

2022 Student-Political Activities Frequently Asked Questions

Cleveland State University recognizes every student's constitutional freedoms of speech and peaceable assembly provided under the United States and State of Ohio Constitutions. Further, 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. Accordingly, the university shall not prohibit any student from engaging in political activity on campus so long as the student's conduct is lawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the University. In an effort to maintain a safe campus for all in the University community, and to ensure the effective operation of educational, business and related University activities, political activities on campus may be subject to constitutional time, place and manner restrictions that are viewpoint and content neutral.

The following FAQ's are intended as a quick resource regarding student political activities on campus. For more detailed information please review the University's Expressive Activities Policy, available at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/compliance/expressive-activity-policy-0> and its Expressive Activity Procedures at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Expressive-Activity-Procedures-for-posting.pdf>.

Q1. Can I wear clothing or accessories with a political message/affiliation?

A1. 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 holds generally 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.

Q2. Am I able to participate in on-campus demonstrations as a student?

A2. Yes, students have a constitutional right to freedom of speech, press, and assembly, which includes the right to participate in on campus demonstrations in accordance with the University's Expressive Activities Policy, available at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/compliance/expressive-activity-policy-0> and its Expressive Activity Procedures at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Expressive-Activity-Procedures-for-posting.pdf>.

Q3. Am I able to hold an on-campus demonstration?

A3. 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 and permissible times, and must abide by all applicable laws. For more information, see the University's Expressive Activities Policy, available at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/compliance/expressive-activity-policy-0> and its Expressive Activity Procedures at: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Expressive-Activity-Procedures-for-posting.pdf>.

Q4. As a student, may I distribute pamphlets, leaflets, and other literature on campus?

A4. 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

Q5. As a student, may I sign or distribute petitions?

A5. Yes, a student may sign or distribute petitions in general access outdoor areas. General access areas are publicly accessible outdoor areas 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.

Q6. Can I register to vote at an on-campus voter registration drive?

A6. Yes, the University Office of Civic Engagement hosts voter registration events to ensure that every CSU student has the opportunity to register to vote. More information is available at: <https://urban.csuohio.edu/occe/occe-news-get-registered-to-vote-vikes> .

**Note that for the 2022 election, the voter registration deadline was October 11.*

Q7. Can my student organization hold voter registration drives or voter education events?

A7. 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.

Q8. As a student, may I join a political student organization?

A8. Yes, a student may join any recognized University student organization including partisan organizations. University-recognized student organizations are based on the interests of currently enrolled, degree-seeking students and 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

Q9. Can my University-recognized student organization endorse a candidate?

A9. 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 or appear 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 or ballot measure so long as it is made clear that CSU is not endorsing the candidate or ballot measure.

Q10. May a CSU recognized student organization invite a political candidate to campus?

A10. Yes, a University-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 must 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.

Q11. Are any types of activities prohibited?

A11. 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.