



Our expectations of conduct in troubled times

26 October 2023

Dear students,

Like you, we continue to be shocked and appalled by recent events in the Middle East. The University abhors terrorism, violence and all breaches of human rights and humanitarian law, and as we have previously stated we do not tolerate any form of racism, threats to safety, hate speech, intimidation, threatening speech, bullying or unlawful harassment, including anti-Semitic or anti-Muslim language or behaviour.

While many members of our community have strongly-held views on the Israel-Hamas conflict, and we uphold the right to free speech and academic freedom, in line with provisions of our Enterprise Agreement, our [Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom \(203KB\)](#), and [Student Charter \(pdf, 218KB\)](#), those rights must be exercised in a manner that considers the impact on other members of our community. This means that during the current conflict and at all other times, we support the rights of students and staff to engage in political discourse, including by making pro-Israel and pro-Palestine statements or commentary, but we will not tolerate any pro-terrorist statements or commentary, including support for Hamas's recent terrorist attacks.

The University will not hesitate to take firm and decisive disciplinary action where appropriate if a student or staff member is found to have breached the Student Charter or University Policy. The University has developed additional guidance to support students to understand our Student Charter, and what the University considers unacceptable conduct that may lead to disciplinary action. This guidance can be found in [Freedom of Expression at the University of Sydney \(pdf, 289KB\)](#).

In addition, if a student makes a comment or engages in action that might involve injury, risk to safety, serious property damage or disruption, the Registrar may issue a suspension notice under clause 6 of the [Discipline Rule \(pdf, 379KB\)](#). Similarly, a staff member may require a student to leave a class, building or area to protect safety, or prevent serious property damage or disruption. The same rules apply for any staff member who is found to have committed serious misconduct in any of these contexts – they may be suspended under the University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2023-26.

It is our sincere hope that all members of our University community will express their views in a thoughtful and considered manner, rendering such disciplinary proceedings unnecessary.

What to do if you encounter racism on campus

- If you witness or experience racism on campus, you can lodge a complaint online via the [student complaints portal](#) or by calling [1800 SYD HLP \(1800 793 457\)](#) (option 2 for complaints).
- Campus security operates 24/7 and can be contacted on [9351 3333](#). This team offers security escorts for staff and students throughout campus.
- Emergency Help points are located across campus both in our buildings and in public spaces such as Eastern Avenue. These are responded to by campus security patrols.
- Any incidents of discriminatory posters or graffiti on our campuses can be reported to our Campus Assist team at campus.assist@sydney.edu.au or on [9351 2000](#) so they may be immediately removed. Our security, grounds and campus assist teams also constantly look out for any inappropriate graffiti, chalking or posters as part of their regular duties, and take action accordingly.
- We are aware that common access routes to our campus, or public transport locations may also have posters or graffiti applied. While these locations are managed by the local council, a request to remove bill posters can be lodged online or by calling the Customer Service Centre on [9265 9333](#). Where we receive complaints in relation to these, we will liaise with local council to enable their removal.
- We also take action if we are aware of a possible attempt to damage property, including protest signage, as that would normally be seen as inhibiting another person's right to free speech.

Protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of our students and staff – as well as any visitors to campus – is always the University's highest priority, and we encourage you to seek support if you need it.

Support available to you

- **Student Wellbeing team:** Our [Student Wellbeing team](#) offers a range of confidential and free health, wellbeing and personal supports, including 24/7 and after hours support.
- **Online resources:** Our [student life, wellbeing and support webpage](#) has a comprehensive list of student services, resources and events to support your personal wellbeing.
- **Special consideration:** If current events are impacting your ability to study and meet deadlines, you may consider applying for special consideration. Information about how to apply for special consideration, required documents and deadlines for applications can be found on the [special consideration and arrangements webpage](#).

Please look after yourselves and each other in these difficult times, make use of the support available to you here at the University, and remember that you are not alone.

Kind regards,
Mark and Joanne

Professor Mark Scott
Vice-Chancellor and President

Professor Joanne Wright
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all. [Learn more.](#)

Please add university.communications@sydney.edu.au to your address book or senders safe list to make sure you continue to see our emails in the future.

[Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy statement](#) | [University of Sydney](#)