



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Student Academic Disruptive Behavior Policy

### Policy Number 1-21

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, April 9, 2026

Issued by President Jeffery Osgood, April 23, 2026

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Previous Policy Number: PRP 3881

### 1. Purpose

The ultimate goal of this policy is to create a safe learning atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy, conducive to clarity of thought. Instructors and students are expected to treat each other with respect for their scholarly intentions, which are noble and worthwhile pursuits. It is the instructor's right and responsibility to maintain an appropriate environment for learning, with the expectation of support from the university administration. In order to facilitate an environment that allows for optimal student growth and enrichment through instruction and interaction, this policy has been developed to assist with classroom management as it specifically addresses disruptive behavior.

### 2. Scope

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania students, faculty, and staff.

### 3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1 Definitions

- 3.1.1 **Instructor:** all persons authorized by Commonwealth University to conduct instruction, advisement, or guidance of students enrolled in the university's courses or programs, including invited speakers and guests.
- 3.1.2 **Instructional Setting:** any classroom, laboratory, office, library, or other environment in which instruction is scheduled or offered under the auspices of the University.
- 3.1.3 **Police:** for incidents occurring on campus, this will generally refer to the University Police. For incidents occurring off campus, this may refer to police authorized to act at that location.
- 3.1.4 **Disruptive Behavior:** behavior that a reasonable instructor would view as interfering with normal academic functions. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - 3.1.4.1 Verbal, physical, or psychological threats, harassment, and physical violence
  - 3.1.4.2 Refusal to comply with reasonable instructor directions



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- 3.1.4.3 Repeatedly arriving after class has begun or leaving class early, except when accommodations dictate otherwise.
- 3.1.4.4 Distractive talking, including speaking out of turn or monopolizing discussion
- 3.1.4.5 Disruptive or inappropriate use of technology and electronic devices during the class period, including video or audio recording of class lectures, presentations, or discussions without prior authorization .
- 3.1.4.6 Disruptions in online conversations as part of a distance education or web-based class
- 3.1.4.7 Use of alcohol, tobacco products, or controlled substances
- 3.1.4.8 Activities not germane to the content and work of the class in session.
- 3.1.4.9 Examples include activities such as reading the newspaper, doing homework for other classes, etc., that are not directly related to/appropriate for the class in session.

## 3.2 **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.2.1 **Students** are expected to be familiar with what constitutes disruptive behavior and to abide by the University's policies and procedures.
- 3.2.2 **Faculty** are expected to maintain an orderly instructional setting that is conducive to learning.
- 3.2.3 **Dean of Students / Office of Student Conduct** is expected to support faculty in their responsibility to maintain an orderly instructional setting.
- 3.2.4 **Dean, Provost, and/or President or their designee** oversee responses to student disruptive behavior, implement necessary interim measures, coordinate with appropriate offices, and ensure actions are consistent with university policy, due process, and applicable law.

## 4. **Policy**

- 4.1 All Instructors are highly encouraged to articulate clear behavioral expectations for students in their respective course syllabi.
- 4.2 To prevent disruptive behavior, the following should be reasonably expected of all students in the educational setting:
  - 4.2.1 Acting in a responsible and respectful manner
  - 4.2.2 Compliance with instructional setting protocols as outlined in the course syllabus
  - 4.2.3 Attending classes and paying attention. Students are responsible for any material presented in class. Students may expect the instructor to clarify material already taught but not to re-teach the material missed.
  - 4.2.4 Coming to class/logging in on time and staying until dismissed. If a student has to enter class late, he/she/they should do so in a manner so as not to disrupt the class. Students should not leave a class once it has begun unless it is absolutely necessary. This applies to testing situations as well, until the student has completed the test.



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- 4.2.5 Respecting the right of others to speak uninterrupted. Students must allow others time to give their input and ask questions. Students should not stray from the topic of the class discussion.
- 4.2.6 Turning off electronic devices before class begins, except those permitted by the instructor and/or those specified in a student's letter of accommodation
- 4.2.7 Focusing on class material during class time. Sleeping, talking to others, showing audible and visible signs of restlessness or boredom, doing work for another class, reading the newspaper, checking e-mail, and text messaging are examples of, but not the only, unacceptable behaviors in instructional settings.
- 4.2.8 Waiting until the instructor has dismissed class to pack class materials so as not to miss important closing information
- 4.2.9 Expressing disagreement civilly, when and if disagreement occurs
  
- 4.3 When a student is disorderly, faculty are authorized to:
  - 4.3.1 Issue a warning to a disruptive student
  - 4.3.2 Remove a disruptive student from the instructional setting
  - 4.3.3 Call the police to remove a disruptive a student from the classroom, in extreme cases
  - 4.3.4 Exclude the disruptive student from the instructor's instructional setting pending expedited review and decision by the Dean of Students
  - 4.3.5 Sanction the disruptive student academically, if course participation is a component of the final grade and is indicated in the course syllabus
  
- 4.4 Students who feel the academic appeals process has curtailed their rights to due process may request a hearing before an academic grievance board (CU Policy 1-24)
  
- 4.5 Resolution of incidents of disruptive classroom behavior will follow the following steps:
  - 4.5.1 Step 1: Informal Resolution (Instructor's Response to the Disruptive Behavior)
  - 4.5.2 Step 2: Formal Resolution (When Behavior is not resolved at Step 1)

## **5. Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines**

### **5.1 Procedures to Follow When Disruptive Behavior Occurs**

#### **Step 1 — Informal Resolution (Instructor's Response to the Disruptive Behavior)**

Student behavior disruptive of the instructional setting will not be tolerated. If a student's behavior is deemed disruptive by an instructor, the instructor can direct the student to refrain from the disruptive behavior and warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in disciplinary action. If, in defiance of this warning, the disruptive behavior recurs, the instructor has the right to remove the student from the instructional setting for that class period. In extreme cases, if the student refuses to leave after being requested to do so, the instructor can summon the police to remove the student.



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The Instructor has the option of meeting with the student prior to the next class to provide the student with a clear and concise explanation of the behavior/action that led to his/her/their dismissal from the class, and of what is expected of the student before permission will be granted by the instructor for readmittance.

Incidents in which the student ceases the disruptive behavior will be considered informally resolved, with no further action necessary. Incidents in which the instructor removes the student from the classroom, the faculty member may choose to complete an incident report, which moves the resolution to step 2.

Incidents in which the police remove the student, will require formal resolution, as defined below.

### **Step 2 – Formal Resolution (When Conduct cannot be resolved at Step 1)**

The instructor can choose not to meet with the student, and can refer the incident to the administration for resolution. When this happens,

1. The Instructor should document the incident by completing a Student Conduct Incident Report (linked from the Student Conduct webpage) before the next class meeting. The instructor can exclude the student from the instructional setting pending resolution of the matter.
2. The Office of Student Conduct shall provide the student with a copy of the report.
3. The student shall be provided an opportunity to review the report and respond in writing or in person within the timeframe established by the Office of Student Conduct. Failure to respond may result in the matter being resolved based on the information available.
4. The instructor can exclude the student from the classroom or other instructional site pending resolution of the matter by: (1) informing the student of the exclusion, (2) informing the student of his/her rights to request an expedited review of the exclusion, and (3) by immediately referring the matter to the Office of Student Conduct by submitting the Student Conduct Incident Report and informing the appropriate Dean of the College.
5. If such exclusion occurs, and if the student requests a review, the Office of Student Conduct shall review the exclusion within three business days of the date the student requests the review. The office, in such cases, will be charged with investigating the incident and deciding whether the student will be readmitted to the classroom. The office will promptly communicate its decision to the instructor and student.
6. In situations in which the student or the instructor does not agree with the decisions rendered in the formal resolution, they have the right to appeal the outcome to the Provost.



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## **6. Compliance and Enforcement**

- 6.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 6.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

## **7. Additional Information**

### **7.1 Supporting Documents**

- 7.1.1 <https://www.commonwealthu.edu/offices-directory/student-conduct>

### **7.2 History**

- 7.2.1 Supersedes PRP 3881: Student Disruptive Behavior Policy
- 7.2.2 Effective Date – April 23, 2026
- 7.2.3 Revised – April 23, 2026
- 7.2.4 Next Review Date – Spring 2031

### **7.3 Related Policies**

### **7.4 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting**

Office of the Provost  
Commonwealth University  
viceprovost@commonwealthu.edu  
570-389-3803