

UM FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE OF UNIVERSITY FACILITIES AND THE ORGANISATION OF EVENTS

The Executive Board of Maastricht University (UM) considers it important to facilitate and encourage a culture of openness, academic dialogue, and freedom of expression. This is a way to promote academic development and societal engagement within our community, enabling our students and staff to learn to think critically and independently based on diverse academic perspectives and viewpoints. The connection to society is also of crucial importance in this regard. This room is what defines the academic environment.

To provide that room, UM must be a physically, socially, and digitally safe environment for our entire community. The UM Executive Board (EB) therefore has the responsibility to take into account risk-increasing factors before, during, or after events in, on, or around our university spaces.

This framework sets out the Executive Board's guiding principles and approach, based on UM's democratic and academic values and standards as laid out in the strategic programme. This framework explains how Maastricht University manages the use of its buildings, grounds, and associated facilities. The Framework supplements existing rules, such as Maastricht University's General House Rules and measures to maintain order. These rules therefore remain in full force.

Part 1 – Definitions

For the purposes of this Framework, the following terms have the following meanings:

- **University:** the legal entity Maastricht University;
- **Premises:** All buildings and grounds owned or managed by the University, and all facilities forming part thereof;
- **Event:** any organised activity or gathering other than regular educational and research meetings and regular operational activities;
- **External Applicant:** any (legal) person or entity wishing to use a University space who is not an Internal Applicant;
- **Internal applicant:** a University employee, student, faculty, department, or other person affiliated with the University who wishes to use a University space;
- **Recognized student or academic association applicant:** a student or academic association recognized by the University in accordance with the UM Framework for the Recognition of Student and Academic Associations¹, which wishes to use a University space;
- **Academic affiliation:** a demonstrable connection to education, research, valorisation, or the academic community;
- **Competent authority:** an official or body within the University with the authority to make decisions regarding the use of spaces;
- **Employee:** a natural person with a permanent or temporary employment contract with the University;
- **Student:** a student enrolled at the University.

¹ A Framework outlining the provisions for the recognition of student and academic associations will follow soon.

Part 2 – For what purposes may spaces be used?

1. The University makes its spaces available to support:
 - education, research, and valorisation;
 - academic dialogue and debate;
 - knowledge transfer between science and society;
 - regular operations (such as the cafeteria);
 - community building which contributes to the goals and values of UM.

Teaching and research always take priority over other forms of use.

2. Spaces are not available for:
 - meetings with a primarily commercial purpose;
 - activities without an academic connection, such as purely political or religious gatherings;
 - activities that are discriminatory, hateful, or otherwise unlawful;
 - events where safety and public order cannot be sufficiently guaranteed.

Part 3 – What events may be organised in, on, or around the spaces?

Scientific dialogue, discussion, and debate are facilitated. As articulated [by the KNAW](#), the free exchange of perspectives and open debate—among scholars themselves, but also with students and with society—are crucial components of academic freedom and, therefore, of the University. This freedom applies to all opinions, including controversial ones, as well as to criticism of these opinions, as long as they are not criminal offenses.

In practical terms, this means the following for the organization of events:

- The University facilitates an academic platform where ideas and views are discussed in such a way that there is opportunity for intellectual debate on the content, and thus room for critical discussion or dialogue. So it's okay if things get heated; it's okay if it's uncomfortable. Consequently, there is no room for gatherings that systematically exclude criticism or dissenting opinions and/or disseminate pseudoscientific or factually incorrect information without context or rebuttal.
- For every event, the question must be asked whether it serves the University's (core) tasks: does it contribute to science (teaching, research, academic development, or valorisation), or would it be better suited in a different setting?
- The very broad scope for open academic debate also entails responsibilities for those who use the space. In this regard, factors such as safety, fundamental rights, and good employment practices are taken into account. Organisers, participants, or visitors to an event must treat one another with tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding. This means that while you may challenge other opinions with arguments, you must also be willing to listen.
- There is room for politically sensitive views and opinions, but the right of reply is always guaranteed. The organisers of an event must ensure that there is room for a plurality of perspectives.
- Individual statements made during an event are never expressions of the University as an institution. As a UM employee or student, you cannot, by definition, make statements on behalf of the University as a whole or present them as such; conversely, the University cannot restrict the academic freedom of its students and staff.
- There is no room for intimidation, verbal aggression, or other inflammatory, exclusionary, and/or discriminatory statements directed at groups or individual

students, staff members, or other persons, which may also incite disturbances of public order.

- Exclusively political or religious gatherings are not permitted – gatherings of student parties are permitted. Gatherings involving multiple political, religious, or philosophical groups are permitted, provided that open academic debate among speakers and participants with differing views is central to the event. A student or academic association with a religious character is not considered a religious group. Celebrations such as Diwali, Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, or Hanukkah are permitted. However, spaces may not be used exclusively for ‘*levensbeschouwelijke*’ or religious activities, such as a prayer service.

Part 4 – Who is permitted to organise events in, on, or around spaces?

The following criteria apply to **the organiser** of an event:

1. The applicant must be an internal party;
2. The applicant must be a recognized student or academic association. Applications for these activities must always be submitted by an individual on behalf of the association’s board;
3. Events initiated by an external applicant will be facilitated provided they serve an educational, social, or scientific purpose and are organized in collaboration with one of the individuals, entities, or associations listed under 1 or 2.

The following criteria apply to **external speakers**:

1. The speaker’s visit must serve the interests of science (whether the speaker’s appearance is for the purposes of research, education, academic development, or valorisation);
2. The event’s design and organisation must ensure room for open dialogue and a diversity of perspectives;
3. The safety of speakers and attendees must be reasonably guaranteed.

If these conditions are not met, the event cannot take place in university buildings or on university campuses.

The staff of Studium Generale and OmniUM can provide advice on how to properly organize an event if desired.

Part 5 – What (practical) rules apply to the use of spaces and the organization of events in university buildings?

Whenever the spaces are used, Maastricht University’s General House Rules and Order Regulations must be observed. In addition, any house rules of the building in which the spaces are located or of which they form a part also apply. To the extent applicable, all obligations under university regulations and applicable laws and regulations must also be followed.²

In principle, the use of spaces is permitted only during the opening hours of the space in question and while the University as a whole is open. During collective closures (such as public holidays), use is therefore not permitted unless prior authorization is obtained from the

² All house rules, codes of conduct, and regulations of Maastricht University can be found at: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/about-um/organisation/gedragcodes-reglementen>

Executive Board. The University may impose restrictions, such as during exam periods, during maintenance work, or in the event of special circumstances.

In the event of conflicting requests for the same time and location, the following order of priority applies:

1. Educational activities;
2. Research activities;
3. Internal meetings;
4. Meetings of student and academic associations;
5. Meetings of external parties.

Within each of these categories, priority is determined by the order in which requests are received.

The event organizer bears primary responsibility for ensuring that the gathering proceeds in a physically and socially safe manner.

Part 6 – How do you submit a request to use a space, and how is permission granted?

1. Submission

- Requests are submitted via the reservation system managed by Facility Services or through the faculties' room reservation systems;
- The request must be submitted **at least 2 weeks³ in advance** and must include:
 - Name of the organizer (person);
 - purpose and nature of the activity;
 - date, time, and location;
 - expected number of participants;
 - information about speakers and content;
 - emergency assistance information (*in Dutch: BHV informatie*);
 - If applicable: potential (safety) risks and how the smooth operation of the event in, on, or around the requested space(s) will be ensured.⁴

2. Assessment

- Applications are assessed against this Framework. The assessment is conducted by the competent authority. Depending on the specific situation, this may be the Executive Board, the dean of the faculty, the director of the unit in which the space is located, or another authorized person;
- In cases of increased risk, an additional assessment is conducted by the dean/director and, if necessary, subsequently by the Executive Board.
- For the purposes of the assessment, additional information may be requested from the organiser.

3. Decision-making (required only for high-risk gatherings outside of regular education and operations)

- The competent authority will decide on:
 - Approval;
 - Rejection. The Executive Board is authorized to refuse or cancel an event if this framework is not met;

³ If your request concerns an event that requires extensive organizational arrangements, please submit it at least 4 weeks in advance.

⁴ If you need advice regarding safety aspects, please feel free to contact [UM's safety & security advisor](#).

- Approval subject to conditions (e.g., the presence of security; a specific room/location; crowd management).

4. Documentation

- Decisions are documented in writing;
 - Contracts may be drawn up for external parties, if applicable.
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Final Provision

1. This Framework takes effect on 1 September 2026 and applies to all spaces in use at UM.
2. The Framework will be periodically evaluated and amended as necessary.
3. In cases not covered by this Framework, the Executive Board will make the final decision.