

Free Speech and Demonstration Guidelines

Rights, rules, responsibilities, and resources



At Portland State University, established guidelines protect the right to free speech, while ensuring that opposing views may also be expressed. The university strives to balance the right to dissent with the right to be heard, the right to speak one's mind with the right to listen. The university applies its rules and expectations in a manner neutral to the viewpoints expressed.

Spaces

- To enable the free sharing of ideas on campus, PSU has rules and procedures for reserving space or other facilities
- When campus activities conflict with one another, university officials have the authority to request those involved in one activity to stop, move, or change their behavior, so that the other activity can continue
- Tables and other structures are not allowed to set up in University controlled-spaces without a reservation

Sound

- Outdoor amplified sound on campus (including microphones, amps, and bullhorns) must be scheduled and have a Noise Variance from the City of Portland.
- Outdoor sound may not exceed 75db measured 50 feet from the sound source in any direction. PSU reserves the right to require events and individuals to lower the volume of outdoor sound when it is disrupting university business or other events with a reservation.
- No amplified sound at outdoor information tables

Printed Material

- Most building walls and campus fixtures, as well as most bulletin boards, are regulated. Building or department operators may determine what content may be approved (i.e., requiring content related to a particular program, or published by university groups for a university audience). Unapproved or unrelated material may be removed
- Material may not contain true threats of violence

Signs

- May not have attached sticks inside buildings (safety hazard)
- May not make direct, true threats of violence
- May be removed if not attended to at all times

Graffiti

- Chalking to promote PSU related activities or events can be given prior authorization, see link below.
- No markings, including chalking, may be left on campus buildings or other structures or surfaces without prior approval.

Demonstrations

- May not interfere with scheduled university activities or speakers (such as classes or events)
- May not block doors, hallways, stairways, fire exits, fire lanes, or public rights of way including streets, sidewalks, etc.
- May not pose a threat to health and safety
- May not result in damage, theft, or vandalism of property
- May not exceed safe occupancy capacity in a room
- May not have open flames larger than a standard candle outdoors, or any open flames indoors
- Overnight camping or storage of materials is not allowed. All materials or structures associated with an event must be removed immediately following the conclusion of that event or by 10 p.m. each day for multiple-day events.

Online references and resources

- [PSU Free Speech Website](#)
- [Campus Events Venues and Reservations](#)
- [Campus Events Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Chalking and Art Installations](#)
- [Portland Noise Variance](#)
- [City Street and Sidewalk Regulations](#)
- [City Park Regulations](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct and Responsibility](#)
- [Faculty Code of Conduct](#)
- [Portland State Professional Standards](#)

Visitors to the PSU campus have the responsibility to obey federal and state laws, the municipal code, and PSU rules and policies, and may be cited for trespass or subject to prosecution for any illegal behavior committed on campus. Additionally, students are subject to the requirements of the Student Conduct Code, faculty are subject to the Faculty Conduct Code, and all employees are subject to Professional Standards of Conduct, as well as all applicable policies on progressive discipline.