

Guidance for Assessing When Behavior is Disruptive to University Operations

This document provides guidance regarding when an event or other activity has become disruptive to University operations, and therefore, may be determined to be in violation of University policy.

The University's response to disruptive events or activities may vary based on the nature of the conduct. For example, warnings and requests to stop engaging in behavior may be provided before individuals are removed from an event or an event is shut down if behavior continues or individuals may be removed from an event rather than shutting down the whole event if removal of those individuals will remove the disruption. See the escalation protocol for further guidance.

I. Considerations in Evaluating Potential Disruption to University Operations

The following considerations will be used to evaluate whether an event or individual(s) at an event are disruptive to University Operations. Depending on the context, any one factor may be dispositive.

- Creating a physically unsafe condition or causing physical harm to others
- Causing harm to university or other property
- Engaging in illegal activity
- Violating University policy
- Creating noise through any means (including, but not limited to, amplified sound) that disrupts or prevents university academic or administrative operations (e.g., prevents university employees from doing their work; prevents students from working or studying; disrupts other events)
 - Exceptions to sound limits for amplified sound may be approved through University Events for scheduled events, however, even events with exceptions can be stopped at the university's discretion if they become disruptive
- Blocking sidewalks, roadways, building entrances, or other areas of campus so as to prevent the movement of others around campus
- Engaging in speech not protected by the First Amendment
 - Assessment of whether speech is protected by the First Amendment should be made in consultation with the Office of University Counsel
 - Speech that is upsetting or offensive to others (even if causes others to feel unsafe) is protected by the First Amendment unless it falls into a category of unprotected speech. While the University may not be able to stop the offending speech, supportive measures can be provided to the person complaining and allegations of harassment based on protected characteristic (e.g. race, sex, national origin, religion, etc.) must be reported to and assessed by the Equity and Access Services Office within DEI.
- Interfering with or preventing others' use of campus space or another event
- Occupying space reserved for another event
- Placing or hanging objects on university property in a manner that disrupts university operations or that violates the University Posting Policy

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- Acting in a manner that prevents an event from proceeding or the attendees at the event from hearing or participating in the event (e.g., yelling over a speaker, repeated or consistent interrupting, obstructing the view of participants, failing to follow the legitimate instructions of event organizers)

II. Additional Prohibited Activities for Events Not Scheduled in 25Live

In addition to the above, the following are not permitted:

- Holding an unscheduled event inside a university building. All indoor events must be scheduled and registered in 25Live. *See* Policy 1103
- Using amplified sound at an unscheduled event
- Placing physical objects (other than personal items or personal seating) on Mason's property during an unscheduled event

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