



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

# AD51 Use of Outdoor Areas for Expressive Activities

**Policy Status:** Active

**Subject Matter Expert:** Danny Shaha, [814-863-4926](tel:814-863-4926), [jds49@psu.edu](mailto:jds49@psu.edu)

**Policy Steward:** Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff

## Contents

- [Purpose](#)
- [Contacts for Questions and Information](#)
- [Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions](#)
- [Locations for Expressive Activity](#)
- [Reserving Locations](#)
- [Requirements for Expressive Activity at All Campus Locations](#)
- [Residence Hall Areas](#)
- [Cross References](#)

## **PURPOSE**

A university is inherently a marketplace of ideas, and Penn State encourages and protects the rights of groups and individuals to express divergent viewpoints and opinions. At the same time, the University encourages persons participating in expressive activity to engage in respectful discourse, have concern for the safety of persons and property (as outlined in policy [AD103, Visitors Rights and Responsibilities](#)), and show consideration for University activities, even when perspectives differ.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Penn State students, faculty, staff, and others who wish to engage in speaking, literature distribution, poster or sign displays, petitioning, and similar noncommercial activities (generally referred to as expressive activity) at outside locations on University grounds.

## **CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION**

### **PENN STATE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ON UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS**

Penn State students, faculty, staff, and registered University student organizations or a group of ten or more University students, faculty, or staff may reserve the University Park campus outdoor areas listed in this policy. Questions and requests for information should be directed to the Event Management Office (125 HUB-Robeson Center) via email at [hubevents@psu.edu](mailto:hubevents@psu.edu).

### **NON-PENN STATE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ON UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS**

Those external to Penn State should direct questions and requests to Campus and Community Events in the Office of Strategic Communications via email at [psuevents@psu.edu](mailto:psuevents@psu.edu). Reservation is voluntary but encouraged to avoid conflicts and ensure availability.

### **PENN STATE CAMPUSES OTHER THAN UNIVERSITY PARK**

At Penn State campus locations outside University Park, groups and individuals not affiliated with Penn State; University-registered student organizations; and groups of University students, faculty, or staff should contact the respective campus chancellor's office to reserve a location for expressive activity.

### **PENN STATE HEALTH**

To protect patient privacy and maintain a healing environment for patients and families facing challenging diagnoses or injury, additional restrictions for expressive outdoor activities might apply on grounds associated with Penn State Health. Those internal or external to Penn State should direct questions and requests to [leinhornravitz@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:leinhornravitz@pennstatehealth.psu.edu).

## **TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER RESTRICTIONS**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the free exchange of ideas and the principles of academic freedom, in accordance with the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. However, the right to speak is not a right to speak at any time, at any place, and in any manner that a person wishes. Courts have long recognized that public colleges and universities have the right to set reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on the use of their campus facilities to maintain campus safety and prevent material and substantial disruption of the functioning of the universities or infringement on the rights of others. Simply put, this means that The Pennsylvania State University can delineate the “when, where, and how” of free-speech activities, if it is applied in a content neutral way (in other words, it must apply to all speech, no matter how favored or disfavored) and it leaves ample opportunity for speech in alternative areas or forums.

The University’s time, place, and manner restrictions take into account, among other considerations: environmental, health, and safety concerns; wear and tear on facilities; the direct and indirect costs to the institution; appropriateness of the event to the specific facility and the specific building policies; and the overall impact of the event on the campus community, surrounding neighborhoods, and the general public. Examples of such restrictions include:

- Regularly scheduled University activities take precedence over spontaneous activities.
- University facilities may not be used in ways which obstruct or disrupt University operations, the freedom of movement, or any other lawful activities. No activity may obstruct entrances, exits, staircases, doorways, hallways, or the safe and efficient flow of people and vehicles.
- Expressive activity may not create unreasonable safety risks nor an imminent threat, health, or safety hazard.

## **LOCATIONS FOR EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY ON UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS**

Based on careful study, the following areas on University Park campus have been designated as outdoor areas suitable for expressive activity (note: some areas could incur costs):

- Old Main front patio
- Allen Street Gate Plaza
- Willard Building grounds (area between Willard and the obelisk)
- Palmer Plaza in front of the Palmer Building
- Northwest Corner of Shortlidge Road and College Avenue
- Fisher Plaza
- Information Sciences and Technology (IST) Westgate Plaza
- Pattee Library Mall (entrance plaza)
- HUB-Robeson Center rear sidewalk pad (not the patio)
- HUB-Robeson Center lawn
- Osmond Fountain area
- Area under the Willaman Gateway to the Life Sciences

When selecting a location, groups should consider such factors as the number of people involved in the activity, how much space will be required, and the anticipated time and duration of the activity.

## **RESERVING LOCATIONS ON UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS**

Locations identified in this policy may be reserved under the following conditions:

- Reservations can only be made for one location per day and the same location cannot be reserved for more than one day in each calendar week.
- Reservations must be requested at least fourteen business days in advance of the proposed activity.
- Reservations will be accepted in the order of request, unless considerations of format, size, and equitable distribution of locations requires allocation of locations.
- Reserved spaces have priority.
- Reservations are non-transferrable.
- Reservation is voluntary but encouraged to avoid conflicts. Any public outdoor area on University Park campus may be used in accordance with this policy.
- Costs may be incurred at some locations.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY AT ALL CAMPUS LOCATIONS**

In addition to other University policies and rules that apply to students, faculty, staff, and visitors, the following requirements specifically apply to expressive activity by individuals and groups at outdoor locations:

1. Use of sound amplification equipment is generally prohibited between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Amplification is permitted at the Old Main location at University Park between noon and 1:00 p.m.
2. Groups and individuals are requested to voluntarily use the designated areas but may use any outdoor area open to the public that can safely be used so long as noise levels do not conflict with the conduct of University business and crowds do not impede egress and ingress to University facilities.
3. Pedestrian or vehicular traffic must not be impeded in any manner.
4. Disturbance of or interference with classrooms, offices, study facilities, libraries, or other University facilities and activities is prohibited.
5. Safety precautions and protection of Penn State's buildings and grounds (as outlined in AD57, General Regulations on Use of University Property) must be followed.
6. Damage or destruction of property is prohibited. Should damage, destruction, or clean-up charges/cost occur, the organization, department, or individual who uses the space will be responsible for any and all expenses.
7. Flashing or rotating lights and illuminated signs may not be used.
8. Signs, placards, posters, banners, photographs, and the like shall not be affixed in any manner to University grounds and property, including but not limited to buildings, poles, gates, fences, trees, or other vegetation. All such materials must be removed at the conclusion of each day's use. Signage cannot obstruct the flow of traffic.
9. Papers, pamphlets, and similar material must be distributed in person by the sponsoring organization.
10. Placing or erecting structures of any size or material is prohibited. These structures will be removed, and costs could be incurred.
11. Tables must be staffed by the sponsoring organization and/or group and may be used only in those areas designated for expressive activity. The use of tables must be stipulated at the time of reservation. The name of the sponsoring organization or group must be displayed at the table(s).

## **RESIDENCE HALL AREAS**

Grounds adjoining University residence halls are reserved for use exclusively by occupants of the residence halls. Requirements for use of these areas are issued by the Directors of Residence Life and Housing Services at University

Park campus and the Directors of Student Affairs and Housing and Food Services at other campuses with residential facilities.

## **CROSS REFERENCES**

Other Policies in this manual should also be referenced, especially the following:

[AD01](#) - Auditoriums, Policies and Procedures for Use of University,

[AD02](#) - Non-University Groups Using University Facilities,

[AD26](#) - Sale of Food and Beverages at University Locations,

[AD27](#) - Commercial Sales Activities at University Locations,

[AD29](#) - Statement of Intolerance,

[AD57](#) - General Regulations on Use of University Property

---

Most recent changes:

- June 3, 2024 - Made comprehensive changes to provide more clarity on how and where internal and external groups can reserve outside locations on University grounds for expressive activities. Added sections and contact information for University Park, campuses other than University Park, and Penn State Health; made updates to locations and reservation information for University Park and other campus locations; and made updates to the requirements for expressive activity at all campus locations. Also added time, place, and manner restrictions to the policy.

Revision History (and effective dates):

- September 18, 2023 - Addition of time, place and manner language under section "Locations for Expressive Activity."
- April 22, 2019 - Editorial changes to the PURPOSE section to add that "all persons engaging in expressive activity on University property must comply with University policies."
- December 19, 2018 - Added Student Affairs as an additional contact under the Further Information section.

- August 21, 2014 - Editorial changes. In the NON-UNIVERSITY GROUPS section, reference to the Office of University Relations have been changed to the Office of Strategic Communications. Addition of policy steward information, in the event that there are questions or requests for changes to the policy.
  - May 11, 2011 - Reference added for the Department of Community Relations in the NON-UNIVERSITY GROUPS section.
  - August 08, 2008 - Change made in "Locations For Expressive Activity" (Allen Street Gate Plaza), and in the "Requirements of Use" section, #7, expanding restrictions to include banners, gates and fences. Added verbiage in the "Reservation of Location" and "Non-University Groups" sections to provide guidance for requesting the use of University facilities at non-University Park locations.
  - June 28, 2006 - Editorial change made in "Locations For Expressive Activity," removing sentence that referred to other areas on University property.
  - July 13, 2005 - The "Area under the Willaman Gateway to the Life Sciences" was added, per July 11, 2005 approval by the President's Council, to the "Locations For Expressive Activity." Additionally, the office of the Chancellor was added to the list of University administrators specified in the section for individuals/offices who should be consulted with when identifying sites suitable for expressive activity at other University locations.
  - August 30, 2004:
    - The Event Management Office in the Robeson Center is now responsible for questions concerning this policy.
    - The IST Plaza, HUB-Robeson rear sidewalk pad, HUB-Rebeson lawn, and Osmond fountain area (after 5pm) have been added as locations for expressive activity.
    - The HUB Lawn, Old Main Patio and Fisher Plaza can be reserved for hours other than 8:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.
    - Under RESERVATIONS OF LOCATIONS, there are new regulations for smaller groups and individuals.
    - Groups that reserve space have priority over non-reserved groups.
    - The section NON-UNIVERSITY GROUPS was added.
    - The REQUIREMENTS OF USE section underwent substantial changes.
    - Sound amplification equipment is permitted at Old Main location between the hours of noon - 1 p.m.
  - July 30, 1999 - Added: reference to Hetzel Union Bldg; provision for smaller groups and individuals; provision for groups wishing to reserve space other than those designated; and provision for use of tables.
  - April 26, 1999 - New Policy.
-

**Date Approved:** Wed, 08/06/2008 - 12:00

**Date Published:** Thu, 08/07/2008 - 12:00

**Effective Date:** Thu, 08/07/2008 - 12:00



The Pennsylvania State University  
201 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802

Phone: 1-814-865-4700



[Hotline](#) | [Privacy Statements](#) | [Non Discrimination](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Equal Opportunity](#) | [Legal Statements](#)

Copyright ©2024 The Pennsylvania State University.

All rights reserved. Except where otherwise noted, this work is subject to a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license](#). [Details and exceptions](#).