

Protest Events at SOAS – Guidelines for Students

Our university is committed to being a place where all members of our community can freely express their opinions and challenge views and perspectives through discourse, spoken word, different art forms, and peaceful protests.

We maintain the importance of upholding lawful freedom of speech, and it is important that all members of our community understand, respect and tolerate that to uphold this important principle when we hear views that do not align with our own.

To encourage a safe and secure atmosphere for all our staff, students, and visitors, we have put together these guidelines for our community to facilitate peaceful protest on campus.

We want to support members of our community to freely express themselves while making sure that everyone feels safe on campus.

If you are organising a protest or rally on campus, please follow these steps:

- If you are organising a protest on behalf of a student society, please contact the SOAS Student Union's [Events and Activities Officer](#).
- Please provide clear information about the protest, including the speakers you are inviting. SOAS cannot prevent speakers from attending a protest on campus, except where the law may be broken. Knowledge of speakers also allows us to provide any support needed.
- Once your booking has been confirmed, notify the university's Campus Security team of the date, time, location of your protest by emailing campussecurity@soas.ac.uk.
- Ensure that you follow the permissions given to you by SOAS with regards to location, timings, and health and safety procedures.
- Our policies on Fire Safety, Freedom of Speech and Conduct of Events at SOAS, and the SOAS Charter on Discrimination can be read on the [Key Policies page](#) of the SOAS website.

If everyone taking part, we ask that you adhere to the following guidance:

- Please follow the [SOAS Dignity and Respect Policy](#).
- Be mindful of others – SOAS is an institution that will always support freedom of speech, however primarily our campus is an education provider, so please be mindful of students trying to get to classes or lectures, or others trying to work and study in communal areas.
- Take part in the agreed location. For health and safety reasons, and to ensure your fellow students can access their lectures, you must not block access to SOAS buildings or conduct any activities on the SOAS steps. Blocking any entrance – especially around the steps – can create an intimidatory atmosphere for those not engaged with the protests when they enter and leave our premises.
- Remember opinions vary. Some people may not join a protest as they feel differently or unsure about the matter at hand. We must respect this.

- Individuals in our community must not be personally targeted – whatever their position on an issue – whether on social media or physically on campus.
- Material such as placards, posters, or banners containing abusive language will not be tolerated on site.
- Teaching or university operations must not be disrupted as part of any protest activities. It is essential that students can still access their learning if they so wish.
- Be respectful of your campus and its premises. Vandalism of school property, littering, and setting off fire alarms will not be deemed part of a peaceful protest. This includes the use of flares and fireworks.
- Do not engage in any activities or use language that violates UK law.
- Our policies on Fire Safety, Freedom of Speech and Conduct of Events at SOAS, the SOAS Charter on Discrimination can be read on the [Key Policies page](#) of the SOAS website.

If you find yourself in the vicinity of a protest happening on campus, but not taking part:

- Your studies are our top priority. These guidelines aim to maintain all students and academics' abilities to conduct their work while respecting everyone's right to protest.
- Please talk to Campus Security if there is a problem.
- Please be mindful of others – while on our campus is primarily an education provider, it is a part of SOAS's ethos to respect others protesting.
- It is fine to not join a protest if you feel differently or may be unsure about the matter at hand. Everyone must respect this.
- Individuals in our community must not be targeted – whatever their position is on the issue – whether on social media or physically on campus
- Please do not try to physically or verbally stop a protest from occurring. This includes harassing those gathering, preventing speakers from addressing attendees, or preventing people from joining or leaving the protest.
- Our policies on Fire Safety, Freedom of Speech and Conduct of Events at SOAS, the SOAS Charter on Discrimination can be found on the [Key Policies page](#) of the SOAS website.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can ensure that protests at SOAS University of London remain a powerful means of expression while upholding a respectful and secure environment for all community members.