



2020 Student-Political Activity Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What are my First Amendment rights?

A1: Every student has First Amendment rights under the United States and Ohio Constitutions. Every student is entitled to freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of press, and freedom of peaceable assembly. Freedom of speech includes freedom of expression and political speech. First Amendment rights are not however, limitless. Expressive activities on the University's campus may be subject to reasonable regulation with regard to the time, place, and manner of the activities.

Q2. How can I exercise my First Amendment right to freedom of speech at CSU?

A2. The University's Expressive Activities Policy, available at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/compliance/expressive-activity-policy-0> recognizes every student's right to free speech, assembly, and other expressive activity. The University is dedicated to maintaining an environment that promotes the exchange of ideas and that is a secure, safe, and effective educational and work environment for all students, staff, faculty, and visitors. Students and University recognized student organizations may seek to reserve the use of specific outdoor areas of the campus in accordance with the Policy.

Q3. Can I wear a mask with a political message/affiliation?

A3. Yes, it is generally permissible for students to wear clothing, buttons, and other accessories that portray political messages or parties. The United States Supreme Court in *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Community Sch. Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969) held that a school's regulation of any form of speech or expressive conduct violates the First Amendment unless the school reasonably believes that the speech will "substantially and materially interfere" with schoolwork or discipline.

Q4. Am I able to participate in on-campus demonstrations as a student?

A4. Yes, students have a constitutional right to freedom of speech, press, and assembly, which includes the right to participate in on campus demonstrations.

*Please note that during the current COVID pandemic, all on campus events are subject to COVID related conditions and must be approved by the Vice President of Student Affairs & Dean of Students, or designee, prior to being scheduled on campus.

Q5. Am I able to hold an on-campus demonstration?

A5. Yes, students have access to publicly accessible outdoor areas of the University's campus except parking lots, garages, and driveways, which can be used for political activity. Students may not block access to buildings or block walkways, must abide by sound amplification levels/permissible times, and must abide by all applicable laws. For more information, see the University's Expressive Activity Procedures at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Expressive-Activity-Procedures-for-posting.pdf> and the CSU Student Organization Resource Manual available at: https://vikesconnect.csuohio.edu/organization/student-life/documents/view/1837389?_ga=2.6009334.47954457.1602168640-1248628029.1579892655.

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Q6. As a student, may I distribute pamphlets, leaflets, and other literature on campus?

A6. Yes, students may use general access outdoor areas of the University to distribute materials such as pamphlets and leaflets. Distribution or solicitation by placing any material on vehicles in the parking lots or garages is prohibited. Leaving trash, litter materials, or pollutants in any area is also prohibited. For information about how student organizations may use bulletin boards see the Cleveland State University Student Organization Resource Manual at: https://vikesconnect.csuohio.edu/organization/student-life/documents/view/1837389?_ga=2.6009334.47954457.1602168640-1248628029.1579892655

Q7. As a student, may I sign or distribute petitions?

A7. Yes, a student may sign or distribute petitions in general access outdoor areas. General access areas are publicly accessible outdoor area of the university campus. Care should be taken not to violate the rights of others such as by impeding the progress of a passersby, forcing materials on another, intentionally touching another, etc.

Q8. Can I register to vote at an on-campus voter registration drive?

A8. Yes, the University Office of Civic Engagement hosts voter registration tables to ensure that every CSU student has the opportunity to register to vote. More information is available at: <https://urban.csuohio.edu/oce/oce-news-get-registered-to-vote-vikes> .

*Please note that for the 2020 election, the voter registration deadline was October 5.

Q9. Can my student organization hold voter registration drives or voter education events?

A9. Yes, CSU recognized student organizations may conduct voter education and registration activities on campus including publishing voter education guides, and coordinating voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote events.

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Q10. As a student, may I join a political student organization?

A10. Yes, a student may join any recognized University student organization including partisan organizations. Cleveland State University recognized student organizations are based on the interests of currently enrolled, degree-seeking students. University recognized student organizations may be professional, political, academic, faith-based, athletic, or interest-based in nature. For more information on student organizations see: https://vikesconnect.csuohio.edu/organization/student-life/documents/view/1837389?_ga=2.6009334.47954457.1602168640-1248628029.1579892655

Q11. Can a student organization raffle off prizes such as gift cards or other things having monetary value in exchange for an individual's promise to vote or to reward a person for voting?

A11. No. This is illegal under federal law and state law.

Q12. Can my University recognized student organization endorse a candidate?

A12. Yes, a University recognized student organization generally have the same rights as an individual. Individual students and University recognized student organizations are free to engage in partisan political activities so long as their activities are not intended to reflect or represent the views of the University. This includes the ability of recognized student organizations to use their CSU Zoom or other CSU account to endorse a candidate so long as it is made clear that CSU is not endorsing the candidate.

Q13. May a CSU recognized student organization invite a political candidate to campus?

A13. Yes, a CSU recognized student organization may invite a candidate to campus and invite the University community, so long as campus facilities are reserved in the same way that student organizations usually do. If an event is open to the general public, the organization should reserve the campus facilities in the same way that members of the general public do, including making any required payment. Because of the student organization's affiliation with the University, invitations or other material must include the following disclaimer:

This event is sponsored by _____ [insert recognized student organization]. The use of Cleveland State University facilities for this event does not constitute an endorsement by Cleveland State University. Cleveland State University does not endorse any candidate or ballot measure in this or any other election.

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Q14. Are any types of activities prohibited?

A14. Activities that significantly disrupt the University's ability to teach students, provide services, or conduct its other business and support operations are prohibited. Examples include but are not limited to excessive noise, impeding vehicle or pedestrian traffic, and conduct otherwise unlawful; no activity may damage University property.

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