

DEFEND **DISSENT**

CHARTER

Amnesty UK's Charter for freedom of expression, academic freedom, and the right to protest in universities

1

Guarantee freedom of expression and assembly

Explicitly commit to protecting the rights set out in Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), ensuring all students and staff can express their views and organise peacefully without fear of reprisal.

2

Scrap restrictive protest rules

Repeal all requirements for prior authorisation, organiser registration, or excessive notice periods for protests and demonstrations. Replace them with simple, rights-based procedures that facilitate, not restrict, peaceful protest.

3

End misuse of disciplinary actions

Review and revise student conduct and disciplinary codes to ensure they are clear, lawful, and uphold due process. Stop the use of vague “misconduct” or “reputational harm” clauses to punish activism.

4

End intrusive monitoring and data sharing

Cease surveillance of lawful protest and the sharing of personal or political data with third parties (including police, Prevent, or private intelligence contractors) unless required by law, or strictly necessary, and transparent to those affected.

5

Avoid discrimination

Commit to addressing racialised targeting of students and staff in protests, disciplinary actions, and media narratives.

6

Confront Islamophobia and anti-Semitism

Adopt definitions of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism that are consistent with international law, do not undermine freedom of expression, and are grounded in an understanding of structural racism.

7

Be transparent and accountable

Publish annual data on protest-related disciplinary actions, disaggregated by protected characteristics, to identify whether there are patterns of discrimination.

8

Create independent accountability

Establish an independent, accessible, and trauma-informed complaints mechanism for students and staff who believe their rights to free expression or protest have been violated, and those subject to repression from the government of their home countries.

9

Establish appropriate support services for students at risk

Establish an independent, accessible, and trauma-informed complaints mechanism for students and staff who believe their rights to free expression or protest have been violated, and those subject to repression from the government of their home countries.

10

Act when freedom of expression is threatened

Take action to protect the rights of any student or scholar under threat from external bodies.

Be part of the national Defend Dissent campaign
amnesty.org.uk/defenddissent | [@defend.dissent](https://twitter.com/defend.dissent)

