

NYU's Guidance and Expectations on Student Conduct

NYU is, first and foremost, a place of teaching, learning, and scholarship. We draw together faculty, students, administrators, and staff in a scholarly community to pursue our academic aims. As a community, we necessarily set standards and expectations for the conduct of community members. The underpinning of all of our [conduct rules](#) is to maintain our academic mission, abide by our principles, and safeguard the well-being of all members of the community.

We provide the following examples and explanations of our policies to help the community better understand not only what the rules say, but how they are applied. Many people in our community have asked for this additional clarity, which we hope is instructive. We, of course, can't exhaustively list all of the types of scenarios that would violate our rules, but we hope that this guidance is helpful in enabling each of us to be a contributing member to our scholarly community. We provide below examples of conduct that are particularly relevant to the issues of the day, including discrimination and harassment based on identity, as well as examples of conduct that may violate other provisions in our student conduct policy, including our prohibitions on threatening and abusive behavior, destruction of property, disorderly conduct, failure to comply, fire safety, guests and visitors, misrepresentation, misuse of University properties, weapons, and residence hall policies. However, just because an activity is not prohibited does not

mean you should do it. We encourage everyone to be mindful of the impact of their actions on the wider NYU community, and to partake in activities that build bridges across differences, not those that further divide us.

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University's Expectations on Conduct

1. Nondiscrimination and anti-harassment (“NDAH”)

The [University's Non-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures for Students](#) (the “NDAH” or “NDAH Policy”) is grounded in our legal obligations. U.S. civil rights laws, including Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504, provide that no one should be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in our programs and activities. These laws afford students these protections no matter their race or national origin; their shared ancestry or ethnicity, including religious identities; their sex or gender identity; their disability; or other identities covered by law. Our policies – which apply to all students in all schools and

locations, including Study Away Sites and Portal Campuses – are designed to comply with our obligations under U.S. and other applicable laws to take action to address discrimination and harassment.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination and harassment based on a student's race, color, or national origin. This extends to students who experience discrimination or harassment based on actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, and citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity and their association with this national origin/ancestry. For example, students of Arab, Hindu, Israeli, Jewish, Latine, Muslim, Palestinian, Sikh, and/or South Asian descent, or any other faith or ancestry, are protected under Title VI.

Our NDAH Policy defines discrimination as adverse treatment based on an actual or perceived protected characteristic. Harassment is defined as unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on an actual or perceived protected characteristic that, from the viewpoint of a reasonable person under all the relevant circumstances, would create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic or residential environment or otherwise adversely affect the individual's academic opportunities or participation in an NYU program, activity, or benefit. Policy violations occur when discrimination or harassment is based in racism, colorism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, sexism, transphobia, ableism and other forms of bigotry involving protected characteristics covered by the policy.

Some examples of activities that would violate the NDAH Policy include:

- Refusing to work with each other, or the application of any type of “litmus test” for participation in any academic activity, based on identity.

- Targeting someone for harassment or intimidation on the basis of their identity, their religious attire, their name, their language spoken, their accent, or their association with a religious organization or identity-related student club.
- Ostracism based on identity, such as refusing entry to an open event.
- Use or dissemination of tropes about protected groups.
- Calls for genocide of an entire people or group.
- Actions taken against someone based on their field of study, course enrollment, or study abroad participation could provide evidence of discriminatory motive for NDAH purposes—for example, vandalizing the office doors in a particular department tied to the study of a country or region.

Using code words, like “Zionist,” does not eliminate the possibility that your speech violates the NDAH Policy. For many Jewish people, Zionism is a part of their Jewish identity. Speech and conduct that would violate the NDAH if targeting Jewish or Israeli people can also violate the NDAH if directed toward Zionists. For example, excluding Zionists from an open event, calling for the death of Zionists, applying a “no Zionist” litmus test for participation in any NYU activity, using or disseminating tropes, stereotypes, and conspiracies about Zionists (e.g., “Zionists control the media”), demanding a person who is or is perceived to be Jewish or Israeli to state a position on Israel or Zionism, minimizing or denying the Holocaust, or invoking Holocaust imagery or symbols to harass or discriminate.

Expressing views regarding a particular country's policies or practices does not violate University policy, but if conduct that otherwise appears to be

based on views about a country's policies or practices is targeted at or infused with discriminatory comments, such as in the examples above, then it would implicate the NDAH. For example, as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has [explained](#), "if a professor teaching a class on international politics references or criticizes the government of Israel's treatment of non-Jewish people, the nation of Saudi Arabia's response to religious extremism, or the government of India's promotion of Hinduism, so long as such comments do not target Israeli, Jewish, Saudi, Arab, or Indian students based on race, color, or national origin, that would not likely implicate Title VI."

As noted above, these rules apply equally across the board, no matter what the negative reference might be: race or national origin; shared ancestry or ethnicity, including religious identities; sex or gender identity; disability; or other identities covered by law. For example, in some religious and ethnic groups, such as in some South Asian communities, discrimination based on caste – i.e. a hierarchical classifications or exclusion – would implicate our prohibition on discrimination based on shared ancestry. Likewise, various outward displays of identity can be part of a protected identity – like natural hair or ethnic attire – and harassment or a group's (e.g. a student organization, club, journal, etc.) policies or rules that target these displays closely linked with a protected identity would violate our policies.

NYU is committed to the fair and equal application of our NDAH Policy, on the basis of all protected characteristics, as a matter of policy and consistent with our legal obligations. To learn more about examples that might implicate our NDAH Policy obligations, you can review information from OCR's websites, such as information linked [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

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2. Intimidation and violence

The University has zero tolerance for any form of violence, threats, physical altercation or intimidation, and will promptly move to address such issues with action proportionate to the misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to: calling for violence on campus; calling for violence against NYU, or someone at NYU; or using language advocating for killing people or groups of people, and all relevant synonyms (e.g. eradicate, destroy, massacre, exterminate, etc.).

In addition, maliciously ridiculing someone or exploiting known psychological or physical vulnerabilities or impairments is impermissible.

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3. Behavior during protest activities

The University remains steadfast in its commitment to academic freedom and affirms the right of all NYU community members to peacefully protest. But dissent and protest, while enshrined by our policies as vital to “free discourse,” must comply with all applicable University policies. These include specific building rules, rules on fire safety and ingress/egress, [rules on disruptive activities](#), local NYC laws and regulations, and following the directions of Campus Safety or other University staff to prevent a crowd from becoming unsafe or disruptive. For example, [Bobst Library](#), [Kimmel](#), and the [Paulson Center](#) each have a set of published policies that govern the use of those spaces. Protest participants are responsible for following policies applicable to any and all buildings at NYU. The time, place, and manner of your protest activities are subject to these rules as illustrated by the following guidance.

NYU’s unique position in the heart of Greenwich Village brings both opportunities and challenges. Although it is a public space, many of us think of Washington Square Park when we think about NYU’s Manhattan campus.

The Park has historically been a site of political activism, from mourners protesting the working conditions that led to [the deadly fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory](#) at the turn of the 20th century, to our own students – as well as other members of the public – using the Park as a point of assembly, protest and activism. While protest activity within University properties are constrained by the need to not disrupt the core research, scholarly, and educational function of University spaces, protestors may have more latitude in public spaces like Washington Square Park or other spaces around New York City.

Public spaces like Washington Square Park offer community members a venue to protest with less likelihood of disrupting University activities and running afoul of University policies, all while being visible to the University community and giving those community members who may disagree an opportunity to avoid the protests. But to be clear: protesting at an off-campus location does not immunize your conduct from University policies. If your protest activity has continuing adverse effects on campus or in any NYU activity; substantially disrupts the regular operation of the University; or threatens the health, safety, or security of the University community, then University policies would be implicated.

Some ground rules that apply to *any protest activity*:

- Peacefully protesting on University property is permitted so long as you do not disrupt or interfere with the regular operation of University activities or otherwise violate University policies, such as the NDAH.
- If your activities become loud or disruptive, Campus Safety Officers or other University administrators may ask you to relocate, lower your volume,

or stop, in which case you are required to do so.

- All protest participants must follow the direction of Campus Safety Officers and other University staff. This includes temporarily removing a mask or showing your NYU ID for identification purposes.
- Access to certain locations may be temporarily limited in order to reduce safety risks for members of the University community.

Some protest activities are *never permitted*:

- Amplified sound (e.g., bullhorns, speakers, musical instruments, etc.) indoors is never permitted.
- Amplified sound outside that is directly adjacent to classrooms, residence halls, or libraries and that disrupts academic or residential activities inside is never permitted.
- Protesting inside libraries is disruptive to study activities and is not allowed.
- Physically accosting someone who is participating in a protest, encircling, blocking someone's path, attempting to grab or move their signs or equipment, and/or sabotaging their equipment are examples of violations.
- Encampments and overnight demonstrations are never permitted, indoors or outdoors, at any University location. Unauthorized overnight demonstrations on University property will be considered trespassing.
- Erecting unauthorized tents, structures, walls, barriers, or other objects on University property is never permitted.

The following protest activities *are permitted*:

- Teach-ins, sit-ins, vigils, poetry readings, holding signs that conform to building-specific rules, and handing out flyers are permitted, so long as they do not disrupt or interfere with the regular operation of University activities (e.g. blocking access to entrances or exits of buildings or rooms; preventing others from studying, teaching or conducting research; or disrupting a class or planned University event) or otherwise violate University policies, in particular the NDAH. You may reach out to the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) if you have any questions regarding which spaces and times may be appropriate.
- Subject to the limitations regarding classroom and academic activities as set forth in #4 below, wearing or affixing messaging on clothing is permitted so long as the content does not violate the NDAH.
- Displaying movies in public spaces may be permitted with prior approval from the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), subject to building-specific rules.
- Displaying light projections on any University building or structure is not permitted without prior approval from [the Office of the Dean of Students](#).

All organizers and participants of a protest or demonstration on campus are responsible for the conduct of the event, including the actions of any non-NYU people who are participating in the event, should that occur. NYU may set restrictions on guests or any non-NYU individuals and/or require them to leave the premises, and those limitations must be followed. These rules apply to counter-protests as well. Additional information and resources regarding conduct during protests is available [here](#).

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4. Classrooms and academic activities

Classrooms, laboratories, and other spaces where teaching and learning occur occupy a sacrosanct place in an academic community. The University will not tolerate interrupting a class session or otherwise interfering with a classroom or related activity. Conduct that may be permissible elsewhere, such as the holding or placement of banners, signs, etc., is not permissible in the classroom environment. Staff have been asked to remove all such materials in the classroom environment, regardless of content.

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5. Residence halls

Behavior that disturbs the normal operations of the residence hall living environment – such as excessive sound and blocking ingress or egress – violates student housing rules. Signs, posters, flags, and banners may not be posted or displayed on the outside of any residence hall building or in windows. For displays in common areas of residence halls, students must submit requests ahead of time in accordance with the [Residence Life Handbook](#).

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6. University activities and events

Event sponsors are responsible for researching and following the procedures for scheduling events, which vary for different venues. Events sponsored by NYU community members must be scheduled well in advance of the scheduled event. All-University clubs (those under the Student Activities Board) must obtain authorization from the Center for Student Life at least seven business days before the scheduled event; ten business days if the

club requires reimbursement for expenses; and thirty business days if the event will host a speaker.

We do not permit “heckler’s veto”; it is a violation to interrupt, impede, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with any University event, including student group or club events. Consistent with the University’s [Guidelines for Administrative Implementation of NYU Policies on Speech, Speakers, and Dissent](#), silent protests that do not interfere with the ability of a speaker to speak and listeners to hear are permissible. For example, *you may*:

- Hold signs or banners so long as they do not block the view of other attendees, are not affixed to any University property consistent with a building’s relevant policies, and do not contain threats or other content that would violate the NDAH.
- Put tape over your mouth.
- Turn your back to the speaker.
- Stage a walk-out that doesn’t interfere with the speaker’s ability to speak.
- Organize a counter speaker, panel or demonstration.

But you *may not*:

- Disrupt the program.
- Block entrances or exits or prevent others from entering or leaving the program.
- Obstruct the view of others.

NYU community members may not serve as “proxies” or provide access to non-NYU affiliated individuals or organizations to use NYU property to organize or host an event on their behalf.

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7. Signs, posters, banners, etc.

Affixing Signs: Any sign, poster, banner, flier, or similar display must comply with all applicable requirements of the University building or bulletin board at issue; otherwise it may not be posted. Non-water soluble, semi-permanent, and permanent substances, including but not limited to spray-chalk, spray paint or other forms of paint, stickers, or markers may not be used on any University property and will be considered vandalism. Any materials affixed to University property in violation of applicable rules will be subject to immediate removal by the University. Using water-soluble chalk on public sidewalks is permitted, subject to local NYC laws and regulations.

Removing Signs: Individuals may not remove, deface, or cover over a sign or poster that does not belong to them. Please contact [Facilities and Construction Management](#) to report a sign on NYU's property that you believe is in the wrong place or beyond the scope of permissible content; it is a violation to take action on your own.

Sign Content: Signs containing material that discriminates or harasses through their use of bigoted messages or symbols, or that advocate violence against anyone in the University community are violations of the NDAH Policy and our prohibition on threatening or violent conduct.

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8. Social media and online activity

The University does not generally discipline social media content, however, the University may take student disciplinary action for conduct occurring outside the University context, including online, when such conduct substantially disrupts the regular operation of the University; threatens the health, safety, or security of the University community; or results in a violation of the NDAH (such as a hostile environment). Individuals and groups should take special care to carefully read and understand materials before offering their support or endorsement. Endorsing or reposting calls for violence or discriminatory content would implicate the NDAH or other University policies and result in disciplinary action. Social media posts may also be taken into account to establish context or intent, where relevant, in reviewing other forms of misconduct.

Doxxing (i.e. sharing certain private information concerning a fellow member of the community for the purposes of harassment) is prohibited under the Student Conduct Policy.

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9. Student organization activity

Student organizations and their leaders and members may be held both collectively and individually responsible for violations of University policy. In accordance with the [Student Activities Board Policies and Procedures](#), student organizations may not receive direct funding from non-NYU sources.

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If you are ever in doubt about whether a planned activity is permitted, you are encouraged to reach out to the [Office of the Dean of Students](#).

In summary, all community members may peacefully protest in a non-disruptive manner. But if your planned activity disrupts or interferes with the regular operation of University activities, you can expect to be asked to conform your activities to be in line with University policies or to stop. If you do not, you will face consequences under the applicable policies and procedures. And if the content of your speech – whether online, affixed to a sign or an item of clothing, chanted at a protest or otherwise – would violate the NDAH, you can expect to be held accountable pursuant to that policy.