

Boston University Policies

POLICY

Boston University Events and Demonstrations Policy

RESPONSIBLE OFFICES

Office of the Associate Provost and Dean of Students,
Office of the University Provost

Purpose

As the Boston University Statement on Free Speech and Expression makes clear, providing opportunities for members of the University community to express themselves, including to dissent, to rally, to gather in vigil, to walkout, or to otherwise express themselves peaceably, is crucial to the educational mission of the University. The University makes these opportunities available while neither requiring that other members of the community condone particular messages or remain silent in the face of speech with which they disagree.

This policy describes the requirements for events that are to be held on the University's campus and that are organized by University affiliates.



Defined Terms

Affiliate: any Boston University department, recognized student organization, or current student, faculty or staff member.

Event: a public display of individual or group speech or other expression occurring either (i) on the Boston University campus or (ii) at University-sponsored events off campus. Events include, but are not limited to, concerts, performances, speeches, panels, demonstrations, assemblies, picketing, protests, counter-demonstrations, rallies, vigils, and sit-ins. For avoidance of doubt, regularly scheduled University classes, personal occasion events and family events (e.g., birthday parties and weddings) are not considered Events for purposes of this Policy.

Demonstration: An in-person meeting or march to protest or express views on an issue in the view of others on campus or the public, which may take the form of a vigil, rally, protest, picketing, leafletting, sit-ins or similar.

Counter-Demonstration: A demonstration in response to another Event on campus.

Covered Parties

All Affiliates attending or organizing Events and all non-Affiliates attending Events are subject to and expected to comply with this Policy, as well as all other applicable University policies and procedures and applicable law. Affiliates may invite non-Affiliates to participate in Events, but the inviting Affiliate will be responsible for informing non-Affiliates of this Policy and may be held accountable for the non-Affiliates' failure to comply.

This Policy does not cover the following:

- assignment of space in University facilities for academic and administrative use;
- personal occasion events or family events (e.g., birthday parties and weddings), even if organized by an Affiliate;
- use or reservation of Agganis Arena;



- Athletics venues when used for athletic practices and competitions – Case Center, Walter Brown Arena and Track and Tennis Center; and
- third-party (non-Affiliate) use of or reservation of any University facilities.

Policy

I. Use of Campus Spaces

A. Organizing Events

All Events other than Demonstrations (as described in Section II) must be registered with the relevant University office:

- For students and student organizations: [Student Activities Office](#)
- For faculty and staff: [Events & Conferences](#)


B. Use of University Space

The use of University space is limited to lawful purposes consistent with the educational purposes of the University. The assignment of space within University facilities will be determined by the primary function of the facility, the attendant priority in its use, and the purpose for which the space is designed. Reasonable charges, including overhead for the use of space and equipment, facilities, security, and amenities, are the responsibility of Event organizers.

To reserve University space or check on its availability, please see [Events & Conferences](#).

C. Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

The following restrictions apply to all Events:

- No blocking or otherwise interfering with the free flow of vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic. The right of way on streets and sidewalks must be maintained.
- No blocking or otherwise interfering with the ability of others to go into and out of campus buildings. 

- No preventing or attempting to force the cancellation of any class, or event or activity sponsored by the University or by any persons authorized to use University facilities.

This restriction is not intended to prohibit Counter-Demonstrations.

- No inciting imminent lawless action.
- No harassment, physical abuse, or threats toward another person or persons present.
- No Events between midnight and 8a.m.
- No unattended temporary structures, without express written approval of Dean of Students, for students and student organizations, or Events and Conferences, for faculty and staff and non-Affiliates.
- No unattended placards, banners, or other signs, unless they are affixed securely to a location that has been approved for posting (e.g., a Free Expression Board).
- Persons on campus must comply with the directions of any University official acting in the performance of their duty

The University may determine that public address systems or amplified sound may not be used during times when classes are in session or when there is another nearby event. (i.e., amplified sound in Marsh Plaza is also prohibited when events are being held in the Main Chapel).

Boston University reserves the right to set forth additional, reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions for Events.

D. Public Safety

The University will strive to protect the safety of the campus community at all times and wishes to work with Event organizers to ensure that Events transpire safely. The Boston University Police Department will assess and has authority to determine the nature and extent of safety measures, which may include (but are not limited to) relocating an Event, changing its timing, employing safety equipment or protocols, or restricting the Event to Affiliates. In those rare instances in which the University concludes that an Event presents an insurmountable threat to public safety, Boston University reserves the right to cancel the Event.

II. Guidelines for Demonstrations



A. Optional Registration

On-campus Demonstrations sponsored and/or organized by Affiliates are exempt from the event registration process described in Section I(A), though subject to the other provisions of this Policy. Nevertheless, the University invites and encourages Affiliates organizing Demonstrations on campus to register them as Events so that the University can provide event support.

B. Locations

The University permits Demonstrations at the following locations, unless another party has previously reserved the space:

- Marsh Plaza
- George Sherman Union Plaza
- Metcalf Science Plaza
- Cummington Mall
- Talbot Green
- Alpert Mall (BU Beach)
- Outside Booth Theatre
- Alley between Commonwealth Avenue and Photonics

The Office of the Provost may also approve the use of other locations to accommodate particular circumstances associated with a Demonstration.

C. Counter-Demonstrations

When an Event on campus prompts a Counter-Demonstration, in the interest of safety, the University may designate a separate area for the counter-demonstrators. To the extent practicable, the University will designate an area or areas within reasonable sight and sound of the Event and the speaker's and the audience's entry into and exit from the Event.

END OF POLICY TEXT



Additional Resources Regarding This Policy

History

The Boston University Events and Demonstrations Policy was drafted by the University Council Committee on Student Life and Policies and was approved by the University Council on 5/17/22.

Categories: [Events or Demonstrations](#), [Political Activities](#), [University Policies Affecting Student Life](#) Keywords: [activism](#), [demonstration](#), [demonstrations](#), [free speech](#), [gathering](#), [gatherings](#), [protect](#), [protects](#), [time place manner](#)

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