

Classroom Incivility

Definitions

A. Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Faculty members of Utah State University have the responsibility and authority to determine, maintain, and enforce an atmosphere in their classrooms that is conducive to teaching and learning, in accordance with University policy and practice.

1. **Faculty member** shall include all persons authorized by Utah State University or any of its units to conduct instruction of students enrolled in the University's courses or programs.

2. **Classroom** shall include any gathering of faculty member(s) and students for the purposes of teaching and learning authorized by Utah State University or any of its units.

3. **Disruptive classroom behavior** involves physical actions, verbal utterance, or other activities which interfere with either the faculty member's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program.

Disciplinary Procedures

A. Discipline not involving immediate removal from the classroom

1. The faculty member responsible for the class or activity where the alleged disruptive behavior occurred will inform the student that the student's behavior has been inappropriate. The faculty member will describe to the student the necessary changes in the student's behavior. By the second classroom meeting following the incident, the faculty member will give to the student a written, dated summary of the discussion, and the faculty member will retain a file copy of this summary. The student will be provided an opportunity to modify his or her behavior in accordance with the changes identified.

2. If the student believes the faculty member's expectations are unreasonable, the student may confer with the faculty member's department head, or the dean of the college if the instructor is the department head, about the matter. The department head or dean may choose to support the guidelines developed by the faculty member, or may work with the faculty member to develop a modified set of expectations. If there are changes in the faculty member's original set of expectations, a signed and dated copy will be provided by the department head or dean to both the student and the faculty member.

3. Should the student's behavior continue to be unacceptable, the faculty member will inform the department head or dean of the circumstances and will share with the department head or dean the written summary of the discussion with the student. The department head or dean may initiate additional discussion with the faculty member and/or the student. If the department head or dean concurs with the faculty member's view that the problem has not been resolved, the situation shall be referred to the Vice President for Student Services. A memorandum briefly describing the student's behavior, as well as a copy of the written summary of the faculty member's discussion with the student and any other related material, shall be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Services for the purposes of disciplinary action. A copy of all material sent to the Vice President for Student Services shall be provided to the faculty member's dean and to the dean of the college for the student's declared major, if different.

B. Discipline involving immediate removal from the classroom

1. A faculty member has the right to demand and secure the immediate removal of any student from the classroom whenever it is the faculty member's belief that such student has compromised the faculty member's right to teach or the students' right to learn. The faculty member will inform the student whether the removal is for the current classroom meeting only or the removal also includes subsequent classroom meetings. If necessary, the faculty member may call upon the University Police for assistance.

2. When the removal is for the current classroom meeting, the faculty member responsible for the class or activity will inform the student that the student's behavior has been inappropriate and describe to the student the necessary changes in the student's behavior. By the second classroom meeting following the one-time removal, the faculty member will give to the student a written, dated summary of the discussion, and the faculty member will retain a file copy of this summary. The student will be provided an opportunity to modify his or her behavior in accordance with the changes identified.

3. A student may not be permanently removed from a class in which the student is enrolled without a formal review. When the faculty member has removed the student from the current classroom meeting and from subsequent classroom meetings, the faculty member will inform the student that to be considered for reinstatement into the class the student must meet with the head of the department offering the course, or the dean of the college if the instructor is the department head. The student is entitled to a conference with the department head or the dean before the second classroom meeting after the temporary removal. Before the third classroom meeting after the temporary removal, the department head or dean may either:

a. approve an agreement of expectations between the student and the faculty member and reinstate the student to the class, *or*

b. extend the temporary removal of the student from the class and refer the matter to the Vice President for Student Services for disciplinary action. Permanent removal of a student from the class, or reinstatement to the class, shall be effected according to the procedures for discipline of students.

4. When a student is permanently removed from a class, the University's standard refund policy shall apply.

5. Nonstudents and students not enrolled in a class may be removed permanently by the faculty member without a formal review, because they have no right to attend the class without the faculty member's permission. The faculty member's decision is final in these cases.

Termination of Disrupted Class Session

If a disruptive person refuses to remove himself or herself from the classroom when requested to do so by the faculty member or the faculty member feels that there is a threat of imminent physical danger, the faculty member has the right to declare the class session terminated and leave the classroom. Any classroom disruption that prompts the faculty member to terminate a classroom meeting must be reported in writing to the department head, or the dean of the college if the department head is the instructor, before the next regularly scheduled class meeting. The department head or dean shall investigate the circumstances of the situation, including in such investigation testimony from, if possible, at least three randomly selected students enrolled in the class who were not involved in the disruption. The department head or dean may initiate appropriate action to resolve the situation.