

UNIVERSITY SPACE STANDARDS (updated 8-14-24)

A. Purpose and Principles of Usage

As a land-grant institution, The Ohio State University is committed to protecting the First Amendment right to free speech and expression on our campuses. Intellectual freedom and civic engagement are foundational to the university's values and enhance the university community. Ohio State supports the right of everyone to peacefully express their views and to speak out about issues that are important to them.

Accordingly, the University makes available certain designated indoor and outdoor spaces for hosting events which support its land-grant missions of teaching, research, service and outreach. The purpose of these standards are to assure the right of free expression on the Ohio State campus while supporting the ability of University community members to carry out academic and administrative pursuits without substantial disruptions.

The University's buildings, grounds, facilities, and other property (for the purpose of these standards, "space") are dedicated to the fulfillment of its land grant educational mission. The University is also responsible for ensuring the continued safe and effective operation of the business of the University. The University allows designated outdoor and indoor spaces to be reserved for events consistent with the University's teaching, research, and service missions, administrative and other official functions, and students' campus-life activities. The University may limit access to or use of its space as may be necessary to provide for the safety of the university community and the orderly conduct of the University's teaching, research, and service missions, the University's administrative and other official functions, and students' campus-life activities.

Accordingly, the University has designated its classrooms, laboratories, athletic and recreational facilities, residential facilities, as well as administration, office, patient care, research, farm and facilities buildings, as closed for public use, unless otherwise specified. The University has spaces—including but not limited to outdoor spaces, conference rooms and classrooms, and designated areas within facilities—that may be reserved for activities or events that support the University's teaching, research, and service missions, the University's administrative and other official functions, or students' campus-life activities consistent with these standards. Non-affiliates are free to visit and walk through our campuses; however, must comply with these standards to conduct events.

These standards work in conjunction with other University rules, policies, standards and related governing documents including the:

- [Faculty Rule 3335-11-02](#);
- [Code of Student Conduct](#);
- [Campus Free Speech Policy](#);
- [Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#); and,

- [University Signage Standards, including the university's temporary signage and chalking rules.](#)

B. Definitions

An **event** is any non-curricular planned gathering including but not limited to lectures, speaker presentations, conferences, forums, performances, concerts, demonstrations, protests, rallies, celebrations and social gatherings.

A **non-affiliate** is defined as any person who is not a student, employee, Trustee, or emeritus of the University.

A **registered student organization**, as defined in the [Council on Student Affairs guidelines](#), is an association of students created for any educational purpose that supports the vision and goals of the University.

Restricted noise is defined as noise disrupting the function of the University. Noise that is disruptive includes, but is not limited to, amplified sound (which includes, but is not limited to, audio enhancement devices, vocally amplified sound (i.e. shouting), and other noise-making instruments) and other loud noise that is disruptive as defined within [Faculty Rule 3335-11-02](#) or is noise occurring during the restricted hours outlined in Section F(13) below. Restricted noise does not include noise which is necessary for the conduct of official university functions, including noise related to construction, maintenance, and landscaping.

The phrase “**university authorized activity**” shall be taken to mean any activity that the university-conducts, sponsors, or permits to be carried out on the campus or in any university building or facility.

The phrase “**with an intent to disrupt**” shall be taken to mean that a person knows or reasonably should know that their act or acts will have the consequence of preventing others from carrying out university authorized activities. See [Faculty Rule 3335-11-02](#).

C. Designation of Space for Reservation

The University has designated some spaces that may be reserved for holding events by registered student organizations, students, faculty, staff, and non-affiliates for the support of the University's mission, administrative functions, or campus-life activities. In these spaces, the University may require reasonable time, place and manner limitations be placed on usage to ensure that the usage does not disrupt the University's mission, administrative functions, or other campus-life activities.

Designated University indoor and outdoor spaces must be reserved through the Office of Student Life or the Office of the University Registrar for the purpose of hosting events, when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- If event organizers expect or promote the activity as having the sole usage of a space; or
- If the activity requires or event organizers expect university staff support or resources in order to conduct the activity or hold the event; or
- If the activity requires physical set-up of equipment, signs, or other structures.

Additionally, the University, within its sole discretion and subject to change based upon the operational needs of the University, has designated spaces that are not available for reservation by registered student organizations, students, faculty, staff, and non-affiliates. These spaces are assigned for specific University administrative or other official functions, teaching, learning, or research and cannot be reserved by the Office of Student Life or University Registrar.

Use of space for purposes other than those for which they have been designated will not be permitted. A dynamic list of designated reservable spaces can be found on the [university's Freedom of Expression website](#).

D. Reserving Space for Events

Reservations for spaces are processed on first-come, first-served basis with priority given to University departments, registered student organizations, and other official University functions. Reservations are non-transferable and the University reserves the right to reschedule events consistent with these standards.

Reserving space for events occurring in or on University outdoor space should proceed as follows:

- 1. Registered Student Organizations and University Departments:** Registered student organizations and University Departments must submit requests through Student Life's online space request tool (<https://go.osu.edu/spacerequesttool>) or other [facility-specific reservation processes](#). For information regarding the associated booking window dates, please visit the Student Life Events and Conferences webpage (<https://slec.osu.edu/plan-your-event/host-a-student-event>).
 - a. Registered Student Organizations** sponsoring visits from political candidates or surrogates must also comply with the [Protocol for Visits by Political Candidates or Surrogates Sponsored by Registered Student Organizations](#).
- 2. Students, Faculty, Staff and Non-Affiliates:** Students, faculty, staff, and non-affiliates must submit requests through the Student Life Events and Conferences online form (<https://go.osu.edu/startplanningtoday>) or [other facility-specific reservation processes](#).

3. Other spaces on campus may have additional venue-specific processes that can be reviewed on the [university's Freedom of Expression website](#).

E. Rescheduling of Events

Events that are determined to pose a risk to personal safety, University property, or facility security may be moved to another space or rescheduled, where reasonably practicable, with at least a three-business day advance notice until such time as adequate and appropriate security can be made available, as determined by the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

Facilities Operations and Development, the Outdoor Events Committee, and Department of Athletics, where applicable, reserves the right to cancel scheduled events (or have events moved to a predetermined alternate location) with, where reasonably practicable, a three-business day notice due to weather, grounds, and maintenance considerations.

F. Rules Governing Usage of Space

1. Animals

Dogs or other animals under an individual's ownership are subject to University Rule 3335-13-05.

Farm, wildlife, and/or zoo animals are not permitted in indoor and outdoor spaces without the prior approval of Facilities Operations and Development and the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

2. Facility Hours and Usage

Other than University department use or written permission from Student Life Events and Conferences, usage of University space is limited to the designated hours of operation for the space, and other property. Usage shall not disrupt the University's administrative functions or other campus-life activities and may not impede ingress or egress to the University, any University property, parking lot, building, facility, or event.

3. Food and Beverage

No food shall be sold except by University food services or contracted vendors with authorization to serve a particular area.

No beverages competing with Coca-Cola products are permitted to be distributed on campus. Food trucks for events must be coordinated through Office of Student Life University Dining Services or other approved university vendors. All free food and beverage distributions by companies must be coordinated with Student Life or the relevant facility/space coordinator.

Food and beverages may be distributed free of charge in the approved area. All food should be prepared on site, delivered to the site from a licensed caterer or restaurant, or commercially pre-packaged. The appropriate permits from the City of Columbus may also be required. No home cooking, including bake sales, is permitted.

Events seeking to serve alcohol must follow the request process outlined in the [university's Alcohol and Other Drugs policy](#).

4. Grills and Open Burning

Open burning, including fires and bonfires, and the use of grills with charcoal are not permitted with the exception of University-approved and installed permanent charcoal grill pits. Propane grills must be placed atop a shield to protect the surface beneath from drips/spills and accompanied by a fire suppression device approved by [Ohio State University Emergency Management & Fire Prevention](#).

5. Ingress and Egress

To ensure accessibility for students, faculty, and staff, any event approved for an outdoor space may not block sidewalks, walkways or streets in a way that obstructs usage; must maintain ingress and egress to proximal indoor facilities; two means of egress or the minimum number required as emergency egress by public safety officials, whichever is larger, must be accessible.

6. Mirror Lake

Mirror Lake is not intended or approved for recreational use of any kind at any time. Swimming, wading or entering the water and water basin is not permitted and is considered criminal trespassing. No person, pet, or watercraft is permitted on or in Mirror Lake or any other body of water (including when frozen) without the prior consent of the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

7. Motorized Vehicles

Motorized vehicles are not permitted to be used on sidewalks, walkways and grounds for events without permission from Facilities Operations and Development.

Use of motorized vehicles for events requires advance approval by Transportation and Traffic Management, the Ohio State Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Athletics (where applicable).

8. Public Safety Needs

Public safety needs, including any security, law enforcement, fire safety, and/or medical needs, must be noted when being scheduled. Notifications should go to the Ohio State

Department of Public Safety, the Office of Student Life, the building operator, and any other appropriate offices. The Ohio State Department of Public Safety will determine any necessary and required security arrangements in conjunction with the event host and the venue operator. Final determinations regarding necessary and required security arrangements are the sole decision of the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

Costs for public safety arrangements will be based on the event size, location, date and time, any special safety arrangements requested by the event host, and other safety or risk considerations specific to the event. Costs may also include any special safety arrangements required for third party security and related equipment affiliated with the event.

Any law enforcement, security officers, or safety/security equipment requested or planned for utilization by event host at the event must have approval from the Ohio State Department of Public Safety. Approval is required a minimum of three (3) business days before the event. All security personnel must meet criteria developed by the Ohio State Department of Public Safety.

The University will provide the event host with an itemized statement of public safety costs for the event. The cost of security is the responsibility of the event host(s).

9. Temporary Signage or Posting

No bills, signs, or banners may be attached, affixed or projected to university furniture, trees, light poles, buildings (except in cases where prior approval is obtained), or handheld wooden sticks or plastic or metal poles, pursuant to the [University Signage Standards](#). Signs, a-frames, banners, projected images and other forms of advertising may only be posted or displayed within the approved event space.

Freestanding signs must be secure and safe. No signs causing ground penetration are permitted without prior approval from Facilities Operations and Development. Signs, a-frames, banners, and other forms of advertising are not to be raised in other areas of campus or posted in such a way as to prevent ingress or egress to university buildings or the use of sidewalks, walkways or streets.

10. Tents and Temporary Structures

No tents or other temporary structures may be set up without prior approval from Facilities Operations and Development or designee. Any approved structures may not cover grass for more than 24 hours after the conclusion of the event reservation.

No staking of temporary structures is permitted – all temporary structures must use a weighting system (e.g., water barrels) approved by Facilities Operations and Development that does not penetrate the ground.

Tents or air supported temporary membrane structures (inflatables) may not exceed size restrictions established by the [State of Ohio](#) and must have a permit provided by the [Ohio Department of Commerce](#). The [Ohio State University \(Ohio State\) Emergency Management & Fire Prevention](#) can be contacted for additional information.

11. The Main Oval

The Main Oval is considered the University's "front lawn" and is maintained for the enjoyment of students, faculty and staff. Within the University's discretion, events may be relocated to preserve the quality of the Main Oval for continued usage by students, faculty and staff.

12. Timing and Duration of Events

Unless an official University function or an approved event reservation, events ending after 10 p.m. are not permitted.

Events consistent with the University's teaching, research, and service missions requesting to end after 10 p.m. must:

- be confined to a single 24-hour period.
- not occupy the same or adjacent spaces on consecutive days.
- not have outside or inside habitation be the primary focus of the event.
- be reviewed and approved by the Ohio State Department of Public Safety, Facilities Operations and Development, Department of Athletics (where applicable) and the Office of Student Life as part of the event request process.

13. Use of Sound

Unless approved as part of an event reservation or official University function, restricted noise is not permitted outdoors Monday through Friday prior to 5:30 p.m. and after 10 p.m.; Saturday prior to noon and after midnight; and, Sunday prior to noon and after 10 p.m..

Restricted noise is not permitted in indoor spaces unless approved as part of an event reservation or official University function.

Exceptions for use of restricted noise outdoors may be granted, in its sole discretion by the University in consideration of the duration of the sound, time during the academic semester, and type of restricted noise used. Exception requests must be submitted for approval to outdoorevents@osu.edu for review a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the event. Even when occurring during approved hours, restricted noise should be kept at a reasonable level and the University may request that organizers adjust the volume if the sound is disrupting the function of the University.

14. Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Usage of unmanned aircraft systems in University spaces is governed by Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) University Policy and the use of UAS during events requires advanced approval pursuant to this University policy.

G. Damage to Space

Persons or organizations reserving space are responsible for any damage and shall repair the damage to the satisfaction of Facilities Operations and Development or pay for others to complete necessary repairs. Specific services when required or if needed must be arranged and paid for directly with the appropriate University department (i.e., Facilities Operations and Development, Department of Public Safety, etc.). Deposits or an agreement regarding use of space, liability, and payment may be required for reservation.

H. Enforcement of Standards

All persons on University property are required to abide by University policies and applicable law and shall identify themselves upon request to University officials who are acting in the performance of their duties. Students, registered student organizations, faculty, staff, and non-affiliates are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, all applicable University policies, and applicable local, state and federal laws. Students and registered student organizations are also expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Use of University property must not, in any form, disrupt University business.

When enforcing these standards, an official or employee authorized to maintain order on the campus or facility should make a reasonable attempt to warn and advise all persons to cease the prohibited conduct or activity before citing and/or arresting the individual for violation of these standards, except where the conduct violating these standards reasonably appears to create a threat to or endanger health, safety or property.