

# To the Students of Oberlin College

This published version of the *Oberlin College Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures* is intended to be a guide to the principles and policies that shape and regulate our community. Those who matriculate at Oberlin have entered into a unique community, dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and excellence. By joining this community, you are expected to understand and abide by the principles and policies that enable us to thrive as educators, scholars, and learners.

From its inception, Oberlin College has been dedicated to free and open thought and expression. The community's positions on social issues have often been quite varied; our members have included abolitionists, missionaries, libertarians, integrationists, and prohibitionists, as well as suffragists, nationalists, communitarians, pacifists, and fundamentalists. Although frequently regarded as progressive in their time, Oberlinians have promoted ideas that by some interpretation – or by the terms of another era – may not seem so. What has remained constant is a degree of iconoclasm – a belief in the importance of allowing ideas to flourish, regardless of their popularity at a given moment. Moreover, it is a mark of an Oberlin education to apply the insights and values of the classroom to the understanding and resolution of pressing social issues of the day. And while those issues have frequently evolved and changed, the principles of tolerance, self-determination, social responsibility, and intellectual integrity have remained constant.

Oberlin College was founded on principles of inclusivity and equal opportunity. As such, it has been the country's historical leader in the education of women and people of color. We are dedicated to the celebration, promotion, and greater understanding of diversity in all its manifestations and complexities.



Eric Estes  
*Dean of Students*

# Rules and Regulations

As a deliberate community of scholars, Oberlin College has a set of rules and regulations that are intended to enable students to strike a reasonable balance between personal freedom and their responsibility to the quality of life in their community. Our community life is intended first, to foster learning, and second, to constitute a setting that is a living laboratory for creating the habits of an engaged citizenry.

It is important that students acquaint themselves with the published rules and regulations in order to understand the principles that govern our community. Although, upon joining our community, students will acquire an enormous amount of freedom to make their own decisions, it is important to be informed of the possible consequences—intended and unintended—of these decisions, and to be prepared to accept the consequences. Students remain beholden to the laws of the city of Oberlin, the state of Ohio, and the federal government, and the college will not protect students from the consequences of breaking those laws. Additionally, the college’s Judicial System has the authority to impose penalties of its own. Sanctions ranging from a warning to dismissal may be imposed for a range of infractions outlined in the college’s Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is intended to help maintain an orderly environment in which our first business is the pursuit of scholarship, arts, and learning. It is also intended to protect individual safety, the property of individuals and the college, and to ensure that all members of the community are able to fully enjoy the educational benefits of this institution.

The mechanisms of the Judicial System include two deans in the Office of the Dean of Students who are designated the Judicial Coordinators. The Judicial Coordinators and authorized hearing officers may hear cases and impose sanctions at the request of the charged student if there is no fundamental disputation of fact. Other cases are heard by the all-student Judicial Board, while the most serious cases are heard by a combined student-faculty Community Board.

If students believe they have been subject to behavior that constitutes a violation of the Code of Conduct, they should first consider reporting it to the Office of Safety and Security. Additionally, students should consider speaking with a Judicial Coordinator to register a complaint against the other student and to determine whether judicial charges might be an appropriate means of redress. Students may also be encouraged to pursue mediation, depending on the kind of outcome they hope to achieve. If a student is charged with an infraction of the Code of Conduct—or believes that he/she may be charged with an infraction—it is also important for the student to meet with a Judicial Coordinator in order to ascertain how the process works and what his/her rights are. Students may be encouraged to select an advisor who can accompany them to meetings with the Judicial Coordinator and to any Judicial or Community Board hearings. A dean may be a particularly

appropriate person to function as an advisor, since these individuals know the system well and can help students anticipate the various steps.

Oberlin College is committed to the free and open exchange of ideas and strongly presumes the right of community members to express their ideas freely, regardless of how unpopular those ideas may be. In order for the Oberlin College community to learn and benefit from the ideas of others, our attachment to the principles of free speech should also be tempered by a substantial degree of respect for all members of the community. Moreover, the exercise of free speech does not extend to language that is intimidating or harassing to individuals or that creates a hostile environment for particular members of the community. If students believe they have been subject to behavior that constitutes harassment or discrimination, they can consider reporting it to the Office of equity concerns.

Oberlin College is also committed to the creation of a learning environment in which students’ ability to meet their full potential is not adversely affected by the abuse of alcohol or other drugs. The underage use and possession of alcohol is prohibited, as is the possession and use of illicit or controlled substances or paraphernalia related to their use. Moreover, Oberlin College implemented a policy in the fall of 2001 that prohibits severe intoxication and prescribes educational responses as well as progressively more serious disciplinary consequences for obvious and egregious instances of alcohol abuse.

Oberlin College is an environment in which students are provided the means of making independent and uncoerced decisions about their own sexual behavior. College regulations require that all sexual encounters between students be fully and unambiguously consensual. Sexual behavior that is not fully consensual may result in adjudication under the college’s Sexual Offense Policy with possible sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Academic exercises at Oberlin are governed by the college’s fully student-run Honor System, the principle of which is that students must fully credit the ideas of others and undertake their academic work with absolute integrity. The Student Honor Committee will adjudicate plagiarism and cheating, however inadvertent. Sanctions may be severe, and can include suspension and dismissal. To learn more about the details of these and other college policies, students should consult the *Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures* that follow.