



No Communication Orders and No Contact Orders Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated November 2024

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide information regarding NCOs issued by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, Graduate School, Office of the Dean of the Faculty, and Human Resources.

1. What is a No Communication Order?

A No Communication Order is a University order which provides that two parties may not have any communication with each other in-person or through another party, by telephone, letter, e-mail, or other electronic media, or by any other means, including via social media for a specified period of time. This applies on-campus and in the local vicinity, at University-sponsored events, and/or by electronic communication (from any location). These orders help to ensure an environment in which individuals can focus on and pursue their education and/or work. If a party is unsure whether a particular type of communication is permitted, they should contact the administrator who issued the No Communication Order.

Below are non-exhaustive examples of communication that is *not permitted* when there is a No Communication Order in place:

- One party may not walk up to the other party and begin speaking directly to them, regardless of content or tone.
- Parties may not have a friend communicate with the other party on their behalf (e.g., “Can you tell X that I said...?” or “Can you ask X if ...”).
- A party may not respond or comment on the other party’s social media post (including using emotive icons, emojis or other digital images). If the parties are in the same group text/messaging group, they may continue to participate in the text/messaging, but they may not respond (including by using emotive icons, emojis or other digital images) to the other party’s message.
- A party may not text, message through any social media app, and/or call the other party for any reason, including from a blocked number or someone else’s device/account.
- A party may not make a comment directed at the other party in a listserv.
- A party may not send a request to the other party to follow them on social media.

If parties are in the same class, they may both participate in discussion boards for the class. If direct communication between students is required for a class, students should reach out to the administrator who issued the No Communication Order to seek guidance and/or assistance.

2. What is a mutual No Contact Order?

A mutual No Contact Order (which includes a no communication directive) is a University Order which imposes limits on the locations where two members of the University community may be present in order to limit them from being in the same location. These orders help to ensure an environment in which individuals can focus on and pursue their education and/or work.

However, No Contact Orders do not ensure that parties to such Orders will not see one another on the campus. Rather, they serve to limit potential interactions between the parties. If individuals have safety concerns and feel that they need additional protection (for example, through a temporary restraining order), they should contact the Department of Public Safety at 609-258-1000.

3. Under a mutual No Contact Order, what does it mean to not have contact with and to avoid “close proximity” to the other party?

No Contact Orders serve to limit potential interactions between the parties, but they do not ensure that parties to such Orders will not see one another or ever be in the same location on campus. The following list provides examples of permissible and impermissible contact. If you have a concern not covered in these examples, please contact the appropriate administrator.

Below are non-exhaustive examples of contact that is *permitted* when there is a No Contact Order in place:

- Both parties may attend the same class, though they may request to not be assigned to do group work together. Both parties should make a concerted effort not to sit near the other party. For example, if there is a large lecture hall and one party is sitting in the front on the left side of the lecture hall, the other person should attempt to sit in a different area of the lecture hall (e.g., in the back, in the front on the right side, etc.). If it is a smaller classroom, the parties should seek to sit as far apart as possible (for example, in the farthest available open seat).
- If parties are in the same class, they may both participate in discussion boards for the class. If direct communication between students is required for a class, students should reach out to the administrator who issued the No Contact Order to seek guidance and/or assistance.
- Both parties may attend the same on or off campus events, such as lectures/discussions, athletic events, or social gatherings. They should make a concerted effort to avoid close proximity to the other party. For example, if it is a football game, the parties should avoid sitting next to or directly behind or in front of the other party. If there is a social

gathering in a dormitory room of a third party, the parties should avoid standing or sitting next to or near each other and should not communicate with one another.

- Parties may be present in the same eating club (as long as it is not an eating club that is specified as being off limits to the party). However, the parties should avoid standing or sitting next to or near each other and should not communicate with one another.
- Typically, parties may be present in the same dining hall (as long as it is not a dining hall specified as being off limits to the party). For dining halls with shared serveries, parties typically may be in the shared serveries together (provided that they avoid standing near one another) and may sit in the same dining hall (provided that it is not specified as being off limits to the party and provided that they avoid sitting near one another).

Please note that for certain community events held in large venues where significant distance can be maintained, both parties to a No Contact Order typically may attend, provided that both parties avoid close proximity to one another. Examples of such events may include: large events occurring in outside areas, in large concert venues, in the University Chapel, or in large athletic venues, including the USG Concert held during Lawn Parties, Commencement events, and activities in Reunions tents.

Please note that the examples provided in FAQ 1 regarding behavior that is *not permitted* when there is a No Communication Order in place also apply when a No Contact Order is in place.

4. What is a “skewed” No Contact Order?

A “skewed” No Contact Order, like a mutual No Contact Order, is a University Order which limits the locations where two members of the University community (students, staff or faculty) may be present, but under a “skewed” No Contact Order, in places in which neither party’s presence is required, the responsibility to avoid a party falls exclusively on the other.

A “skewed” No Contact Order may be issued (or an existing mutual No Contact Order may be modified) when an individual has been found responsible through a formal disciplinary process for violating a University policy or a previous No Contact Order. Under this circumstance, “skewed” No Contact Orders are disciplinary in nature; they are issued by a disciplinary body only when an individual has been found responsible for violating University policy or a prior No Contact Order; they can only be modified by the appropriate appellate body; and the duration of the “skewed” No Contact Order is determined by the disciplinary body issuing the Order.

5. Do No Communication Orders and No Contact Orders prevent the other party from talking about me to others?

While No Communication Orders and No Contact Orders prevent parties from engaging in any direct or indirect communication with one another, and from engaging in harassing, retaliatory, or intimidating behavior that would constitute a violation of University policy, such Orders do not bar individuals from talking about the other party and/or situations involving the other party.

6. When are No Communication or mutual No Contact Orders issued?

No Communication or No Contact Orders may be issued in the following circumstances:

- 1) In an emergent situation, such as where there has been a significant interpersonal conflict or altercation, a dean may issue a temporary No Communication Order or No Contact Order for a short period of time (typically through the next business day) until the matter can be reviewed; or, where a disciplinary infraction is being investigated and there is a concern for the safety of an individual, until an adjudication of the case can take place; or
- 2) If an individual has been found responsible for a violation of University policy, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, the Graduate School, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, or Human Resources may issue a No Communication Order or No Contact Order as part of the penalty.

7. What if I believe that the other party has violated the No Communication or No Contact Order?

If you believe that the other party has violated a No Communication or No Contact Order, you should contact the following administrators, who will review the matter and impose appropriate discipline, if it is determined that the other party violated the Order:

- Undergraduate students should contact the Assistant Dean for Student Life of their residential college.
- Graduate students should contact the appropriate Graduate School Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.
- Faculty and Academic Professionals (all postdoc ranks, Professional Specialists, Associate/Research Scholars, Academic Research Managers, Senior Academic Research Managers) should contact the Assistant Dean of Compliance, Office of the Dean of the Faculty.
- Staff should contact their designated Human Resources manager.

In making determinations regarding whether the mutual No Contact Order was violated, the disciplinary body will consider the context of the interaction, whether the other party reasonably ought to have known that the other party was present, the level of proximity, the venue, etc.

8. Who should I contact if I have general questions about NCOs?

If you have general questions about NCOs, please contact your [Assistant Dean for Student Life \(https://odus.princeton.edu/about/staff\)](https://odus.princeton.edu/about/staff) (undergraduate students); [the Assistant Deans for Student Affairs or Assistant Director for Student Affairs and Residential Life](#) (graduate students); the [Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs](#) (postdocs); the [Assistant Dean for Compliance](#) (faculty); or your [Senior Human Resources Manager](#) (staff).

9. Are No Communication Orders and No Contact Orders punitive?

Other than Orders issued after a finding of a violation of University policy (as described above), these Orders are not part of the University disciplinary process, do not constitute a finding of, or charge of, any violation of University policy, and are not intended to be punitive in any way.

10. If a No Contact Order prohibits me from accessing certain University spaces at certain times, isn't that a form of punishment?

We recognize that a No Contact Order does place some restrictions on an individual's movement around campus, but we work with both individuals to ensure that this does not unduly interfere with their educational and/or working experiences and is not unduly burdensome.

11. In terms of No Contact Orders, if both individuals regularly access the same physical place(s), how will it be determined which individual has priority to access that space?

The issuing office will make this assessment on a case by case basis, taking into account a number of factors, including the reason that the access is needed and how often access is needed. The issuing office may consult with University faculty or staff to determine how shared spaces can be reasonably accessed.

12. What happens if circumstances change, and the No Contact Order in place seems to unfairly burden one individual?

If circumstances change, a party may request that the issuing office revisit the Order. If adjustments are deemed necessary, both parties to the Order will be consulted.

13. For students, what is the penalty for violating a No Communication or No Contact Order?

As for any violation of University policy, penalties will depend upon the nature and severity of the violation (see [Rights, Rules, Responsibilities Section 1.1.7](#)). However, first-time violations of No Communication Orders or mutual No Contact Orders typically would not result in separation (suspension or expulsion) unless the violation was egregious or there was a history of prior violations of University policy that warranted such action.

14. For employees, how do workplace No Contact Orders or No Communication Orders relate to National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) requirements?

Workplace No Contact or No Communication Orders are not intended to discourage or prohibit concerted activity under Section 7 of the NLRA. If you have any questions in that regard, please contact the Director of Client Services and Labor Relations, Office of Human Resources.

15. How do No Communication Orders or No Contact Orders issued by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, Graduate School, Office of the Dean of the

Faculty, and Human Resources differ from No Contact or No Communication Orders issued by the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration?

There is a different process for Orders issued by the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration. Individuals seeking information about Orders in situations involving sexual misconduct may contact the Sexual Harassment/Assault Advising, Resources and Education (SHARE) office or the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration. Please see <https://sexualmisconductinvestigations.princeton.edu/faqs/faqs-regarding-title-ix-no-communication-and-no-contact-orders> for FAQs regarding Orders issued by the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration. If you have a question regarding an Order that has been issued by the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration, please contact Nicole Barkley-Jones in the Office of Gender Equity and Title IX Administration.