

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

AS A STUDENT ORGANISER

people & planet

Out of fear of organised resistance, universities and governments are increasingly restricting protest rights through new laws and policies. Despite this, many protections for protesters remain, and it's important to equip ourselves with the knowledge to keep ourselves safe and confident taking action.

Because laws change frequently and campus repression varies, this guide signposts you resources where you can access updated information to suit your different needs. This includes materials addressing challenges faced by marginalized campaigners, including those with insecure immigration status. Even if you think this section isn't relevant to you as an individual, it is still very important to engage with these resources. An awareness of the risks faced by our comrades helps us to organise in a way that is more accessible for all, and contributes to a culture of mutual care.

**Please note that this document is not intended to constitute legal advice.*

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ORGANISATIONS TO KNOW

LIBERTY: An independent organisation campaigning for civil liberties and human rights

GREEN & BLACK CROSS (GBC): An independent, grassroots project providing resources and training for legal observers and arrestee support

INFORMED DISSENT: A group of volunteers providing activist legal support

DISABILITY RIGHTS UK: The UK's pan-disability charity set up to represent the needs of disabled people in the UK

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (OIAHE): A free, independent ombudsman scheme that reviews unresolved complaints from students against universities

CAGE INTERNATIONAL: An independent advocacy organisation providing legal and community support to the groups and individuals campaigning against human rights abuses and state oppression

EUROPEAN LEGAL SUPPORT CENTRE (ELSC): An independent, non-profit organisation that defends and empowers the Palestine solidarity movement across Europe and Britain

KEY RESOURCES FOR UNIVERSITY PROTESTS

LIBERTY - PRACTICAL PROTEST GUIDE: STUDENT EDITION

Includes info on:

- What to bring and what not to bring to protests
- Some laws to be aware of ('locking on' during protests, or the use of face coverings)
- Information about interactions with the police
- What to do if you are arrested

LIBERTY - PROTESTING AT UNIVERSITY: WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

Includes info on:

- The laws which define your right to protest in public universities
- What to do if your university takes disciplinary action against you
- What law enforcement powers university staff have
- Police powers in university
- Legal information on university occupations and encampments
- Where to find protest legal support and legal observers

GBC - LEGAL BRIEFING FOR UNIVERSITY ENCAMPMENTS

Includes info on:

- The relevant legislation that may be used against you, including aggravated trespass, criminal damage and public order acts.
- Risks from Bailiffs or Civil Action, including possession orders and injunctions
- Risks from University including disciplinaries, fire safety and risks to international students.

GBC - STOP AND SEARCH

Includes info on:

- Information on when you can be stopped, when you can be searched and what you can be searched for
- Information on what happens when you get searched, what to be wary of when being searched, and what happens should you be caught with an item they suspected you of possessing
- Having items seized and getting receipts for this
- Information on what police can do with your phone
- How to register a complaint against a stop and search

GBC - LAWS COMMONLY USED AT PROTESTS

Includes info on:

- The laws which may be in play during protests, both campus and non-campus, including Obstruction of the Highway, Trespass/Aggravated Trespass, Dispersal Orders and Obstructing Workplaces.

GBC - WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M ARRESTED?

Includes info on:

- What details to give the police, and what not to give
- What happens during arrest
- Your rights in police custody
- What happens during a police station interview
- Why you shouldn't usually accept a caution
- What happens when you are released from custody

GBC - I'VE BEEN ARRESTED - WHAT NEXT?

Includes info on:

- What the different kinds of bail refer to, and what to do if you've been bailed
- How to contact a solicitor and which solicitors to consider using
- Writing statements and gathering evidence for a trial
- What will happen to your personal belongings
- How to access mutual support with other defendants
- How to access emotional support for the arrest process

CAGE - KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: PALESTINE ACTION PROSCRIPTION

Recently the direct action movement Palestine Action was proscribed by the UK government meaning that showing public support for the group could be prosecuted as a terror offence. It is important to know your rights around what you can and can't do under the current laws.

KEY RESOURCES AS A MEMBER OF A MARGINALISED GROUP

GBC - BEING TRANS AND PROTESTING

Includes info on:

- Your rights as a trans person under the equality act
- 'Key messages' to take into protests
- Specific issues trans people may face during police stop and searches
- Specific issues trans people may face if they are arrested

INFORMED DISSENT - ARREST AND IMMIGRATION STATUS

Includes info on:

- The various factors which make it impossible to know for certain the implications of arrest on
- What to consider in relation to your immigration status before going on a protest including
- Potential consequences for being involved in an action

LIBERTY - DISABLED PEOPLE'S PROTEST RIGHTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Includes info on:

- Disabled people's rights during protest and right not to be discriminated against
- Information related to the police confiscating assistive equipment and 'kettling' (when the police surround and block protestors from moving)
- Interactions with the police including what happens if the police believe you are 'vulnerable', what assistance should be provided at the police station, and whether the police can use force against you.
- How to make a complaint against the police in relation to disability rights:
- Useful tips when attending a protest including managing medication and voicing access needs
- Useful tips when organising a protest including how to prioritise accessibility in planning
- Information regarding the 'Post-Rwanda' Immigration Act and how it relates to disability rights

GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions about the information in this resource or would like any support to put it into action, please reach out to us any time on:

DIVESTBORDERS@PEOPLEANDPLANET.ORG

UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Universities have their own internal disciplinary procedures, which vary from campus to campus and are completely separate from the law. You should be able to find the disciplinary policy for your university by searching their webpage.

[The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education has a useful guide](#) to what to expect of the standard university disciplinary process, including:

- The different stages of the investigation and decision making process
- Your rights, how you can make representations and find support
- The kind of things that should be taken into account by panels
- The kind of sanctions you might face
- How to appeal against a decision

If you have been subject to disciplinary action, you should contact a solicitor specializing in education law. You can contact us or your SU for support with this. Other external organisations have provided support to students facing disciplinary procedures related to political campaigns, including [The European Legal Support Center](#) and [CAGE International](#).

Liberty's [Protesting at University](#) guide contains information on how to proceed if you are subject to disciplinary action, including:

- Who you should contact for support
- How to prepare for meetings with the university
- What may occur during the meeting
- How to proceed after the meeting

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TRAINING

LIBERTY - [TRAINING, WORKSHOPS AND PROJECTS](#)

GBC - [WORKSHOPS](#)

Both Liberty and Green and Black Cross run regular workshops to support people to understand all of the information above, and how it applies to their specific circumstances. Get in touch with them to invite them to run a session on your campus, or if you're confident you could [run your own Know Your Rights workshop using this template](#).