

Directive for protests at research universities and universities of applied sciences

Introduction

Knowledge and critical voices are the beating heart of research universities and universities of applied sciences. This includes substantive debates and also the opportunity to protest. In the Netherlands, people have the right to freedom of expression, association, assembly and demonstration (Article 7, 8 and 9 of the Constitution). As research universities and universities of applied sciences wholeheartedly support this, protesting at these institutes is therefore permitted. As part of this, research universities and universities of applied sciences consider it important that everyone (including students, staff and visitors) can feel safe on campus. That is why laws and regulations, house rules and codes of conduct should be respected. This applies at protests as well. Although each research university and university of applied sciences articulates it differently in its house rules and code of conduct, at least the following principles apply everywhere for protesting at research university and university of applied sciences sites.

Basic principles

- Research universities and universities of applied sciences always aim to ensure peaceful protests. To that end, these institutes try to remain in dialogue with protesting staff and students, to ensure the protest can take place safely.
- Protests should be notified in advance by a student or staff member to the research university or university of applied sciences so that safe conduct can be ensured and arrangements can be made on how the protest is to take place. At the protest, organisers should always be recognisable and accessible to the institute's representative, without face coverings, and be available to discuss the conduct of the protest.
- Occupying a building (taking temporary possession in protest or action) will not be allowed. Research universities and universities of applied sciences can press charges if this does happen. Staying in the institute's buildings or on the institute's premises overnight without permission is also not allowed. This also applies to staying overnight in a tent. The buildings and sites do not have an overnight function, and security cannot be guaranteed.
- Organisers of protests are asked to ensure that no criminal offences are committed. These include criminal behaviours such as violence, threats, discrimination, vandalism and breach of the peace. More generally, this also applies to intimidating behaviour, anonymous statements and other forms of disorderliness, which research universities and universities of applied sciences also reject in other situations.
- Teaching, research and business activities must be allowed to continue, even during protests. Protests in locations and areas that may obviously pose a danger to people, animals and the environment (e.g. laboratories) will not be tolerated.
- It is against the law to wear face-covering clothing (e.g. full-face helmets, balaclavas, masks, face veils). People wearing face-covering clothing will be asked to leave the site or remove the face-covering clothing.
- Participants in protests at research university and university of applied sciences sites should be able to identify themselves at all times with a student or employee ID card and/or proof of identity when asked to do so by staff in charge of enforcing the institute's

house rules. Protestors who refuse to follow instructions from these employees may be asked to leave the building and sites immediately.

- When a protest does not comply with the above basic principles, research universities and universities of applied sciences will deploy de-escalation. Depending on the specific situation of a protest, the institute – in coordination with the local triumvirate – will decide which steps will contribute to the most appropriate solution.
- If there is disorderly conduct (access to a building is blocked, the building is not open to the public, closing times are not followed or the provision of education is made impossible), a representative of the research university or university of applied sciences may order participants in a protest to leave the premises and/or site. This message will then be repeated several times, in Dutch and/or English. If the participants in the protest do not comply, a report will be filed for housebreaking or local trespassing (Sections 138 and 139 of the Penal Code). The local triumvirate (municipal authority, police, public prosecution service) will in this case decide whether to act by having the protestors cleared out.
- The public prosecution service may decide to prosecute people for any offences such as vandalism or violence reported by a research university or university of applied sciences.
- Research universities and universities of applied sciences always report offences such as threats, violence, vandalism and public violence.