

RESPONSE TO DISRUPTION IN THE CLASSROOM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

GUIDANCE

This document is intended to provide guidance to faculty and staff who need to address disruptive student conduct in the classroom or other learning environment. Instructors are responsible for the management of the learning environment in their classrooms, (whether in person or virtual) so all students in the class have an opportunity to participate in the learning process. The learning environment may also extend beyond the classroom where it may be under the management of faculty and/or staff. The university supports free expression and determines whether conduct is disruptive in a viewpoint neutral manner. Constructive, appropriate dialogue relevant to class or program curriculum is an important part of the learning process. However, there may be times when the conduct of a student or group of students disrupts the learning environment or learning process and needs to be addressed.

The GSU Code of Conduct (“Code”) is available online at <https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/> and contains the General Conduct Policies and Procedures that apply to all GSU students. The Code defines “Disruption” as follows:

[T]o interrupt, impede or obstruct teaching, instructional, research, disciplinary, public service, administration, or other university activities. Examples of Disruption include, but are not limited to the following: allowing personal electronic communication devices to ring or beep, making or receiving phone calls, messages, or otherwise disrupting class or scheduled university instructional activities; assembling in a manner that is disruptive and not peaceful, refusing to follow the direction of a university official, entering or attempting to enter any athletic, dance, social or other event without the credentials for admission (e.g. ticket, identification card or invitation).

The Code also includes a list of prohibited conduct that, in addition to disruption, may occur in the classroom or other learning environment. The steps suggested below may be used to address any and all of these behaviors as they may occur in the classroom and learning environment.

Suggested Steps:

Steps to take in response to disruption and other prohibited conduct in the classroom or learning environment.

1. Inform the student they are being disruptive and ask the student to cease the disruptive conduct.
 - a. If there is no immediate safety concern and the student ceases the disruption, the student may remain in that class session and the instructor submits an online “Student of Concern” referral as soon as possible after the class session using this link: <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/#concerns>

- b. If the student does not cease the disruption but the continued level of disruption:
(1) causes no immediate safety concern; and (2) can be reasonably managed by the instructor, then the student may remain in that class session and the instructor submits an online “Student of Concern” referral as soon as possible after the class session using this link: <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/#concerns>
 - c. If the initial disruption causes an immediate safety concern, or the student’s level of continued disruption cannot be reasonably managed by the instructor, ask the student to leave the classroom. If the student does not comply with the direction to leave the classroom, or if the student complies but the immediate concern for safety continues even after the student departs the classroom, contact the GSU Police at 404-413-3333 for assistance. Submit an Online Incident Report Form as soon as possible to the Office of the Dean of Students using this link: <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-conduct/#reporting-code-violations>. Also inform the appropriate department chair as soon as possible.
2. If the student is not removed from the class session and no further disruptions by the student occur after that class session, no formal conduct action will be initiated by the Office of the Dean of Students. However, the Office of the Dean of Students will contact the student to remind them of the university’s expectations for classroom behavior and the potential consequences of future disruption.
 3. If the student is removed from the classroom or exhibits a pattern of disruption across multiple class sessions or multiple different courses, the Office of the Dean of Students will initiate the student conduct process. During the student conduct process, the student will be allowed to continue attending classes so long as the student refrains from any further disruption.

The instructor should continue to address disruption following the same guidance and reporting procedures outlined in Step 1.

4. Should a student’s level of disruption warrant as determined by the Office of the Dean of Students, the university may pursue interim measures and/or make alternative course arrangements (e.g., online only, alternative course section, emergency withdrawal, etc.) while the conduct process continues. The Process for Resolving General Conduct Matters, including the processes for interim measures, is outlined in the Code.
5. At the conclusion of the conduct process, the reporting instructor will be notified of any outcome that impacts the student’s continued participation in the course.