

Conference Policy

1. Preamble

The MSA is political environment which works towards empowering and serving students. In order to remain truly representative of students at Monash and act as an independent body, guidelines are needed as to what constitutes an acceptable conference for students to attend on behalf of the MSA.

The MSA recognises the important role attending conferences can play in information sharing, networking and the skilling up of Monash Clayton students. However, we also recognise that without specific direction, there are a number of significant problems which may arise.

This document sets out the MSA's policy on determining acceptable conferences that students can attend on behalf of the MSA, with the aim to:

- a. protect the image and reputation of the MSA;
- b. ensure that all conferences attended by office bearers are constitutionally acceptable and aligned with the interests of the MSA;
- c. ensure that a broad range of students can attend and benefit from the conference.

This document applies to all Office Bearers and to any student who receives MSA funding to attend a conference and/or an opportunity to attend a conference by virtue of their position within the MSA.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

1. Conference - means any external, formal event primarily focused on discussion or the sharing of ideas between multiple organisations/bodies. A conference will usually involve registration and should be distinguished from a 'regular' meeting by its more substantial length and/or multiple sessions either concurrently or continuously.
2. MSA representative – means a department nominated attendee of a conference, who is given special permission to attend a conference and represent the views of Monash students.
3. Independent capacity – means individuals attending an authorised MSA conference, but who do not have the permission to represent the MSA and the organisation's views or stance.

If further clarification is required on a definition, contact Monash Student Association Executive.

3. Policy

3.1 The MSA supports the attendance of conferences that:

- a. Comply with the MSA Constitution and policies listed in the MSA Policies and Procedures page, including but not limited to:

- a. The 'Purposes' of the MSA as outlined in the MSA Constitution; Part 2, section 3; and
 - b. Office Bearer 'Duties' of the MSA as outlined in the MSA Constitution; Part 9, section 38.
 - c. Office Bearer 'Direction and Responsibilities' as outlined in the MSA Constitution; Part 9, section 37.
- b. benefit Monash Clayton Students;
 - c. enhance or extend the programs, facilities or services of the MSA; and
 - d. do not restrict attendance by political faction.

3.2 The Monash Student Association will not have any involvement with conferences which, in the reasonable view of the MSC Executive, would damage the reputation, standing or brand of the MSA.

3.3 Autonomous departments, such as Women's, Queer or Indigenous, may restrict attendance of conferences to only those who identify as a part of the relevant autonomous groups;

3.4 As per the 'MSC Standing Orders' Section 5.8 and 5.8.1, Office Bearers who have returned from conferences where they were participating within their role as an Office Bearer are required to submit a Conference Report to the next MSC.

3.4.1 Where the next MSC is within a week of their return from conference, Office Bearers are permitted to submit their Conference Report to the following meeting of MSC.

3.5 Conferences that are to be attended on behalf of or funded by the MSA must be approved in writing by the MSA Secretary first, to ensure the conference is not in breach of any relevant policy. This approval needs to be granted even if there is a line item provision within the department budget to do so.

3.5.1 Requests to attend conferences must, wherever possible, outline clearly;

- The purpose of the conference
- The schedule of sessions of the conference, and
- What benefits will be accrued by the member, the Board and the MSA.

3.5.2 Where there is an objection to the Secretary's decision in relation to a conference, the matter may be brought to discussion at a meeting of the MSC Executive, and, if necessary, brought before a meeting of MSC.

3.6 If funding is offered to students to attend a conference:

- Funding may only be granted to Monash Clayton Students
- Selection must be equitable, transparent, and open to all students. However, autonomous departments are exempted from the requirement to open funding to students outside of their autonomous group, due to their equal opportunity exemptions.
- Specific permission can be granted by the MSA Secretary for individuals to attend as MSA representatives. If the MSA representative is an MSA Office Bearer, hours within conference may count toward office bearer hours.

- Unless specific, written permission is given by the MSA Secretary, those receiving funding to attend the conference are attending in an individual capacity only, and hours cannot count toward office bearer hours.

3.7 Office Bearers attending a conference in an individual capacity must NOT claim to represent the MSA or its views.

3.7.1 Where an Office Bearer claims to represent the MSA or its views when acting in an individual capacity, this is considered a breach of his/her duties under the MSA Office Bearer Regulations and the office bearer may be penalised accordingly by MSC.

3.8 Distribution of funding is to be determined by individual departments and the relevant committees.