

GUIDELINES FOR PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

I. Scope and Purpose

Policies of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (“Cooper Union” or the “College”) affirm the freedom of our students, faculty, and staff to pursue their scholarly, artistic, intellectual, and professional interests in a vibrant working, learning, and living environment that supports academic inquiry, the free exchange of ideas, and respects the fundamental dignity and worth of all individuals to be free from discrimination and harassment.

Cooper Union recognizes that peaceful protest and demonstration are longstanding and important forms of expression and civic engagement that contribute to the exchange of ideas central to the College's educational mission. This policy is intended to support and guide the members of the Cooper Union community in expressing their views, engaging in peaceful protest and demonstration, and participating in robust dialogue while upholding the standards of the shared campus community.

This policy is intended to support members of the community by establishing reasonable, content-neutral guidelines and expectations for protest and demonstration activity on Cooper Union property. This policy should be used as a resource of what is permitted and not permitted on campus.

This policy addresses conduct occurring during protests, demonstrations, or similar gatherings on Cooper Union property. It does not separately restate rules governed by other Cooper Union policies:

- For rules on posting signs, fliers, and other physical or digital materials — including prior-approval requirements — see the Posting Policy.
- For rules on online and social media conduct - see the Social Media Policy.
- For the College's full nondiscrimination obligations - see the Policy Upholding Human Rights, including Title VI and Title IX Protections.

The policies noted above are the most relevant but do not preclude adherence to all Cooper Union policies currently in effect. Questions or concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@cooper.edu), the Title VI/Title IX Coordinator (titleix@cooper.edu), or Campus Safety.

II. Definitions

- a. **Protest or Demonstration:** Any organized or spontaneous gathering of community members or others intended to express a viewpoint, including but not limited to marches, rallies, sit-ins, vigils, and similar activities occurring on Cooper Union property.
- b. **Cooper Union Property (collectively the “campus”):** Limited to the Foundation Building, 41 Cooper Square, 30 Cooper Square (2nd and 3rd floors), The Stuyvesant Fish House, the Residence Hall, and 51 Astor Place (classrooms located on the 1st and 2nd floors). The sidewalks outside of these buildings and Peter Cooper Park are public New York City spaces within the jurisdiction of the New York City Parks Department, the Department of Transportation, and the NYPD, not Cooper Union.
- c. **Campus Safety Officers:** Cooper Union facilities and security personnel, and other College personnel acting in the capacity of their official role, responsible for the safety and security of the Cooper Union community.
- d. **Encampment:** Any tent, temporary shelter, or overnight occupation of Cooper Union property.

III. Policy Statement & Procedures

a. General Expectations for Protest Activity

Community members may engage in peaceful protest on Cooper Union property that does not prevent or hinder the operation of College and academic activities or violate Cooper Union policies, such as the Student Code of Conduct, the Policy Upholding Human Rights, Title VI, and Title IX Protections, and other applicable campus policies.

Community members who choose to protest inside Cooper Union buildings must swipe in at the security desks according to standing security procedures.

All protest participants must follow the directions issued by Campus Safety Officers or other College personnel acting in the capacity of their official role.

Access to certain locations may be temporarily limited due to protest activity.

All organizers and participants of a protest or demonstration on campus are responsible for the conduct of the event, including the actions of any people not affiliated with Cooper Union who participate. Cooper Union furniture or equipment may not be moved to alternative rooms, spaces, or outdoors without the prior approval of Facilities Staff, a Dean, or a Department Leader.

b. Identification and Dispersal

Community members participating in demonstrations, protests, or similar gatherings on campus must present valid Cooper Union identification to Campus Safety Officers upon request. Community members must disperse immediately when instructed to do so by Campus Safety Officers during a demonstration, protest, or similar gathering on campus.

The College may impose restrictions on guests or any people not affiliated with Cooper Union, and/or require them to leave the premises, and those directives must be followed.

c. Masks and Face Coverings

The wearing of masks or face coverings for the purpose of concealing identity or to intimidate others is not permitted on campus. Masks worn for religious and/or medical reasons are permitted on campus. Masks worn for shop or lab safety reasons are also permitted, consistent with applicable safety requirements.

d. Language and Content Expectations

While expressing views or engaging in debates about highly charged or political issues may cause other individuals to feel uncomfortable, it is important to recognize the difference between the use of words that may make someone feel uncomfortable and the use of words that intimidate, threaten, or harass. It is never acceptable to intimidate, threaten, or harass others. These expectations apply to spoken and posted language and content.

What Is Permissible

- It may be acceptable to criticize the policies and actions of entities, such as governments, companies, trade organizations, and organized groups, provided such criticism does not otherwise violate existing College policies.
- Calls for protests or demonstrations that do not otherwise violate existing College policies are acceptable.

What is Not Permissible

- Words or actions that incite or threaten violence.
- Words or actions that exclude people from participation in, or access to, Cooper Union's programs and activities.
- Words or actions that mock individuals based on their protected characteristics.
- Harassment of any kind as described in the Policy Upholding Human Rights including Title VI and Title IX Protections, the Student Code of Conduct, the Non-Discrimination

and Harassment in the Workplace Policy, the Non-Discrimination Statement, or any other Cooper Union policy.

e. Postings & Materials

Signs, banners, fliers, and other physical or digital materials displayed or distributed in connection with a protest or demonstration are governed by the Posting Policy, including its requirements for prior approval and for disclosing the identity of the responsible individual or organization, the nature and content of the material, and where and when it will be posted. Materials may not be posted outside of designated Posting Spaces identified in the Posting Policy.

f. Online and Social Media Conduct

Online and social media conduct connected to a protest or demonstration is governed by the Social Media Policy. Separately, and consistent with that policy, Cooper Union does not generally discipline students for the content of their personal social media accounts. However, the College may take student disciplinary action for conduct occurring outside the College context — including online — when that conduct substantially disrupts the regular operation of the College, threatens the health, safety, or security of the College community, or results in a violation of Cooper Union's policies, including the Policy Upholding Human Rights including Title VI and Title IX Protections. Endorsing or reposting calls for violence or discriminatory content implicates these policies and can result in disciplinary action. Both individuals and student groups should take care to read and understand materials before offering their support or endorsement.

g. Conduct During Campus Events, Lectures, or Programs

During campus events, lectures, or programs, silent protests that do not interfere with speakers and audience members are permissible, for example:

- Displaying signs and banners that do not block the view of other attendees and that comply with the Posting Policy and Sections (d) and (e) above.
- Turning one's back to the speaker.
- Walking out, as long as it is not disruptive to the event or program.

h. Other Permitted Protest Activities

Holding signs that conform to the Posting Policy, and handing out fliers, is permitted, so long as they do not disrupt or interfere with regular College activities and programs and so long as the content does not violate Section (d) above or other applicable College policies.

Contact the Office of Student Affairs with questions about which spaces and times may be appropriate.

Messaging on clothing is permitted so long as the content does not violate sections (d) or (e) above or other applicable College policies.

i. Prohibited Conduct

The following protest activities are never permitted:

- Protest activity inside Cooper Union buildings that disrupts classes, labs, studios, library, or academic study.
- Loud or disruptive behavior in campus buildings, or the use of amplified sound (e.g., bullhorns, speakers, musical instruments, etc.).
- Protesting inside the library, and any other common space that is disruptive to study, classroom and/or administrative activities.
- Assaulting anyone who is participating in a protest.
- Attempting to sabotage protest materials and/or equipment.
- Encampments and overnight demonstrations in campus buildings. Once the buildings close each day, protesters are required to leave; refusal to follow Campus Safety Officers' directions to leave constitutes violation of the Student Code of Conduct or Employee Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Erecting any type of unauthorized barrier inside campus buildings.
- Blocking entrances and exits.
- The wearing of masks or face coverings for the purpose of concealing identity or to intimidate others in campus buildings. Interrupting, impeding, disrupting, or otherwise interfering with any College event, lecture, or program, including student group or club events, so that a speaker is unable to speak, or audience members are unable to hear or see the program.
- Using Cooper Union facilities and equipment to produce protest materials (such as banners, posters, and fliers) without approval from a Dean or Department Leader.

IV. Enforcement

Conduct that violates this policy will be referred to the appropriate student or employee conduct process for further action, consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, Employee Handbooks, and other applicable College procedures.

Any member of the Cooper Union community may report conduct they believe violates this policy to the Dean of Students, the Title VI/Title IX Coordinator, an Academic or Faculty

Dean, or Human Resources. Cooper Union prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith, participates in an investigation, or assists in resolving a complaint.

V. Compliance with Other Policies & Law

This policy works together with, and does not supersede, other Cooper Union policies, including, but not limited to, the Posting Policy, the Social Media Policy, the Student Code of Conduct, the Non-Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace Policy, the Policy Upholding Human Rights including Title VI and Title IX Protections, and the Non-Discrimination Statement. In addition, it works in conjunction with the Student Complaint Policy and Procedures, Student Disability Policy and Procedures, and Guide to Residential Living.

Cooper Union also complies with federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Clery Act.

The sidewalks outside Cooper Union buildings and Peter Cooper Park are public New York City spaces within the jurisdiction of the New York City Parks Department, the Department of Transportation, and the NYPD, and are not governed by this policy.

VI. In Conclusion

We are all members of a shared learning community. Peaceful protest and other forms of expression can play a crucial role in challenging unjust systems and sparking social change. However, conduct and content that conflict with our Community Rights and Protections come with consequences. We urge that all members of the Cooper Union community understand these distinctions and are mindful of their actions. Most importantly, we encourage everyone to be respectful of all community members.