MANDATE

This policy shall govern the rights and standards of CUSA employees to disconnect from work in place. CUSA aims to comply with Bill 27's amendments to the Employment Standards Act, requiring a written policy on disconnecting from work. Additionally, this policy upholds CUSA's commitment to facilitating its employees' and members' self-development.

Constitution of the Carleton University Students' Association, a. II

Recent technological advancements along with an increase in remote work arrangements have led to the risk of “hyper-connectivity”. Accordingly, this Policy sets out CUSA's expectations around work-related communications in an effort to assist employees in disconnecting from work during appropriate times. This policy shall be reviewed every two years by the Board of Directors.

INTERPRETATION

1 This policy may be called the Disconnecting from Work policy.
2 In this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

   “disconnecting from work,” means, per section 21.1.1 of the Employment Standards Act, ‘not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.’

   Employment Standards Act s. 21.1.1

   “emergency” means an urgent event not reasonably foreseen that requires immediate rectification on the part of the employee or employer and a departure from typical standards of work performance;

   “performance of work” means the completion of wage labour for the Association or its affiliated businesses.

   “regular working hours” means the time agreed to by an employee, as stated in their employment contract, when they are meant to perform work for CUSA.
“work-related communications” means virtual communications, including but not limited to, emails, phone and video calls, and Slack messages, which require the performance of work.

3 This Policy must be distributed to every Executive or Association staff member not less than thirty days upon their election or hiring, as shall the text of any amendments made to the same.

4 This policy has been developed to comply with the following Provincial statutes:
   (a) the Working for Workers Act, S.O. 2021, c. 35 - Bill 27, namely Schedule 2, Section 3 2021; and
   (b) Employment Standards Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, c. 4, namely Part VII.0.1.

POLICY

General Principles

5 All CUSA employees have the right to disconnect from work; CUSA employees are to be free from the performance of work, including work-related communications, outside of their normal working hours, subject to exceptional circumstances and/or agreements.

6 (1) Upon hire, CUSA supervisors are to discuss scheduling with their employees to determine the employee’s normal working hours and exceptional circumstances wherein the employee may be required to work outside of these hours.

   (2) Employees are expected to schedule meetings within their allotted working hours, as deemed in their employment contracts, except in cases of emergency and/or exceptional circumstances.

Employment Standards Act.

7 (1) In the event of an emergency, requiring immediate disconnection from work, CUSA employees are to report to their direct supervisor.

   (2) In the absence of their direct supervisor, employees are to report to the President or Executive Director.

8 CUSA understands that employees may want or need to work outside their regular working hours to meet a time-sensitive deadline or to attend to an urgent matter or work-related emergency; however, employees should not regularly or frequently work outside their scheduled hours to complete or catch up on work.

Workload Management and Burnout Prevention

9 Employees who cannot manage their workload during their regular working hours should meet with their direct manager to evaluate their workload, priorities, and due dates.
Should the employee's workload supercede their working hours, supervisors will meet with employees and determine a solution to ensure:

(a) The current workload does not result in the employee working excess hours and does not contribute to additional stress or burnout;
(b) Normal job duties can be completed during regular working hours; and
(c) Employees can remain productive and meet organizational goals and objectives.

CUSA employees are not obligated to perform work on statutory holidays unless:

(a) Otherwise scheduled and/or agreed upon as a part of the employee's working hours; or
(b) The employee must attend to an urgent matter or emergency situation.

CUSA commits to contributing to a healthy work-life balance and building an accessible workplace, both physically and digitally. This includes recognizing and accommodating its employees' varied types and levels of ability. Employees are to consult with their direct supervisors for accommodations related to disconnecting from work.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to CUSA's general principles will vary depending on the employee's role, department, and working agreement. Exceptions in case of emergency, for instance, will vary depending on the circumstances, position, and conditions of employment.

If an emergency arises that poses a pressing and substantial risk to the continued stable operations of the Association, employees charged with certain competences may be requested to end their disconnection from work and resume their performance of work, only to the extent to which their labour is needed to rectify the situation. These personnel are:

(a) the Executives, for emergencies generally;
(b) the Executive Director, for the same;
(c) for emergencies in their departments, the Heads of every department; and
(d) for emergencies in their businesses, the Business manager or managers of any given business.

Exceptions to CUSA's general principles will be applied to respect the need for students, including executives and volunteers, to participate in interviews, Council, and/or Board meetings outside of regular hours.

Instances where Full-Time Staff are required to work outside of their normal business hours, requests for time-off “in lieu” will be considered and not unreasonably withheld. Scheduling of such time must not significantly affect deadlines, productivity and/or the schedule of others.
Guidance for Disconnecting

17 To aid in ceasing work-related communications and disconnecting from work, CUSA employees are encouraged to communicate their status with colleagues using the features provided by all digital communications platforms used by CUSA.

18 (1) When disconnecting from work, employees are advised to use Slack’s “pause notifications” and “change status” features, available under the employee's profile, to indicate their status and discourage work-related communications.

(2) When disconnecting from work, employees are advised to use Google’s “automatic response” feature, accessible under General Settings, to indicate that they are out of office and will respond upon their return.

(3) Employees are encouraged to mute or pause notifications on work-related applications and/or websites, as needed, when disconnecting from work.

(4) Employees are encouraged to utilize Google’s “schedule send” feature for emails written outside of working hours. This feature can be accessed by clicking the white arrow next to “Send” when composing an email.

Rest Periods and Overtime

19 CUSA employees are expected to disconnect from work during rest times, as regulated by the Employment Standards Act.

20 At times, CUSA may have an urgent need which requires that employees work overtime. Overtime will always be approved and scheduled in advance. It may be requested by the employee or required in certain situations to ensure work is completed; however, employees should not work overtime unless directed by their manager or department heads.

Limitations

21 This policy does not amend existing policy nor legislation which regulates hours of work, overtime, and rest times. This includes any collective agreements set in place. Employees working hours are subject to their employment contracts and/or agreements with the employee's manager, in accordance with the Employment Standards Act.