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Protest encampment update

2 May 2024

Mark Scott, Vice-Chancellor and President, wrote to all staff with an update on the protest encampment and conduct expectations for staff and students.

Dear colleagues,

Recently I wrote to remind all staff that at the University we have a long tradition of understanding peaceful protests and freedom of expression can be important demonstrations of free speech.

Today, I reaffirm our commitment to freedom of expression and our zero tolerance for any form of racism, threats to safety, hate speech, intimidation, threatening speech, bullying or unlawful harassment, including antisemitic or anti-Muslim language or behaviour.

Expectations of conduct

Last week the Provost, Professor Annamarie Jagose, wrote to all students and all staff to make clear the principles that would guide our response to and actions regarding the protest encampment set up on our front lawn.

We made very clear that we would not hesitate to take firm and decisive disciplinary action if a student or staff member engaged in unacceptable conduct including:

- disruption of lectures and classes, preventing other students from learning
 - harassing or intimidating staff and students who may hold a different view or simply do not wish to engage in protest or debate
 - preventing free movement around campus
 - damage to property.
- I regret to say that in recent days we've become aware of a number of alleged instances of unacceptable conduct associated with the encampment including:
- Stoppers being grafted on the walls of the Quadrangle
 - A truck driver making an unauthorised delivery to the encampment spitting at and engaging in other offensive and abusive behaviour directed to University staff
 - Protesters entering buildings and harassing staff
 - Protesters blocking City Road and endangering the health and wellbeing of students and staff.

I want to assure you the University considers these alleged behaviours completely unacceptable and that we take violations of our [Student Charter](#) (DCE 2.10-4.8.1.2) and our [Code of Conduct](#) very seriously. We are investigating these violations of our policies in the usual way, including cooperating with police investigations where alleged unacceptable conduct might have broken the law. The University is actively engaging with protesters and we will continue to monitor the behaviour at the encampment. From time to time, in the interests of safety, some buildings may be placed in secure mode meaning a valid student or staff card will be required to enter.

Support

- Information about what to do if you witness or experience unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, harassment, or discrimination is available on the [Intranet](#)
- If you feel unsafe you can contact protective services on 9351 3333
- If you witness an incident please [log a report in Riskware](#)
- If you need support you can contact our [Employee Assistance Program](#) to access 24/7 confidential counselling for you and your family.

As Annamarie said at our all-staff Town Hall on Monday, I encourage everyone to act with empathy for each other in these challenging times.

Kind regards,
Mark

Mark Scott
Vice-Chancellor and President

Code of Conduct >

Expected standards of conduct for those who work for the University

Contact us

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