

MIND AND HAND BOOK

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II (10). Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is essential to the mission of a university. So is freedom from unreasonable and disruptive offense. Members of this educational community are encouraged to avoid putting these essential elements of our university to a balancing test.

People who are offended by matters of speech or expression should consider speaking up promptly and in a civil fashion and should be able to ask others to help them in a professional fashion to express concern. People who learn they have offended others by their manner of expression should consider immediately stopping the offense and apologizing.

With respect to materials posted on bulletin boards, it is not appropriate to remove or deface signed posters, even if some people find such material offensive. If you are offended by a poster signed by a person or group in the MIT community, it is appropriate to convey your sense of offense to those who created the poster. It is not appropriate to remove or deface the poster. You can find more on this topic in the Institute's [policy on Bulletin Boards, Postering, and Display Spaces](#).

It is usually easier to deal with issues of free expression and harassment when members of the community think in terms of interests rather than rights. It may be “legal” to do many things that are not in one’s interests or in the interests of members of a diverse community. Most people intuitively recognize that there may be some difference

between their rights and their interests. For example, most people do not insist on offending others once they have learned that their behavior is offensive, even in circumstances where they may have, or think that they have, a legal right to do so. Thus, anyone dealing with harassment concerns may find it useful to think about the interests on all sides as well as the rights.

MIT is committed to ensuring that community members are able to access timely and relevant information related to free expression; information on MIT's values, the recent Statement on Free Expression and Academic Freedom, and other resources can be found at <https://free-expression.mit.edu/>. New information will be added to this page as it becomes available.

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**Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology**

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

77 Massachusetts Avenue, W32-105

Cambridge, MA [02139-4307](tel:6172584307)

 [617.258.8423](tel:6172588423)

[Accessibility](#)