

SOAS, University of London, policy on student occupations

SOAS, University of London, is committed to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. This can only be conducted effectively in an atmosphere of open enquiry, mutual tolerance and intellectual freedom. Staff and student membership of the School is based on acceptance of this principle.

Within its organisational structure, the School provides channels of communication for students to discuss issues of individual and collective concern with academic staff and with management:

- Students may raise any issues with their tutor or Head of Department;
- There is student representation on various School Committees, including both the Academic Board and the Governing Body;
- The Students' Union may raise any issues, in the first instance, with the Director of Student and Registry Services.

Where appropriate, these can be brought to the attention of the Director or the Registrar and Secretary on an ad hoc basis or at their regular meetings with the Students' Union officers.

While the School's management is committed to the principle of discussion of student concerns, it does not accept that occupations of its premises are a legitimate form of protest or means of attempting to influence School policies. Occupations in the past have caused damage to the School community, the carrying out of normal learning, research and administration, the School's external reputation and its physical infrastructure.

The School, therefore, will not tolerate any occupation of its premises. In the event of an occupation, the School will take appropriate measures, including the use of all available legal means, to regain occupied premises and the subsequent employment of disciplinary action against individuals and parties involved. The Students' Union will be liable for the costs of any occupation sanctioned by the Students' Union. In the case of action not sanctioned by the Students' Union, those identified as being involved will be liable for costs. The School will not hold discussions with students in occupation, but, in keeping with its commitment to the principles of discussion and dialogue, it will seek to resume such discussion at the earliest opportunity after any such occupation has ended. That discussion will be conducted via the agreed mechanisms for School-Students' Union liaison, as detailed above.

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