



The UW Muslim Students' Association  
wishes to say...

**welcome!**

**...and congratulations  
on starting your first year at  
the University of Waterloo!**

Have you noticed the difference between high school life and your new university life? Transition from one lifestyle to another is sometimes mandatory. Having noticed that, this newsletter was written to help you open your mind to new ideas and thoughts by students like you, who have spent some years in university and gained valuable experience.

Welcome to the University of Waterloo MSA, and we hope that this newsletter helps you make the move to post-secondary education easier in-shaAllah.

## **MSA events and services for its members**

**Arabic lessons:** Looking to learn Arabic, the language of the Quran? The MSA is offering classes again this fall.

**Dinner/BBQ:** In order to foster brotherhood and sisterhood among Muslims, the MSA usually holds several dinners and BBQs per term. The MSA usually holds beginning and end of term dinners, and Eid dinners.

**IAW:** Dying to do dawah? Islam Awareness Week provides you with an amazing opportunity to share precious

Islamic values with non-Muslims.

**Prayer rooms and times:** The multi-faith prayer room is located on the third floor of the Student Life Center. The alternate prayer room is also in the Student Life Center in room 2105A. For more information about prayer times and jumu'ah prayers, check the MSA website ([waterloomsa.com](http://waterloomsa.com)).

**MSA Library:** An extensive library in the MSA office where you can borrow and read different types of Islamic

books that covers wide areas in many languages.

**MSA Fitness:** Wondering what the best way to stay in shape is? Contact the MSA's own certified fitness specialist to obtain free advice and exclusive e-articles from Can-Fit-Pro.

Don't forget to visit the MSA's website for information regarding the MSA Marketplace, MSA Housing, and much more! ([waterloomsa.com](http://waterloomsa.com))

# Academic life

The main reason for you to be in UW is to learn and get experience. What makes university life different from high school life is the educational system. So it's important to understand how to shift your gears from high school studying style to university style in order to be able to fit in and succeed outstandingly.

## Here are a few study tips:

1. Attend all classes and labs.
2. Establish regular study habits at the beginning of the year. Getting used to a certain study schedule will significantly

# Student life

For many first year students, university may mark their first experience living away from home for an extended period of time. It is definitely a break from home. An individual's usual sources of support are no longer present to facilitate adjustment to the unfamiliar environment. Here are a few students' tips which provide realistic expectations concerning living arrangements and social life on campus:

- A healthy mind comes with a healthy body, so don't forget the PAC (Physical Activities Complex): participate in the varsities and leagues. Go to the gym and the swimming pool. Always keep yourself fresh and awake, update your life with the new life, and never let something pass; **experience it!**

- Your confidence in yourself supports you in maintaining your success and challenging your problems efficiently, either in your academics or general life. This confidence should come from a strong foundation and a strong belief.

**Images:** [top] The MSA Ballroom Banquet (Fall 2005), and [bottom] an MSA barbecue (Spring 2006).

cantly benefit you when midterms and exams approach.

3. Remember: you are given complete freedom - professors won't ask you about homework!

4. Time management is the key for success and strong grades.

5. You should expect 35-40 hours per week on academics.

Please visit the Counselling Services website for further information about study skills, workshops, and career development:

[www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/study](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/study)





## Words of wisdom

"If you live in residence be careful, although chatting with friends is fun, it wastes a lot of time and leads to sleepless nights catching up on late assignments."

Omar El-Gamal  
Math & Business 3A

"Work smarter... not harder."

Counselling Services

"Let us reject dying to fit in and instead live to contribute."

Dr. Elmasry  
Electrical & Computer Engineering  
CIC President

**Image:** [left] MSA Indonesian Earthquake Relief Barbecue (Spring 2006)

## Did you know

During the month of Ramadan, the Village One cafeterias open extra early so you can get some food before fasting. Ask a representative from the MSA Executive for more info.

## General services

**Turnkey desk** Open 24 hours a day every day. Offering GRT and Greyhound tickets and lots more!

**Fed Bus** A cheap and convenient way of getting to and from Toronto, Hamilton, and London. Tickets available at the Feds Office in the Student Life Center.

**RideSafe** Free ride service that covers the surrounding UW area.

**WalkSafe** Free walk company for a distance of 15 minutes from the SLC.

**PAC (Physical Activities Complex)** Get a work-out or play sports.

**Counselling Services** Job search, workshops on time management, study skills, and much more.

**Used Bookstore** Buy and sell used books in the SLC downstairs.

**CHIP** Basic software/hardware/wireless consultation, and assistance with computing problems including virus detection/cleaning.

**Police** Take care... be aware. In any emergency on campus, call ext. 84911.

## Halal food and grocery stores

### Restaurants:

Al-Madina Egyptian Cuisine 150 University Ave W, Waterloo

Al-Madina Just-n-Pita 150 University Ave W, Waterloo

Kismet University Plaza (in front of Al-Madina), Waterloo

La Casbah 47 Scott St., downtown Kitchener

Phat Cat University Plaza, Waterloo

Shandiz University Plaza, Waterloo

Warrior Pizza & Wings University Plaza (next to William's), Waterloo

### Grocery Stores:

Ammar Halal Meat Food Mart 315 Lancaster St W, Kitchener

Food Basics 851 Fischer-Hallman Rd, Waterloo

Kishki Food Market/Restaurant 200 Highland Rd W, Suite #2, Kitchener

Mohammed Halaal Meats 255 Tollgate Rd, Waterloo

University Food Market 140 University Ave W, Waterloo

# What does the MSA really stand for. Like, really.

**Sr. FEZZIK ABDUR RAHMAN**

As a frosh, I had great expectations. In the quiet of my room, on my first night away from home, I stayed up wondering whether it will be worth it all. I imagined what my first class would be like.

I dreamt up every detail. It would be a huge class of a thousand people. With a loud click, a door would open. A cane would walk in, followed by the prof. Everyone would be dead quiet. He would resemble the perfect cartoon image of a prof - complete with huge bifocals, a grey wool suit from the 60s, curly grey hair and a huge bald spot. He would speak into the microphone in some unimaginably difficult language, and I would sit there scribbling down incomprehensible notes.

I was quite disappointed. Prof turned out to be a cool guy, class size was about a tenth of my imagination. Too bad. But university is full of expectations. Only when we walk in on our first day do we realize how completely off we were. We walk into a world where the desks have no graffiti, washrooms are tucked away in weird corners labeled 'Men' and 'Women' instead of 'Boys' and 'Girls', and you don't need an office slip when you walk in late into class.

Similarly, people often come in with some interesting ideas about what the MSA is. Yeah we know it stands for the Muslim Students' Association, but what does it *really* stand for? Here's a sampling:

**Muslim Singles' Association:** Everyone knows it. It's the biggest cover up in UW Clubs' history. The MSA is actually a place for 'brothers' and 'sisters' to hook up. It all makes sense. The general body meetings, the mixed dinners and fancy banquet halls, their obsession with marriage lectures. I bet you halaqa is really a code word for hookup. They're full of codes I tell ya. Like when a sister says salaam to brothers, they don't reply because they decode it as 'will you marry me'. I kid you not, it says so

right there in the Brothers' Sacred Constitution of Codes under rule 3.1.4.

**Muslimahs (who wear) Skirts (and hijabs) Association:** The MSA is actually a cult run by hijabis with skirts. That's right. Oh you think they're all nice and smiley on the outside but wait until they unleash their ultimate weapon of torture - death by hugging. NooOOOooo. Rumour has it they even have an initiation process, where you have to wear a skirt and hijab and run from E2 to MC to 10 minutes. Points are given for colour coordination and how many salaams and hugs you can give to other random hijabis on the way.

In fact, if you take a look at the acronym (of the long form), and rearrange the letters, you get MAWSAHW. In ancient hijabi-tongue, that means hijabi power! What a devious plan.

**Strictly Muslim Association:** The MSA really is for ultra religious, ultra strict Muslims. If you want to be part of the MSA, you can't be caught without a lota in your bag, a pocket Quran and a tasbih in your right pocket. Every sentence must end with *Mashallah*, *Inshallah*, and *Subhanallah*. The more combos per sentence, the better. English is the language of the *kuffar*, so you must use as much Arabic as possible. *Akhi*, *Ukhti*, should be part of your everyday vocabulary. And if you see anything even remotely unacceptable, you must spit three times on your left and run away screaming 'Haram! Haram!'

But Strictly Muslim Association is SMA, not MSA, you say. Ah, here's the trick. If you're strictly Muslim, you try to use as much Arabic as possible. And Arabic is just like French, the order is reversed (think balon valon instead of volleyball).

**Mostly Sunni Association:** That's right. If you want to be part of the MSA, you must without a doubt be *Sunni*. In fact, to prove your *Sunniness*, you must own at least one 'Sunni Delight' t-shirt.

**Muslim South Asian Association:** It's true, if you're an MSAer, you must be of South Asian descent or must have an extreme tolerance for South Asian food. What else would explain having the same main meal at every MSA event: biryani, biryani, and more burn-my-tongue-yani! Oh sometimes there's spicy chicken too.

As ridiculous as they may sound, these are the very issues that make people hesitant to join the MSA. The stigma attached to religious organizations, especially one that comes along with so many stereotypes, makes many think *MSA - run away*. And they're not entirely wrong. The MSA has its fair share of flaws, but more importantly, the MSA is what you and I make of it. For many of us, we keep coming back to the MSA for what it gives us. At those times when we feel so spiritually bankrupt, hopefully lost in our textbooks, we look forward to our *halaqas* to give us that weekly boost. We cherish the feeling of belongingness, of comfort and strength from being part of such a close-knit community. We seek to learn from each other, laugh at each other, and be a source of support for each other. We're all driven by that same goal - jannah.

As you walk in with great aspirations in your first year at UW, we welcome you. We wish you all the best and look forward to you being an active part of our community. Lectures, socials, barbecues, iftars, entertainment, Islam Awareness Week, Al-Qalam (monthly newsletter), the MSA always has something in store for you.

For the record, I failed the initiation on account of it was snowing that day and hence I am forever subjected to ultimate hugging. The joys of being part of the MSA.

**Remember to visit  
*waterloomsa.com!***