remedy the issue.

3.2 POLICY BRIEF OUTLINE

The brief must provide a solution to the problem introduced in the prompt (prompts will be announced for each stream on Thursday, March 10, 2022).

Briefs must be a maximum of four pages double-spaced (excluding references). Please ensure that you use a 12-point font and Times New Roman. Each section should be separated with a header (subheaders are not required).

All policy briefs must include the following sections:

Title

Titles should be short (12 words or under) and a clear indicator of what your brief will be about. Titles do not have to be excessively creative and participants do not have to spend a significant period of time creating a title; however, participants should ensure that their title is reflective of the topic and of the solution they are presenting.

Executive Summary

The executive summary is the first substantive part of the brief that your audience will read and serves as a hook to persuade judges that your brief is effective and valuable. Executive summaries are short (one paragraph) and should provide a clear description of the problem and relevant information on a) why the current approach to the issue should be resolved and b) your policy recommendations. The executive summary serves as a concise summary of your brief; please ensure that you clearly indicate why the issue is important to address and what your proposed recommendations are.

BRIEF III

3.2 POLICY BRIEF OUTLINE CONT'D

Introduction

Introductions present the audience with a) the problem, b) background and context of the problem, and c) causes of the problem. Introductions are meant to provide readers with details regarding how the issue manifested, the components of the issue, and any relevant political, social, geographic, and economic contextual factors, and all relevant stakeholders. You are encouraged to provide examples of current policy responses that are ineffective.

Approach & Results

Participants must conduct research on the issue within their relevant stream and present findings directly connected to the issue and to their proposed recommendations. The Research Findings section should include:

1. a summary of the methodology being employed to approach the issue
2. an analysis of research findings relating to the issue, current policy approaches, and the efficacy or ineffectiveness of current policy approaches

Participants must ensure that there is a clear link between their research findings and proposed recommendations. Participants are encouraged to incorporate different viewpoints and counterarguments, and to consider why current policy approaches are/are not working.

Implications & Recommendation

In the final section, participants must provide:

1. a clear breakdown of 1-3 specific recommendations, measures, and practical steps that should be taken to implement the proposed solution
2. implications of the policy recommendations: include details on how the recommendations will improve the situation, potential benefits and costs, and potential side effects

Please ensure that your proposed recommendations are clearly connected to your research findings and are relevant, credible, and feasible. Consider the potential disadvantages of your recommendations and identify any additional costs that it may incur.

Please include a clear conclusion to your brief, with a reiteration of the issue, your proposed recommendations, and a clear summary of why and how your recommendations will improve the situation.

BRIEF III

3.2 POLICY BRIEF OUTLINE CONT'D

Conclusion

This section should be used to wrap up all of the major points discussed in each of your sections of the policy brief. You should express yourself using strong assertions and use data to back up your argument. The ideas presented in this section should be balanced and defensible. What is most important is that you write in a compelling manner and convince the audience that your brief is the best solution.

References

While writing your brief, please ensure that all your information is cited using relevant sources. You may use any citation format, as long as it is consistent. At the end of your brief, you must include a reference page listing all your sources in the same format as your citations.

Please write your brief for politicians who are involved in the field but not necessarily informed on this matter. Your brief should include references to academic and professional language; however, refrain from being unnecessarily complex.

Please refer to Section 7 of this handbook for more resources on writing a policy brief.

SUBMISSION IV

4.1 SUBMITTING THE BRIEF

Please read the following instructions carefully. Failure to adhere to the submission instructions will cause your brief not to be considered for awards.

All policy briefs are due at 12PM EST on Sunday, March 13, 2022. Late submissions will not be accepted. Due to the nature of the judging process, we are unable to provide extensions of any kind.

All participants will be provided with the link to an editable Google Doc prior to the start of the event. This link will be sent via an email to each individual team/participant. The document will be owned and accessible to selective members of UTP staff throughout the conference. Participants are required to input their completed policy brief into their Google Doc. You are welcome to draft or write your policy brief in a separate private document; however, the completed brief MUST be inputted within this document link. Failure to do so will lead to immediate disqualification from consideration for awards.

4.2 JUDGING PROCESS

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

On Sunday, March 13, 2022, participants will speak directly to judges on their policy briefs in a Q&A Period. The Q&A period is a new aspect of Policython introduced this year in response to participant feedback suggesting that the event become more interactive. Each team or individual will enter the Zoom call for their stream and be granted 10 minutes each to speak with judges; 2 minutes will be provided to participants to summarize the brief, while the remaining 8 minutes will be granted for judges to ask questions or clarify the content of the brief.

SUBMISSION IV

Please see the schedule below for the Q&A session for each stream. Each team or participant will be granted 10 minutes within the time period for their stream period; you will be notified in advance of your allotted time.
Note: zoom codes are hyper links

STREAM	TIME	ZOOM CODE
Environmental Policy	2PM - 3PM	836 6542 2598
Foreign Policy	2PM - 3PM	825 7042 5866
Public Health Policy	3:10PM - 4:30 PM	814 0864 4253
Economic Policy	3:10PM - 4:30PM	841 7734 2321
Human Rights Policy	3:10PM - 4:30PM	838 0830 5981

The Q&A session is meant to be an opportunity for judges to confirm their ranking. More weight will be placed on the written brief than the content of the Q&A session. Participants are not expected to prepare a visual presentation or a speech, and participants should not expect to be interrogated or questioned over minute details. The goal of the Q&A session is to give participants the chance to gain feedback from experts in the field, and for judges to clarify any outstanding questions they may have.
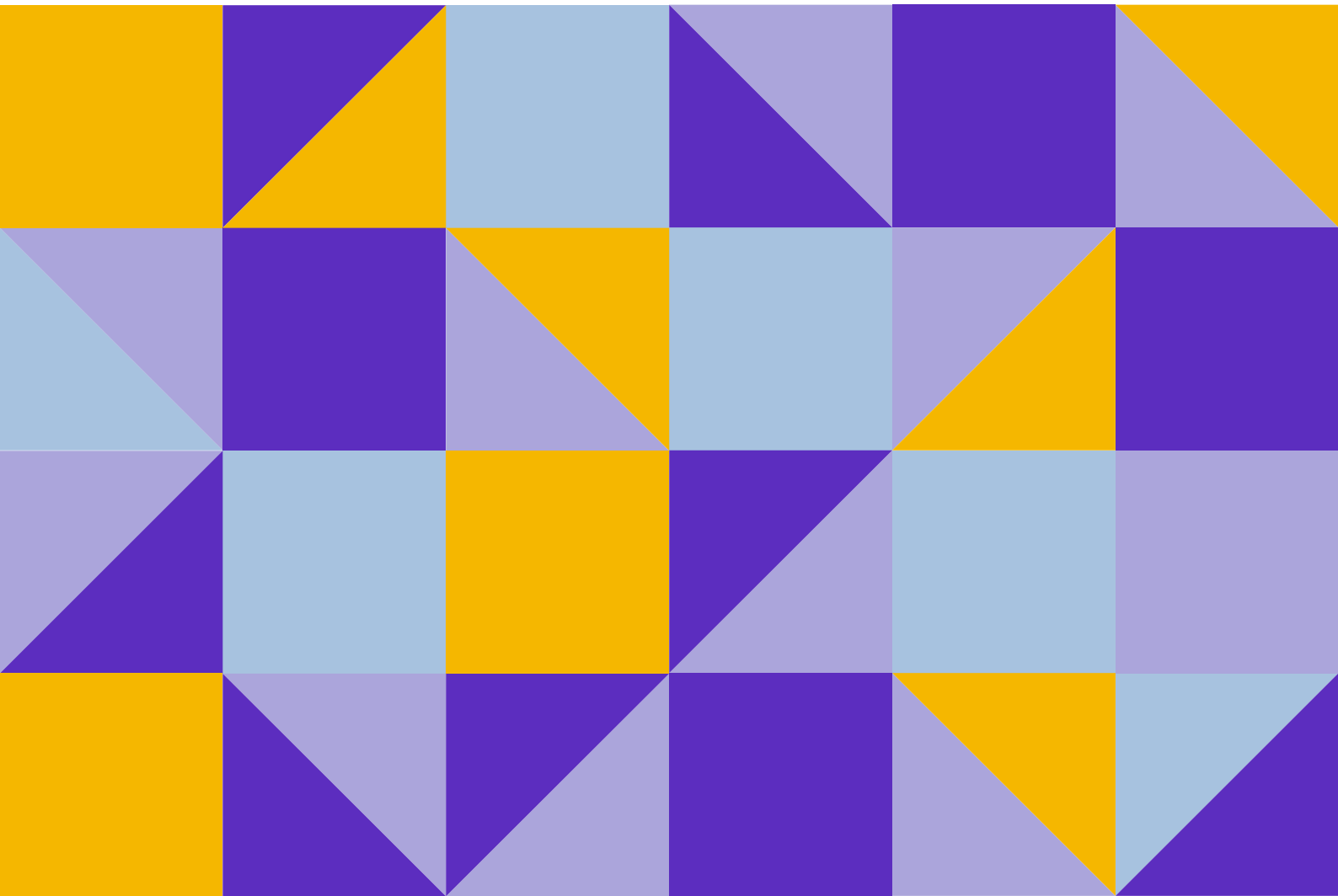
If you have any concerns or questions about the judging process, please contact uoftpolicython@gmail.com.

SUBMISSION IV

4.3 AWARDS

The highest graded team from each stream will receive an awards package. 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.

EQUITY V

Policython is the first and only event of its kind in Canada, and welcomes students of all backgrounds from the University of Toronto, with the goal of fostering a fruitful and rewarding academic experience. UTP strives to promote rigorous academic debate and critical thinking by selecting challenging, enlightening, and diverse topics within each policy stream and pushing students to challenge dominant views surrounding current socio-political issues.

UTP is committed to creating a safe and inclusive space for all staff and participants regardless of ethnicity, religion, class, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or ability. All UTP staff, members and stakeholders are responsible for maintaining an inclusive and transparent environment. In the writing of policy suggestions, all staff and members have the responsibility of ensuring non-discriminatory and consciously inclusive conduct. Any statements made or actions conducted within or outside UTP activities that threaten the wellbeing of certain groups or disrespect one's racial and/ or ethnic heritage will face strict consequences. All attendees are expected to uphold the standards of equity and inclusion as outlined in UTP's Equity Handbook .

We strongly encourage all participants to review the **Equity Handbook** before beginning the briefing process. Failure to know or understand the terms of the Equity Handbook will not be treated as a reasonable excuse in the case of an equity complaint.

Participants who submit policy briefs which breach the Equity Handbook will be subject to a warning and will be asked to change the policy brief in accordance with UTP's equity standards. If the member refuses to change their policy brief or it is not changed within 24 hours, the team or individual will be disqualified from the competition with no refund.

We take all concerns and complaints regarding equity very seriously. If any participants experience any issues at any point during Polython, please use our **Equity Concerns Form** and a member of our equity team will respond to it immediately.

EQUITY V

5.1 EQUITY CHECKS

UTP Equity Commissioners ensure that our Equity Policy is followed. You will be asked to submit a draft of your policy brief throughout the event to ensure that it abides by our Equity Policy.

There are three Equity Checks:
- Friday, March 11 at 3:00PM
- Saturday, March 12 at 3:00PM
- Sunday, March 13 at 9:00AM

For these three Equity Checks, please upload your drafted policy brief to the the Submission Google Document that you received by email (if you have any questions about this, please email utp.logistics@gmail.com).

This **does not** have to be the same file that you submit, nor will we be checking for formatting or the quality of the brief. This will not be considered as material to be judged and if your brief is incomplete or erroneous, it will not affect your final results. The Equity Commissioners will simply be assessing the briefs to ensure that none of the content violates the Equity Handbook. 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 tea.

RESOURCES VI

You may use the following resources as additional guidance during the writing process. Please remember that you will be judged according to UTP's policy writing guidelines and rubric, and that the following resources may include instructions that will differ from our official handbook. Participants are expected to defer to the guidelines set out by UTP for their final submission.

Official Discord:
Policython 2022 has an official discord! You are encouraged to use the discord to ask questions and access resources and updates on the event. You can access the Discord here.

Documents (all hyperlinks):
- What is a Policy Brief?
- How to Write a Policy Brief
- Policy Memo Writing Guide
- Environmental Policy Workshop Slides
- Human Rights Policy Workshop Slides
- Public Health Policy Workshop Slides
- Economic Policy Workshop Slides
- Foreign Policy Workshop Slides
- Policy Brief Template

RUBRIC VII

EXCELLENT	GOOD	WEAK	INADEQUATE
Information is concise and relevant.	Some unnecessary content.	Some unnecessary content. Includes jargon, or other language that is unfit for the audience.	Missing crucial information or sections. Not fit for the audience.
Considers the impact on relevant communities/ parties	Considers the impact on some relevant communities/ parties	Fails to consider the impact on relevant communities/ parties	Fails to consider the impact on relevant communities/ parties
Recommendation has not been attempted before	Recommendation has been attempted before	Recommendation makes no real impact	Recommendation missing
Recommendation is feasible	Recommendation is feasible	Recommendation is feasible, but not complete	Recommendation not feasible and incomplete
Sources are credible and unbiased	Sources are credible and unbiased	Sources are not credible or are biased	Sources are not credible or are biased

GOOD LUCK

Thank you for participating in Policython 2022. We look forward to reading your briefs!

CONTACT

📷 @uoft.policython

f @uoft.policython

in University of Toronto Policython

W www.uoftpolicython.com