

## Time, Place, and Manner Guidance

### Introduction

Tufts has a long, proud tradition of civic engagement and encourages free expression. The university is also committed to maintaining an inclusive environment that is accessible to all those who choose to live, work and study at Tufts. Tufts balances these sometimes competing and contradictory goals through the exercise of reasonable time, place and manner restrictions.

In the wake of protest activity on campuses around the country, including here at Tufts, we wanted to give you a clear view into how we think about campus demonstrations and protests and how we apply the time, place and manner restrictions that are inherently embedded in our existing policies. We have tried to be clear and to give specific examples where possible, but ultimately, our decisions must be guided by the totality of the circumstances. We ask for your cooperation and collaboration as we navigate these important issues.

### Purpose

This guidance reinforces Tufts' community expectations regarding all demonstrations and protests that happen on Tufts property or use Tufts resources. It is meant to further explain and reinforce Tufts' existing policies and procedures, including the [Declaration on Freedom of Expression](#), the [Non-Discrimination Policy](#), and those on event registration, facilities use, and posting across our campuses, schools, and programs.

Tufts property and resources are primarily for educational purposes that support the university's academic mission. Priority is given *first* to academic activities that facilitate teaching, learning, and research, and *second* to non-academic events, including demonstrations and protests. The rules about when (time), where (place), and how (manner) you can express yourself on campus are there to make sure that all academic activities continue without interruptions, everyone has equal access to our facilities and programs, and the university can keep running smoothly. In short, they help support the university's educational mission. While demonstrations and protests generally do not follow the standard event registration process, they must still adhere to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.

### Scope

This guidance applies to all Tufts community members across all campuses, schools, and programs.

By default, demonstrations and protests are limited to members of the Tufts community, unless stated otherwise. The university might check Tufts IDs to see if protest participants are from Tufts or if they are visitors/outside guests. Visitors/outside guests have fewer rights to express themselves on campus than Tufts community members. Anyone participating in a demonstration or protest, including outside guests, must review and follow this guidance and any instructions from university officials.

Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted, applied, or enforced to interfere with, restrain, or coerce Tufts employees in the exercise of their rights to engage in protected, concerted activity under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act or their academic freedom.

## Definitions

**Demonstrations and Protests.** This guidance applies to all demonstrations and protests occurring on Tufts property or using Tufts resources. Any person participating in such a demonstration or protest must review this guidance and adhere to it. All demonstrations and protests will be governed by this guidance regardless of how they are characterized or labeled. Demonstrations and protests are presumed to be private, that is, limited to members of the Tufts community, unless specifically stated otherwise. In general, demonstrations and protests are group actions or activities that occur outside of the typical event registration process.

**Visitors/Outside Guests.** The university reserves the right to request Tufts IDs to determine if participants in demonstrations and protests are Tufts community members or visitors/outside guests. Visitors/outside guests have less expansive rights of free expression on campus than Tufts community members. Visitors/outside guests who participate in demonstrations and protests are required to comply with these guidelines and any additional instructions given by university officials, including the Department of Public Safety. Visitors/outside guests who do not comply with these guidelines or additional instructions may be asked to leave campus or may be barred from campus.

**Time, Place and Manner Restrictions.** Time, place and manner restrictions regulate when, how and where speech can occur on campus and/or with the use of Tufts' resources. These restrictions are intended to prevent disruptions to academic activities, ensure equal access to Tufts facilities and programs, and allow for the continued operation of university business.

## Time, Place and Manner Restrictions

All demonstrations and protests are subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions. The examples included in this guidance are not exhaustive. Community members should familiarize themselves with relevant codes of conduct, handbooks and recognize that the university retains discretion to update its policies and their implementation.

### TIME: When is my participation in demonstrations and protests allowed?

***Scheduling.*** Organizers must check if a space requires advance notice or reservations and follow the proper process. For questions about scheduling, contact your local dean's office or division head. Many locations require advance notice and/or reservations. Organizers should research and determine the process necessary for the space they wish to reserve and use. Campus or school-specific policies about how to reserve or use space on campus may be supplemented by the university.

**Quiet Hours.** Generally, amplified sound is not allowed during classes, exams, or overnight near residence halls. If noise disrupts library, classroom, studio, office, clinic, or lab activities, participants may be asked to lower the volume or stop their activity entirely.

**Overnight Demonstrations and Protests.** To ensure both the safety of all community members and equal access to our campus and facilities, overnight demonstrations and protests are *strictly prohibited*. Failure to vacate a location, either indoor or outdoor, at the end of the day or ignoring instructions from university officials may result in disciplinary actions, no-trespass orders, or arrests.

**PLACE:** Where can we hold campus demonstrations and protests? What spaces, places or events are off limits?

There are several places on Tufts campuses that can accommodate demonstrations and protests, which is why we find it easier to answer this question in the negative. Demonstrations and protests are ***not*** permitted at the following locations:

- Private offices, labs, clinic and research space, hospitals, health services, utilities, or other facilities necessary to the university's continued operation
- Residence halls, dorms, or any on-campus housing
- Classrooms, studios or conference rooms in use or scheduled for classes, private meetings or other activities
- Dining halls
- Campus centers
- Libraries, museums, theaters
- University statues (Jumbo and Bessie)

Demonstrations and protests are ***not*** permitted on certain days and occasions, including:

- Reading Days
- Exam Days

Chalking is not permitted during matriculation and commencement.

**MANNER:** Which types of demonstrations and protests are not allowed?

Demonstrations and protests that explicitly threaten or advocate violence or that create a hostile environment are ***never*** allowed.

In addition, demonstrations and protest must ***not***:

- Block walkways, doorways, stairs, hallways, or traffic.
- Create a disturbance in the surrounding community in violation of local law.
- Introduce items or conditions that would otherwise be banned on campus, e.g., open flames.

**Other restrictions include:**

**Postings.** The university may place restrictions on the size, type, and number of postings for all events, including demonstrations and protests:

- **Projections of images or messages** on *any* campus buildings, properties, or areas are prohibited.
- **Posters advertising demonstrations and protests** sponsored by student organizations may be posted only in authorized areas. Organizers may not place their posters such that they obscure existing posters.
- **Any postings that cannot be immediately and easily removed**, such as stickers, paint, and spray chalk, are prohibited.
- **Chalking** is not allowed on any vertical surface such as the sides of buildings, retaining walls, or the backs of steps. It is also prohibited on any space inaccessible to rain such as covered walkways.
- **Cannon Painting** is a time-honored tradition on the Tufts Medford-Somerville campus. For more information about this tradition, please see <https://students.tufts.edu/dean-students-office/painting-cannon>.

**Posting Removal.** Non-compliant signage, including posters and banners, will be removed immediately by authorized university personnel, which includes student life, public safety, and or facilities staff. If an organizer believes their posting has been removed in error, they should contact their local dean's office or division head.

**Periodic Cleanings; Fostering Free Expression.** The university periodically cleans sidewalks, walkways, bulletin boards, structures and other public-facing spaces on campus as part of its routine maintenance efforts. Regular cleaning schedules for bulletin boards and other posting areas are intended to create space for notices about upcoming campus events and activities and may vary by campus or location. Beginning this academic year (Fall 2025), the university will remove all chalkings daily (weather permitting) and repaint the cannon weekly to help make way for new messages and allow Tufts community members to share a wide array of thoughts, ideas and viewpoints.

**Structures.** The erection of structures, walls, barriers, or other objects on university property requires advance approval from your local dean's office or division head. Structures built without permission are subject to immediate removal.

**Interference with Speech.** Everyone has the right to free expression without interference. Demonstrations and protests are allowed but should not prevent speakers from expressing their views or being heard or seen by others.

**Social Media and Doxing.** While Tufts community members have the right to use *personal* social media accounts to express themselves, online harassment and the doxing of students, faculty, or staff are *not* permitted. To the extent that Tufts organizations or community members can be identified as perpetrators of such activities, the university may take disciplinary action. Reports of such behavior should be directed to the Department of Public Safety.

**News Media:** News media must show credentials when asked and, except for student press, will need permission from media relations to be on campus, as outlined in the [media relations policy](#).

**No Endorsement.** University faculty, staff, and students, can accurately state their affiliation, including title or position, for personal activities, as long as it does not suggest university endorsement.

### [Enforcement](#)

Disrupting university operations, including unreasonable interference with others' activities, causing harm or threat to individuals or property, holding meetings, events, or demonstrations and protests that endanger the health and safety of others, or blocking free movement in any university location inside and outside buildings is prohibited.

Students suspected of violating this guidance or related policies will face university disciplinary actions as applicable. Serious or repeated non-compliance may result in temporary or interim suspension and immediate departure from campus.

Staff suspected of violating this guidance will be referred to Human Resources for appropriate disciplinary action.

Faculty members who violate this guidance will be referred to their respective Dean's offices for appropriate action based on their faculty affiliation.