

Rules for Appropriate Conduct where Academic Activities Overlap with Political Activities

In this document:

Academic activity is:

- a) Any research, publication or teaching activity within an institution of higher learning in accordance with its constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.
- b) Any activity of a faculty member of an institution of higher learning, outside the institution, when the faculty member presents himself as such.
- c) Any activity of the faculty of an academic unit in an institution of higher learning outside of the institution in which said faculty presents itself as such.

Political activity is:

- a. Any activity explicitly involving direct support of a party represented in the Knesset or active in the public, or direct opposition to such a party.
- b. Any activity explicitly involving direct support of or opposition to a representative of a party in the Knesset or someone who is otherwise clearly affiliated with a party, qua representative of said party.
- c. Any activity explicitly involving direct support of or opposition to a specific position in a known public controversy which has been discussed in the Knesset and in public discourse, which has some clear connection to a party or parties, in the Knesset or outside it.

Chapter A: Rules for Institutions

1. Guarding academic freedom:
an institution of higher learning will guard its faculty members' freedom to do research and publish – as individuals and also in research groups – within their fields of study as a constitutive part of its identity as an institution of higher learning.
An institution of higher learning will protect its faculty members' freedom to teach, in accordance with the course plans of academic units and personal syllabi as published towards any academic year, as a constitutive part of its identity as an institution of higher learning.
2. Guarding boundaries of academic freedom: an institution of higher learning will preserve a sharp and salient distinction as possible between the activities of the academic staff within their academic freedom in research publications and teaching and activities which are not part of it.
3. Protecting the status of students: An institution of high learning will protect its students from political or other activities of faculty members which is not included in the freedom of teaching included in academic freedom. Academic discussion within a course, in accordance with the course syllabus, within a specific academic discipline, of a question that touches upon issues to which some political activities pertain, while professionally and respectfully presenting the arguments on the different sides, does not constitute a harm from which the institution must protect the students.
An institution of higher learning which allows political activities by students and student organizations will act fairly and make sure the activities are within the law, compatible with the order needed to maintain academic activities on campus and commensurate with its constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.
An institution of higher learning is entitled to forbid political activities by students and students organizations on its campus, and also entitled to encourage such activities, in accordance with its constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.

An institution of higher learning which allows political activities by students and their organizations will take concrete steps against any such activities that harms the freedom of expression or freedom of creation of other students and organizations. Use of freedom of expression or freedom of creation in a manner harmful to human dignity should be properly limited by the institution of higher learning itself and not by students or anyone else.

4. Avoiding Political Identification:

An institution of higher learning will stay away from identifying itself with political causes and from backing political activities under its auspices, and take concrete steps against any conduct that creates the natural appearance that the institution or one of its units or the academic staff align themselves with a political cause or give the appearance of aligning themselves with a political activity.

An institution of higher learning which allows the renting of campus facilities for external events will make sure that public announcements of these events will not carry its name and will not allow the natural appearance of the institution sponsoring the events.

An institution of higher learning will exercise special caution during election periods in any domain in which appearances of political identification arise naturally, as when it comes to visits from major political actors, the participation of such actors in official ceremony and the granting of honorary degrees

5. Implementation Apparatus

An Institution of higher learning will maintain, on the basis of its constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities, an official apparatus whose exclusive function would be the implementation and oversight of academic freedom, the limits of academic freedom, the status of students and the avoidance of any appearance of political identification.

The apparatus will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of academic freedom, the limits of academic freedom, the status of students and the avoidance of any appearance of political identification subject to judgment. Within this framework "educational notices" can be published regarding activities or impending activities within the institution, subject to judgment.

The apparatus will allow receiving, investigating and adjudicating complaints, as well as publishing them in appropriate detail and circulation, taking corrective steps and recommending further steps to the appropriate institutional authorities.

The apparatus could be a currently existing one, such as an ethics committee or a student ombudsperson office, or a new one run by faculty of the relevant institution, including judges with academic experience.

Chapter B: Rules for Academic Units

In this chapter, an academic unit within an institution of higher education is any academic body operating within the institution in accordance with its constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities, including departments, divisions, institutes, programs, libraries, laboratories, publishing bodies and so on. Similar rules will govern faculties and schools, mutatis mutandis.

1. Protecting the academic field and its boundaries

An academic unit will sustain academic activities in the line of research, publishing and teaching within a specific academic discipline, in a topic or topics related to the field, using the methodology accepted by the international community of scholars in the discipline, in accordance with the institution's constitution, rules, and the decisions of its authorities charged with handling the discipline and the academic fields of the unit.

An academic unit will make changes when it comes to its research, publication or teaching on the basis of considerations accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline.

2. Diverse treatment

An academic unit will sustain academic teaching activities, within a specific discipline, in as wide a scope as possible, given the circumstances, of subjects and trends acknowledged by the international community of scholars in the discipline. An academic unit that sustains academic teaching activities, within a specific discipline, in a narrow selection of subjects or trends will specify it clearly and prominently in its plans and syllabi, which are published towards every academic year. In such a case, the unit will take concrete steps against the appearance that a narrow selection was preferred on the basis of considerations having to do with the political activities of the unit's faculty members.

3. Academic Appointments

An academic unit will discuss a candidate for a faculty position, whether tenure track or not, whether senior or not, solely on the basis of considerations rooted in research ability in the unit's academic discipline or teaching ability in that specific discipline, as well as considerations pertaining to the unit's research and teaching needs, in accordance with the institutions constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.

An academic unit will be very careful not to allow, when considering the appointment of a new member, nor to give any weight to the relationship between the candidate's political activities, such that they are, and the political activities of existing members of the unit, such that they are. The academic unit will be aware of the risk or the possibility that a new academic appointment will be naturally interpreted as tainted with considerations of political kinship, and in such a case will take appropriate concrete steps against such appearance, in accordance with the institutions constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.

An academic unit will be very careful not to allow, when considering the promotion of a faculty member, granting tenure or granting a chair not to give any weight to the relationship between the candidate's political activities, such that they are, and the political activities of existing members of the unit, such that they are. The academic unit will be aware even of the possibility that a new academic appointment will be naturally interpreted as tainted with considerations of political kinship, and in such a case will take appropriate concrete steps against such appearance, in accordance with the institutions constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities.

4. Conferences

An academic unit will hold academic conferences aimed at promoting research in its discipline on the basis of consideration accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline regarding research, publishing, topics, speakers and the format of discussions.

An academic unit will hold academic conferences aimed at educating the students or the general public in its discipline, presenting a wide range of topics and trends in the discipline, through a wide range of speakers, or a narrower range explicitly and prominently pointed where the conference is advertised.

An academic unit will hold academic conferences, for the promotion of research or for the education of the students and the general public, only in a manner that is not naturally interpreted as political activity.

5. Publications.

An academic unit will issue academic publication aimed at promoting research in its discipline on the basis of considerations accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline regarding research promotion, the topics of publications, authorship and format.

An academic unit will engage in academic publications aimed at the education of the students or the general public within the boundaries of the discipline, presenting a wide range of topics and trends in the discipline, through an appropriate variety of authors, or a narrower range clearly and prominently pointed in the work itself and in

advertisements for it, where there is no appearance of preferring the narrower selection on the basis of considerations related to the political activities of the unit's faculty members.

An academic unit will engage in academic publications, for the promotion of research or the education of the students or the public, only in a manner that does not make it a political activity or make it naturally interpreted as political activity.

An institution of higher learning and an academic unit will engage in advertising to the public through the media in a manner that does not give rise to the appearance of an exclusive or special affinity with a particular media outlet possessing a clear political identity.

6. Clinics

An academic unit engaging in teaching clinics for the purpose of practical training for students in its field will do its best to hold clinics in a wide range of topics and trends in the discipline, so as to allow every student to learn and act within the clinic that fits his topics of interest.

An academic unit engaging in teaching clinics will run this part of its teaching only in such a manner as to ensure that none of its parts in its academic or administrative aspects will be political activity or naturally interpreted as political activity.

An academic unit engaging in teaching clinics in practical collaboration with an association active outside academia will make sure not to collaborate in a manner that creates an identification of the unit or the course with the politics of the association or the appearance of providing an academic home to its political activities.

7. Other academic activities

An academic unit will carry out other activities involving research, publishing and teaching, within its discipline, in accordance with considerations accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline, in compliance with the institution's constitution, its rules and the decisions of its authorities, only in a manner that does not make it political activity or is naturally interpretable as political activity.

8. Avoiding political identification:

An academic unit will stay away from political identification and from allowing political activities under its auspices and will take practical steps against any conduct that creates the natural appearance of the unit or its faculty identifying with political causes or of allowing political activities under its auspices.

Chapter C: Rules for faculty members

1. Research

The member of the faculty of an academic unit of an institution of higher learning will engage as he pleases in academic research and publishing activities, within the specific discipline of the unit, in topics related to the relevant field or fields, using methodology accepted by the international community of scholars in the discipline and in accordance to its professional ethical standards.

The faculty member in an academic unit engage as he pleases in introducing novel changes in the discipline, topics and methodology on the basis of considerations accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline and in accordance with its professional ethical standards.

The faculty member in an academic unit will publish his research in conventional fora of the international academic community of the discipline in which the research is conducted and in accordance with its ethics in the way he pleases

The faculty member in an institution of high learning who publishes his research will specify his affiliation with his institution of higher learning. Mentioning the affiliation does not make the institution or the academic unit co-authors or partners to the content of the publication.

2. Class instruction: courses

“Courses” refer mostly to courses in which students receive grades.

A member of the faculty of an academic unit will teach a course within the discipline of the academic unit in accordance with the syllabus as published in the course catalogue towards every academic year or other terms of academic studies.

The faculty member in an academic unit will make sure to teach according to the syllabus, which is a kind of contract between the faculty member and the students registered for the course, and will not allow himself to deviate from the syllabus and from the discipline of the academic unit for the sake of political activity or similar proselytizing, beyond a trivial, momentary deviation. A significant deviation for the sake of political activity or similar proselytizing is inappropriate and can count as abuse of authority in the workplace.

3. Class instruction: survey courses

A member of the faculty of an academic unit who according to his course syllabus is supposed to present a field in which there is a variety of schools of thoughts, methods, and research focuses, within the unit's discipline, will give a place in his course to those schools, methods and focuses he intends to cover in more detail as he pleases but also to other schools, methods and focuses, which he will present fairly, even if not in detail as he pleases.

4. Class Instruction: Treatment of students.

A member of the faculty of an academic unit will respect the wish of students in his class to expand their knowledge of topics, methods, and schools, within the unit's discipline, and for that purpose accept their requests to clarify, explain and justify that which is said in class, within said discipline and the faculty member's expertise.

The faculty member of an academic unit will steer clear of any conduct which involves rejection, silencing, exclusion or discrimination [of students] due to their characteristics or personal views, including their political views, and also of any conduct which has the appearance of such inappropriate treatment.

5. Class Instruction: Appearance

The member of the faculty of an academic unit will beware of the possibility that his speech in class will be naturally interpreted by the students as political activity.

The faculty member of an academic unit will beware of using materials meant for discussion within the discipline of his unit when these materials also have political aspects that are not part of the topic of the course and are not meant for class discussion.

The member of the academic staff will respect the request of a student to clarify the relations between his lecture that created in the student appearance of a political activity and the discipline of the unit and the syllabus of the course. The member of the academic staff will do it in a way that is principled detailed polite or will concede that he made a mistake.

6. Class instruction: Decisions Regarding Student Work

A member of the faculty in an academic unit will evaluate students' papers and exams as well as their active participation solely on the basis of professional considerations within the course's discipline, and do so fairly.

The faculty member will present to the students in his course the professional considerations at the basis of his evaluations of papers, exams, or active participation in the course. The faculty member will do so in a timely, polite, matter-of-fact manner and, if needed, correct mistaken evaluations.

The faculty member will display work done by his students in the course only if his syllabus specifies that work will be displayed, As he guides the students in their work the faculty member will take care not to hurt the dignity of his students and will evaluate and make suggestions solely on the basis of clear professional considerations within the discipline the course is in.

The faculty member who displays students' work will steer clear of giving stage or appearing to give stage to students' political activity which might hurt the human dignity of an individual or group.

7. Teaching: Accepting Students

A member of the faculty of an academic unit who holds a course that has pre-requisites will detail the pre-requisites on the course syllabus.

If the faculty member holds a course to which students are supposed to be accepted on the basis of a personal interview with him, he will include in the syllabus a clear presentation of the standards of success in the personal interview.

8. Teaching: Supervising Advanced Students

A member of the faculty of an academic unit who supervises students working towards advanced degrees will do his best to help the student write a research paper, within the unit's discipline, in accordance with the interests of faculty member and student. For that purpose, he will present the student with a variety of choices, all up to the student if he's so interested.

The faculty member will help the student develop a research program, locate professional literature, develop concepts, considerations and theories, within the unit's discipline, using a methodology accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline, as the student wishes.

The faculty member will direct a student to work in collaboration with a non-academic entity only on the basis of considerations accepted by or acceptable to the international community of scholars in the discipline while take precautions not to force the student to take part in political activity or create the natural appearance that he is engaged in political activity.

9. Conduct on Campus: Treatment of Students

The faculty member engaged in academic teaching will maintain the special professional relationship between faculty and students in any other campus activities, including those outside the classroom. Even in activities outside the campus, the faculty member will avoid publically hurting the human dignity of a specific student, a group of students or the students in general.

10. Conduct on Campus: Political Demonstrations

The member faculty of an institution of higher learning may participate in a political demonstration within a campus as he pleases so far as it is not forbidden by law, by the rules of the institution on whose property the demonstration is taking place or by the constitution, rules, and decisions of the institution of higher education of whose faculty he is a member.

The faculty member may participate in a political demonstration or any other political activity, on the institutions' campus and outside the context of academic teaching, only if the demonstration or other activity will not be interpreted as an identification of the institution, an academic unit thereof, or the faculty of the institution or the unit, with a political cause, or as allowing political activity under its auspices.

11. Conduct Outside Campus: Treatment of Academia

A member of the faculty of an institution of higher education will take care not to act, outside the domain of his freedom of research and teaching, in a way that harms, intentionally or knowingly, the institution, its faculty, its other workers, its property, its academic work and its academic reputation, in Israel and in the academic world elsewhere, and he will also steer clear of urging others to do so.

A member of the faculty of an Israeli academic institution will not participate in an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions or in a call for others to participate in such a boycott or support it

12. Conduct Outside Campus: Academic Identity

A member of the faculty of an institution of higher education is entitled, like any citizen, to freedom of speech, political activity and expression, outside campus, within the limits of the law. In such civic activity, the faculty member will make sure to maintain a sharp distinction between himself and his institution of higher learning.

The faculty member who mentions his institution during off-campus political activity will point out prominently that his activity does not represent the institution or any of its units and is not affiliated with them. Thus, the faculty member will not use the institution's stationery for his political activity.

13. Conduct Outside campus: Reputation and Public Trust

A member of the faculty in an institution of higher learning who participates in political activity off campus will guard the academic reputation of his institution. For that end he will avoid obscenities, cursing, swearing, crude disdain, nonsensical or clearly exaggerated generalizations or any other expression that has no place in the discourse of any academic discipline.

The faculty member who participates in off-campus political activities will act in such a way as to preserve the public's faith in the academic propriety of academic institutions and disciplines. Thus, the faculty member will always be precise, show appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others and do his best to make clear that he is not speaking for his institution.