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Name:	Use of SMUport Group Tools
Policy Number:	2-2002
Origin:	Information Technology Systems & Support (ITSS)
Approved:	7 June 2006
Issuing Authority:	Vice-President, Administration
Responsibility:	Director, Information Technology Systems & Support
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1. Purpose

Saint Mary's University recognizes the value and potential of using web technology towards greater collaboration, sharing, learning and community building. To this end, the University provides access to the SMUport web portal groups tool to members of the Saint Mary's community. Within this community, the potential for large numbers of diverse groups exists. Therefore, some procedures and restrictions must apply to keep the system organized and operating effectively. It is also important to inform group participants and leaders of their rights and responsibilities.

2. What is a Group?

The group tool provides individuals with common interests to virtually meet and share information within SMUport portal through message boards, photo galleries, group email lists, group calendar, and group news.

3. What Type of Groups are Available

The SCT Luminis portal allows four basic group types:

Group Type	Description	Approval Process/Availability
Public	Public groups are open for anyone with a SMUport account to join, and are meant to bring people together who have shared interests or to introduce others to new interests	This is the default type for all approved groups. All student led groups are public groups.
Restricted	Membership in restricted groups is by invitation only and is subject to certain criteria, defined by the group's leader. The group will appear in the list of groups within SMUport but will only be accessible to those	These are restricted to Faculty and Staff groups. Requests for restricted groups must include reasons why the membership must be restricted.

Group Type	Description	Approval Process/Availability
	approved members.	
Hidden	Membership of the group is restricted, and existence of the group is not advertised within SMUport.	This type of group will not be approved for use at Saint Mary's.
Admin Blocked	These are groups that are not visible within the list of available groups in SMUport, are not open to subscription by others, and have the additional restriction that the group administrator cannot view the content or activities of the group.	Formation of these groups requires justification of the need for high-level privacy. All requests for Admin-Blocked groups must be approved by the EMG.

4. Management Overview

The Group Tools application is maintained by ITSS, which will appoint a Groups Administrator to be responsible to review all Group requests. The Groups Administrator will activate all authorized Groups. The Group Tools Policy is part of the administrative governance system overseen by the SMU Banner Users Group.

Members' acceptance to a public group is immediate. Membership in restricted groups depends on certain criteria and is approved by the group's leader.

Groups must govern themselves in accordance with the Group Membership Agreement. The University assumes no editorial responsibility for the content of these groups' communications. Complaints directed to the Groups Administrator alleging abuse by members of a group will be forwarded to the group leader.

Complaints alleging group leader's misbehaviour will be forwarded to the Group Administrator.

5. Group Creation

The Groups application gives students, faculty, and staff at Saint Mary's University the ability to create and manage group homepages for clubs, workgroups, committees or other affiliations and interests. These homepages can include threaded discussions, photo archives, news and more.

Groups must be authorized and may be established in SMUport only if they meet the general criteria below:

6. General Criteria

- a) The group should be of interest to an audience of fewer than 100. For content of interest to an audience of more than 100, a channel may be more appropriate.
- b) The group must be composed of students, faculty, and/or staff of the University.
- c) When operating a group, including the use of the group e-mail and message board functions, all members of the group are responsible for conducting their affairs in a responsible manner consistent with the policies and procedures of the Saint Mary's University Technology Use Policy, found at <http://www.smu.ca/administration/itss/techusepolicy.html>, all other Saint Mary's codes

of conduct, and with local, provincial, and federal laws.

- d) When publishing content on the group web site, members agree not to publish content that is illegal.
- e) Members must agree to share their user names and e-mail addresses with other members of the group.
- f) Members may not use group web sites for the publication or distribution of copyrighted materials or licensed software.
- g) Groups at Saint Mary's may not be used for commercial purposes, or for the personal financial benefit of any members. Not-for-profit fund-raising activities associated with the group are allowed.
- h) Communications and documents exchanged within the groups are subject to the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information / Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP) and any other FOIPOP legislation that might apply.
- i) The University retains the sole responsibility to activate or deactivate any group without notice or recourse.

7. Requesting a Group

Students:

Any Saint Mary's University student can submit a request for a new group. In the case of a SMUSA society, the president of the club or organization will submit a request for creation of a group. The Create New Group Request form can be accessed from within SMUport by clicking on the 'Groups' application icon, then selecting the 'Create Group' button to access the Create New Group online form. Once submitted, you will typically be notified within three business days of the status of your request.

All denied student groups have the right to appeal to the Saint Mary's University Banner Users Group by submitting a written appeal via ITSS. The Banner Users Group decision shall be final.

All student groups must be public. Further, all SMUSA society groups must have their activation renewed by September 30th of each year. To renew a group, the incoming society president must send an email to the Groups Administrator (groupsadministrator@smu.ca) asking to renew their group for another year. This email must be received by September 30th. If an email is not received, the group will be set to inactive.

Faculty/Staff:

To submit a request for creation of a group, login to SMUport and click on the 'Groups' application icon, then select the 'Create Group' button to access the Create New Group online form. Once submitted, you will typically be notified within three business days of the status of your request.

All denied groups have the right to appeal to the Saint Mary's University Banner Users Group by submitting a written appeal via ITSS. The Banner Users Group decision shall be final.

Faculty and Staff groups can be public or restricted. Requests for restricted groups must include reasons why the membership is to be restricted.

Alumni:

There will eventually be role for Alumni within SMUport. Once that role is defined, the criteria for creation of Alumni-related groups will be incorporated into this policy.

8. Lack of Activity

Any group may be made inactive within SMUport due to a lack of maintenance, content that is out-of-date by 90 days or more, or if there is no activity (defined as no usage in a 90 day time frame) in the group's area or account. Before any action is taken, the group leader will be contacted via e-mail. Should the inactivity be for legitimate reasons (the group serves a committee that only meets in the academic terms, for example), then the group will be maintained with active status.

All SMUSA society public groups must request renewal from the Group Administrator by September 30th of each year, or the group will be set as inactive. To reactivate a group, a group leader must send an email to the Groups Administrator to reactivate the group.

9. Group Leaders

Each group will be required to identify at least one group leader. A group leader is responsible for the administration of the group and conformity to University policies. This includes regular monitoring of group content, membership management, removal of aged content and other maintenance. Groups that are not maintained are subject to removal from SMUport.

Group leaders must be Saint Mary's students/faculty/staff. All communications between the Group Administrator and group leaders will be conducted via e-mail, using the group leader's Saint Mary's e-mail address. A group leader is responsible for monitoring their e-mail for such correspondence and for responding in a timely manner.

Should the group leader leave the University it is their responsibility to designate another leader of the group and to notify the Group Administrator of the change. If no other member is willing to serve as group leader, they should contact the Group Administrator to terminate the group. A group without a group leader will be terminated.

Failure to comply with procedures may result in revocation of group leader privileges.

A Group leader is expected to inactivate or delete group members for inappropriate use of group tools or refer an issue to the proper University disciplinary officer.

10. Group Membership Agreement

Group members are responsible for conducting their affairs in a responsible manner consistent with all Saint Mary's codes of conduct, the policies and procedures of the Saint Mary's University Technology Use Policy, and with local, provincial, and federal laws.

Additionally members agree to the following:

- Members will not publish content that is illegal, or is in violation of university codes of conduct.
- Members will not use group web sites for the publication or distribution of copyrighted materials or licensed software.
- Members agree to share their user names and e-mail addresses with other members of the group.
- Members will not use group web sites for commercial purposes, or for their personal financial benefit.
- Members acknowledge that the views expressed in group pages are those of the group membership and do not necessarily reflect the views of SMU.

- All participants are reminded that communications and documents exchanged within the groups are subject to the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP) and any other FOIPOP legislation that might apply.
- Failure to comply with this agreement may result in the revocation of member's privileges and the possible termination of the group. Terminated groups have the right to appeal to the Saint Mary's University Banner Users Group by submitting a written appeal via ITSS. The Banner Users Group decision shall be final.