

## THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

### PROTEST GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

#### Protests on campus

The University recognises that staff and students may wish to take part in protests on campus, and their legal right to do so. The University is committed to protecting freedom of expression and freedom of assembly for everyone, within the law.

This means that protests on campus are permitted and staff and students should feel safe and confident in protesting, provided they do not breach relevant University policies or any applicable laws.

However, as noted in the University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), "protest should not be such as to obstruct the freedom of others to express the views that they reject." This statement reflects the fact that the University has a duty to ensure that protests do not unduly disrupt or prevent the lawful exercise of the rights of other students, staff or visitors on campus.

#### Guidelines for protests

To make it clear to staff and students what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct when protesting on campus, the University has set out some (non-exhaustive) guidelines, below. These are to help us all to enable respectful freedom of expression, including the freedom to protest, as a part of our vibrant academic community.

#### Do

- Remember that we all have a right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and that the right to exchange information, debate ideas and express opinions is a core aspect of our individual freedom and contributes to the collective good of society.
- Be mindful of how your actions may be perceived to ensure that they do not make others reasonably fearful for their safety.
- Follow policies and booking processes for events in University buildings, such as:
  - i) the University [Policy on Speakers and Events](#),
  - ii) the University's [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
  - iii) the [EUSA Safe Spaces Policy](#)
  - iv) the [Edinburgh University Students' Association bookings guidance](#),
  - v) [Room Bookings | Student Administration](#)
- Follow instructions given by University staff and any security/law enforcement in attendance.

### Don't

- Deny the freedom of others to assemble and express opinions or beliefs different to your own.
- Intimidate or disrespect others, either in person or on social media/online.
- Break the law or endanger the health and safety of others.
- Occupy University property without permission as a form of protest (this is unlawful).
- Block access to events or buildings in which events are taking place, or obstruct people passing by.
- Disrupt any University events; e.g., preventing speakers from talking or from being heard (e.g., by making noise to drown out a speaker), or taking action aimed at preventing an event commencing or continuing.
- Commit a crime by causing any damage to property (including flyposting or stickering), or the environment (including smoke canisters).
- Fail to follow the University's booking process, or seek to subvert or exploit booking systems, to prevent attendees from obtaining a place at any event.

### Options for those who disagree with an event which is taking place on campus

- i) Attend the event and respectfully engage at appropriate times, for example, by raising points and asking questions at the allocated times during the event, remembering at all times to comply with the University's [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) which supports us to foster a respectful community
- ii) Speak outside the event, leaflet, or use signs in opposition to the event, in accordance with these guidelines.
- iii) Organise or attend alternative events at the same time as the event that you wish to protest at by gathering at a different location on campus, remembering to always follow the processes for organising an event.

### What if I choose not to follow the protest guidelines?

Failure to follow the guidelines above (or assisting others to breach the guidelines), which support lawful, safe, and peaceful protest, may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct under the [Code of Student Conduct](#) (in the case of students) or the [Disciplinary Policy](#) (in the case of staff).

Disciplinary procedures under those policies could be followed. The Code of Student Conduct provides for a series of penalties for breach of its provisions including fines, reprimands, suspension or exclusion from the University. The Disciplinary Policy for staff includes sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Where staff or students invite third-party groups or individuals to join a protest on University premises, those staff or students will be responsible for ensuring compliance with these guidelines by those groups or individuals.

Any allegation of a criminal offence committed by a student or staff member during a protest may be reported by the University to the Police (or, if the Police are in attendance to ensure public safety, the police may take direct action in the event of a suspected criminal offence). In some cases, the University may also appoint Sheriff Officers to enforce court orders.

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