

# Guidelines for Managing Disruptive Student Behavior

## Context

The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities requires students to uphold an atmosphere of civility, honesty, equity and respect for others. This includes respect for the perspectives of others even when the student disagrees with them, a responsibility not to disrupt or interfere with University activities, and a responsibility to behave in a way that does not harm or threaten to harm another person's physical or mental well being.

The University has a responsibility to ensure that any potentially harassing, threatening or violent student behaviour is managed in a way that is consistent with the [University's Workplace Harassment Policy](#) and [Program](#) and [Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#) and [Program](#).

At the same time, the University has a responsibility to foster student learning and, within that, to accommodate disability to the point of undue hardship. Where the disruptive behaviour of a student may be related to the presence of an undisclosed disability, the case can be difficult to manage in a way that is equitable both to the student and to the instructor and the class.

## Guidelines

1. When a student's behaviour in a classroom or other teaching space is such that academic activities cannot continue and the student has persisted despite being asked to stop the behaviour, the instructor is empowered in the first instance by the Senate Policy on Disruptive or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations to ask the student to remove himself/herself from the classroom or teaching space so that teaching and learning can continue without the disruption. If the student is still not responsive to the instructor's request, the instructor may briefly suspend activities and call upon Security Services for assistance.
2. If concerns about the behaviour persist beyond the initial occurrence, the instructor shall seek the assistance of the Chair of the applicable unit to try to resolve the matter with the student. The Chair may be able to support the instructor in resolving the matter directly with the student, or may determine that it is necessary to bring the matter to the attention of the Associate Dean of

the Faculty and to seek intervention. Behaviour warranting such intervention may also come in the form of email or other remote communication.

3. When asked to intervene, the Associate Dean will first attempt to meet with and explain to the student his or her responsibility to desist from the disruptive behaviour and engage in appropriate behaviour in order to continue attending classes in the course and to continue receiving assistance from the instructor or other academic employees. In circumstances where this is not effective, it may be possible to negotiate the student's voluntary withdrawal from the course. If these efforts do not resolve the matter the Associate Dean, the Chair and the instructor will work together to determine if an arrangement can be made under which the student may complete the course without attending subsequent classes.
4. Associate Deans may consult with the Office of the University Counsel and with the Office of Student Community Relations (OSCR) in deciding on the best approach. This liaison also provides an opportunity to identify factors potentially contributing or relating to the disruptive behaviour and to identify appropriate steps, if any, that should be undertaken in accordance with the University's Workplace Harassment or Workplace Violence Programs, and any broader patterns of disruptive behaviour outside the context of the course in question.
5. In cases where the circumstances give rise to safety concerns, steps under the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities may involve the imposition of a temporary suspension of the student pending an investigation, followed by a formal University Tribunal process to determine an appropriate medium-term or long-term resolution. In accordance with the University's [Workplace Violence Program](#), an academic employee who believes that there is an imminent safety risk should contact 911 for Police Services, and then Security Services. The academic employee shall also contact the Associate Dean or Faculty Executive Officer to advise that Police Services and Security Services have been called. The Associate Dean will also liaise with Security Services and the office of the VP Students regarding possible arrangements to address the safety concerns on an interim basis such as pending the conclusion of University Tribunal proceedings. The Associate Dean may also consult with and provide information on the matter from time to time to the Dean and the Executive Officer of the Faculty.
6. The academic employee who experienced the student's behaviour directly should create a written record particularizing the student's behaviour that prompted recourse to these guidelines, and should be prepared to attend a University Tribunal hearing if required, for the purpose of giving evidence orally about the behaviour and the relevant circumstances.

7. The assessment of whether a student represents an ongoing safety risk rests with the Office of the VP Students, in consultation with University Counsel and Security Services.