



Protest and Demonstration Policy

POLICY NO.	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
01.55.03	April 2, 2024	March 31, 2025

1.0 Policy Purpose

Brown University's Code of Conduct (<https://policy.brown.edu/policy/code-conduct>) states that the University may enforce reasonable regulations for protests and demonstrations in keeping with its commitment to academic freedom. The purpose of this policy is to outline those reasonable regulations, as reflected in the University Code of Conduct (<https://policy.brown.edu/policy/code-conduct#3.1>), which states:

“Brown University maintains, on behalf of its community, that academic freedom is essential to the function of education and to the pursuit of scholarship in universities and, mindful of its historic commitment to scholarship and to the free exchange of ideas, affirms that members of the community shall enjoy full freedom in their teaching, learning, and research. This includes freedom of religious belief; of speech; of press; of association and assembly; of political activity inside and outside the University; the right to petition the authorities, the public and the University; to invite speakers of their choice to the campus; and that students and faculty members as such should not be required to take any oath not required of other citizens. The time, place and manner of exercising these rights on the campus shall be subject to reasonable regulation only to prevent interference with the normal functions of the University.”

The University's commitment to academic freedom can be found in full in the Faculty Rules & Regulations (https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/faculty-governance/sites/facgovernance/files/FRR.v.20.Final_2023.08.18.pdf), Part 5, Section 12.I.C.

2.0 To Whom the Policy Applies

This policy applies to all members of the Brown community, including: members of the Corporation of Brown University; faculty, instructors and postdoctoral scholars; staff; all students, including undergraduate, graduate, medical, and Pre-College students and those participating in any programs offered through the School of Professional Studies; visiting scholars; volunteers; sponsored-ID holders; and guests, visitors and members of the public who attend or participate in protests or demonstrations on the Brown University campus.

3.0 Policy Statement

Protest and demonstration are a necessary and acceptable means of expression within the Brown community. Protest and demonstration become unacceptable when they obstruct the basic exchange of ideas or disrupt or materially interfere with the normal functions of the University. Such disruption or interference is a form of censorship, no matter who initiates it or for what reasons. By asserting their rights to protest or demonstrate, individuals cannot decide for the entire community which ideas will or will not receive free expression.

Protests or demonstrations that infringe upon the rights of others to peaceful assembly, orderly protest, or free exchange of ideas, or that interfere with the rights of others to make use of or enjoy the facilities or attend the functions of the University are prohibited. In recognition of the importance of Brown's commitment to academic freedom to the core mission of education and research, especially the importance of open inquiry, all members of the Brown University community must be able to advance and debate ideas and arguments inside and outside of the classroom, sponsor speakers and fora, and meaningfully engage across differences.

Picket lines that permit free passage of those who wish to pass, and signs, banners and peaceful assemblies are permitted. However, the carrying of signs that by virtue of their construction constitute a safety hazard to others are not permitted. Signs must be constructed entirely of soft material such as cardboard or cloth, must not be attached to rigid sticks or poles, and must not be so excessive in size or be used in such a manner as to create an obstruction.

Halting, disrupting or otherwise seizing control of a lecture, debate, or public forum or directly or indirectly preventing a speaker from speaking, for one's own purposes, even for a brief period of time, is not permitted.

Blocking, obstructing or impeding passage of a person or vehicle, and erecting or placing obstructions, including signs or similar objects that could be used to disrupt the view of others thus depriving others of their rights, are prohibited.

Unauthorized entry and/or use of any University space is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized entry into or occupation of any University room, building, area of campus, or other space controlled by the University in a manner not permitted by the standard rules or policies governing operation for that space. Refusal to leave a space at the request of a University official is considered unauthorized use of space.

This policy will be applied equitably and in a manner that complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI).

4.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the term below has the following definition:

University Officials: Individuals employed by the University in an administrative and supervisory capacity with authority to implement and enforce University policy. For the purposes of this policy, University Officials are: members of the President's Cabinet, Vice Presidents and Deans, Assistant and Associate Vice Presidents and Deans, Officers and Personnel of the Department of Public Safety, and others designated by the President, Provost, Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration or the Vice President for Campus Life with responsibility under this policy.

5.0 Responsibilities

All individuals to whom this policy applies are responsible for becoming familiar with and following this policy. University supervisors and employees with student oversight duties are responsible for promoting the understanding of this policy and for taking appropriate steps to help ensure and enforce compliance with it.

University Officials, including the University's Department of Public Safety (DPS), have authority and responsibility to implement and enforce this policy and request on behalf of the University that DPS or the Providence Police Department (PPD) respond to a protest or demonstration. University Officials will do so in a manner which is equitable and complies with Title VI. University Officials will apply this policy in a nondiscriminatory manner in making determinations under the policy, including but not limited to initiating University conduct proceedings and/or arrest in response to violations of University policy, City ordinances and/or State law.

6.0 Consequences for Violating this Policy

Failure to comply with this and related policies is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension without pay, or termination of employment or association with the University, in accordance with applicable (e.g., staff, faculty, student) disciplinary procedures.

7.0 Related Information

Brown University is a community in which individuals are encouraged to share concerns with University leadership. Concerns can be reported through the Discrimination and Harassment Incident Reporting Form (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?BrownUniv&layout_id=67). Additionally, Brown's Anonymous Reporting Hotline (<https://compliance.brown.edu/reporting-concerns>) allows anonymous and confidential reporting on matters of concern online or by phone (877-318-9184).

The following information complements and supplements this document. The information is intended to help explain this policy and is not an all-inclusive list of policies, procedures, laws and requirements.

7.1 Related Policies

- Code of Student Conduct (</policy/code-student-conduct>)
- Event Disruption Protocol (</policy/event-disruption>)
- Invited Speakers and Guests Policy (</policy/invited-speakers>)
- Political Activity Policy (</policy/political-activity>)
- University Code of Conduct (</policy/code-conduct>)
- University Green Space Usage Policy (</policy/green-space>)

- University Posting Policy (</policy/poster-and-banner>)
- Pre-College Code of Conduct (<https://precollege.brown.edu/policies/#conduct>)

7.2 Related Procedures

- Student Conduct Procedures (<https://www.brown.edu/offices/student-conduct/sites/student-conduct/files/docs/2020-2021%20Student%20Conduct%20Procedures.pdf>)
- Student Conduct Procedures for Student Groups (<https://www.brown.edu/offices/student-conduct/sites/student-conduct/files/docs/2022-2023%20Student%20Conduct%20Procedures%20for%20Student%20Groups.pdf>)
- Event Disruption Protocol (<https://policy.brown.edu/policy/event-disruption>)
- Checklist for Brown Event Sponsors (<https://event-strategy.brown.edu/sites/default/files/Checklist-for-Brown-Event-Sponsors%2011.14.22.pdf>)

7.3 Related Forms

N/A

7.4 Frequently Asked Questions

N/A

7.5 Other Related Information

N/A

8.0 Policy Owner and Contact(s)

8.1 Policy Owner: Vice President for Human Resources and Vice President for Campus Life

8.2 Policy Approved by: President

8.3 Contact Information:

Vice President for Human Resources
Email (<mailto:hrrservicecenter@brown.edu>)
[401-863-5200](tel:401-863-5200)

Vice President for Campus Life
Email (mailto:Campus_Life@brown.edu)
[401-863-1800](tel:401-863-1800)

9.0 Policy History

9.1 Policy Issue Date: April 2, 2024

9.2 Policy Effective Date: March 31, 2025

9.3 Policy Update/Review Summary:

Previous policy version(s) superseded by this policy:

- Protest and Demonstration Policy, Effective Date: April 2, 2024.

Webpage Updated on April 2, 2025