



כללי התבטאות ושיח במרחב האוניברסיטאי

Rules of Expression and Discourse in the University

مبادئ توجيهية بشأن التصريحات والخطاب في الحيز الجامعي

Freedom of expression is one of the central values of a democratic regime and is intended to ensure the right to freely express views and opinions in general, and within the academic sphere in particular. The principle of freedom of expression is especially important when it comes to issues that are controversial, infuriating and even offensive. The rationale behind freedom of expression is that disputes should be resolved through respectful dialogue, not by silencing opinions. But freedom of expression also has its limits.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev considers freedom of expression and diversity of opinions and ideas an important value. In addition, the University is committed to ensuring a sense of belonging and partnership for all who come through its gates, and to promoting dialogue between the different parts of its community. Returning to campus in times of war may be fraught, and therefore there is a need to reiterate and put a fine point on the rules of discourse within the framework of freedom of expression.

The law defines important guidelines regarding the boundaries of discourse – according to the Penal Code, an act of identification with a terrorist organization [1], as well as those who defame communities and incite against them [2] – are subject to punishment. As the university community, we, of course, must take care not to break the law, but over and above that, to establish norms of discourse that allow free expression while preserving the dignity of others. Therefore, we call on faculty members and students to be partners in strengthening and establishing a strong and sensitive community of dialogue.

At Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, there is no place for support for terrorism, hate speech, calls for violence or racism, or incitement against any academic, administrative and technical staff member, and any student. We will not allow freedom of expression to be used to harm the university community, its social fabric and the discourse that takes place within it.

To continue to uphold the values of the University even in these difficult times, we will clarify in this document the principles that we will adhere to.

Principles

- We will find ways to cultivate, emphasize and amplify respectful and non-inflammatory discourse. It is especially important at this time to teach forms of discourse and communication that build trust and increase listening
- We will strive to establish trust between the disparate parts of the community. Therefore, we will not support terrorism (even implicitly), we will not participate in incitement, we will stop expressions of hatred or racism (not even implicitly) and we will refrain from distributing posts, photos and videos that contain [3] expressions of racism or violence or calls for revenge
- Expressing sorrow for the loss of innocent lives is permitted
- Supporting or opposing government policies is legitimate

Rules of discourse at the university

The following are rules that will help build a respectful discourse:

- It is recommended that we all speak for ourselves and refrain from speaking for our group ("we feel") or another group ("they feel") and that we use the language "I" when sharing opinions and feelings
- We will listen to each other to understand, not to react, and we will avoid judgment and criticism while listening
- We will respect the views and opinions of others. We all have the right to an opinion
- If a comment is offensive or insulting, please say that the comment (and not the person) was offensive to you and explain why
- Participants have the right not to participate or answer a question with which they feel uncomfortable
- During the discussion, it's perfectly okay to feel embarrassed and/or not know the answers to everything
- To facilitate fruitful dialogue, it is suggested that we all consider the language we use with special attention to the words we choose

If you have been hurt or witnessed harm to any member of the university community, please contact us at the following link

[1] "Who commits an act of identification with a terrorist organization, including by publishing words of praise, support or sympathy, raising a flag, displaying or publishing a logo, or displaying, playing, or publishing a slogan or anthem, in any of the following, shall be sentenced to three years' imprisonment (Counter-Terrorism Law, 2016).

[2] "Persecution, humiliation, degradation, display of hostility, hostility or violence, or causing resentment against a public or parts of the population, due to color or belonging to a race or national-ethnic origin." (Section 144B of the Penal Code, 1977).

[3] Translation of texts will be done only by authorized entities and not tendentiously.