



What Universities Should Do to Prepare for the Academic Year

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What Universities Should Do to Prepare for the Academic Year

Colleges and universities have the opportunity — and legal obligation — to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Below is a back-to-school best practices toolkit for administrators to ensure the safety and full inclusion of Jewish students, faculty, and staff — as well as all students, faculty, and staff — on higher education campuses across the United States.

Ensure Campus Safety and Clearly Communicate the Standards and Rules Governing the Campus Community, including Policies on Non-Discrimination and Protests and Demonstrations

ADL recommends that colleges and universities send a welcome message at the start of the academic year — and periodically thereafter — that clearly sets expectations for campus conduct for incoming and returning students, as well as all members of the campus community. This communication should state that harassment or discrimination, including antisemitic harassment or discrimination, will not be tolerated, outline consequences for violating conduct policies, and reinforce rules on protests, demonstrations, postings and other time, place and manner restrictions — making clear that free expression does not include directly threatening, harassing, or excluding others based on their identity.

Alongside communicating these policies, the policies must be enforced in an even-handed, content-neutral, and consistent manner and any violations must be promptly and directly investigated and addressed.

Colleges also have a legal and moral duty to ensure a physically safe campus including online. Universities must train staff and campus security on identifying harassment and hate crimes, enforce protest rules on time, place, and manner, and maintain open access to all campus buildings and events. Blocking of entry to campus activities or targeting of Jewish communal spaces must be addressed immediately and consistently.

Best Practices – Statement for the Beginning of the Academic Year

- Cornell's President Michael I. Kotlikoff started the 2024-25 academic year with a statement on [freedom and responsibility](#), establishing clear and unwavering expectations for the community including “ensuring that speech or actions by some members of our community does not violate the rights of others.” Alongside this, Cornell has revised its [Expressive Activity Policy](#) to clearly outline time, place, and manner limits to campus protests, bar unauthorized encampments, and explain the administration's ability to take emergency actions to protect the community, up to and including expulsion.
- Ahead of the 2024–25 academic year, Binghamton University [issued](#) two official campus-wide messages: one reminding the community about its time, place and manner rules governing protests and expressive activity and announcing updates to those policies, and another affirming that hate and bigotry, including antisemitism, will not be tolerated – clearly communicating expectations for behavior and institutional values.

Best Practices – Statement in Response to an Incident

- In April 2025, Brandeis University [issued](#) an “Affirming Brandeis’ Values” statement responding to a protest that violated its campus policies. The message clearly restated expectations that all demonstrations adhere to the university's rules, including prohibitions on trespassing and masked participation. It also outlined new disciplinary steps, emphasized enforcement of no-trespassing rules, and announced the initiation of disciplinary processes against students who facilitated the protest by inviting trespassers.

Best Practices – Including Antisemitism in Non-Discrimination Policies

- [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#): Antisemitism can be a form of intersectional discrimination or harassment based on religion and/or national origin. Antisemitism may manifest as engaging in any of the following conduct against an individual because the individual is or is perceived to be Jewish or because the individual is or is perceived to be from Israel: repeatedly using antisemitic slurs; defacing an individual's property with a hateful symbol or word (e.g., a swastika); denying an individual access to or refusing to allow an individual to participate in any program sponsored or hosted by the University; using force or intimidation to obstruct the path of an individual; or refusing to grant an individual a benefit to which they are entitled (e.g., a letter of recommendation). Evidence of an individual's perceived protected status may include, for example, association with Israel or with a Jewish organization, wearing religious attire (e.g., a kippah), or displaying a religious symbol associated with Judaism (e.g., a star of David).

- University of Minnesota's Policies and Protections: A Foundation for Accountability: Explicit Prohibitions Against Antisemitism: The University's Student Conduct Code and Equal Opportunity Policy explicitly prohibit discrimination based on religion, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics — legal protections that encompass antisemitic harassment. Please see the Guiding Principles of the Student Conduct Code. This includes harassment in all forms, including harassment toward individuals (a) for reasons of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, disability, status as a veteran, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression or (b) based on actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, and citizenship or residency in any country, including Israel and the Arab world countries. This includes, for example, antisemitic and Islamophobic discrimination or harassment. These policies are enforced through investigations by the Office for Community Standards and the Equal Opportunity & Title IX Office. Adjudicators receive annual training on identifying antisemitic behavior under Title VI.

Best Practices – Ensuring Campus Safety

- To address antisemitism and bolster the University's response to incidents, the University of Virginia Safety & Security department has hosted an antisemitism training day that was attended by 120+ employees from various departments. The Safety & Security department is also taking part in Hillel's Campus Climate Initiative.
- To address and prevent antisemitism on campus, the University of Michigan's Division of Public Safety & Security (DPSS) has implemented enhanced security measures, including expanded camera coverage and real-time monitoring technologies. The University has also strengthened its approach to campus activism by prioritizing education, clearly communicating policies, and responding swiftly to disruptions. DPSS maintains close coordination with the Ann Arbor Police Department and Jewish community organizations, such as Hillel, Chabad House, and the Jewish Resource Center, providing security assessments, enhanced patrols, and support for Jewish student organizations and events.
- In March 2025, Columbia University announced a new Anti-Doxing and Online Harassment Policy that applies to all members of the campus community. Under this policy, "intimidating, threatening, targeting, or otherwise causing harm to any member of our community, including Jewish and Israeli students, faculty and staff, on social media are strictly prohibited. This includes harassing messages, threats, or insults; impersonation for malicious purposes; publicly sharing personal or private information; and encouraging harassment of others."

For more information on responding to academic disruptions, see here: <https://notoleranceforantisemitism.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/guidance-academic-disruptions>

Establish a Title VI Office or Coordinator

Colleges and universities should establish a dedicated Title VI office or coordinators to prevent and address discrimination based on race, color, and national origin, including antisemitism. These coordinators should support those who report bias, ensure clear reporting pathways, lead prevention training, track and review complaints to identify hostile environments, and share data transparently where legally permitted.

Best Practices

- In March 2025, New York University (NYU) [announced](#) the appointment of NYU's inaugural Title VI coordinator within NYU's Office of Equal Opportunity. The coordinator will be responsible for addressing and investigating instances of discrimination or harassment on campus, as well as educating the NYU community about what constitutes discrimination and harassment.
- The University of Delaware has [created](#) a Title VI Coordinator role, reporting to the University's Director of Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will be responsible for coordinating the University's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and will serve as the primary point of contact for Title VI issues for members of the campus community, including the investigation and resolution of complaints.
- In July 2025, Columbia University [announced](#) its intention to appoint dedicated Title VI and Title VII coordinators as part of its efforts to strengthen compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The coordinators will play both advisory and enforcement roles to ensure timely and appropriate action in response to complaints. These coordinators will also contribute to a publicly available annual report, detailing Title VI and Title VII complaints, investigations and outcomes.

For more information on strengthening incident reporting mechanisms, see here: <https://notoleranceforantisemitism.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/improving-campus-incident-reporting-mechanisms>

Support Jewish Students, Staff and Faculty

A number of steps should be taken to support Jewish students, staff and faculty this academic year:

1. As the ostracization and targeting of Jewish members of campus communities increases, it is critical that colleges take proactive steps to prevent discrimination against Jewish students, faculty, and staff within campus organizations, clubs, and activities.

Best Practices

- Duke University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Misconduct specifically [states](#) that it is antisemitic conduct to refuse "to allow an individual to participate in any program sponsored or hosted by Duke because they are perceived to be from Israel, are associated with a Jewish organization, wears religious attire, like a kippah, or displays a religious symbol associated with Judaism, like a Star of David."
- New York University's Nondiscrimination and anti-harassment ("NDAH") policy explicitly [prohibits](#) "excluding Zionists from an open event...[and] applying a 'no Zionist' litmus test for participation in any NYU activity."

2. Colleges and universities must unequivocally publicly denounce the targeting and harassment of Jewish students, faculty, staff, and their organizations. As Jewish campus groups face growing hostility, leadership must make clear that such behavior violates community values and will not be tolerated.

Best Practices

- In November 2024, the University of Rochester [responded](#) firmly after hundreds of "Wanted" posters targeting members of the campus community — many explicitly because they were Jewish — were found across university buildings. President Sarah Mangelsdorf publicly denounced the posters, stating unequivocally that the targeting of Jewish individuals constituted antisemitism and would not be tolerated. She affirmed, "This isn't who we are. This goes against everything we stand for, and we have an obligation to reject it."
- In July 2024, the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee strongly [denounced](#) a social media post by an anti-Zionist student group that targeted Jewish students and campus organizations supporting Israel. The University emphasized that while free speech is protected, intimidation and hate have no place on campus. Following continued online targeted harassment, the University temporarily [suspended](#) five anti-Zionist student groups.

- In summer 2024, CUNY Baruch College [condemned](#) a disturbing incident in which a group of CUNY students, including members of the Baruch community, were harassed by protesters at a Hillel-sponsored dinner. The protesters targeted Jewish students, an incident that Baruch's leadership denounced as unacceptable, stating "Such actions have no place in our community and will not be tolerated."
- In August 2024, following a protest in which demonstrators used megaphones to chant directly at the occupants of the Rosen Center — home to the Temple chapter of Hillel — then-President Englert [condemned](#) the targeting of Jewish students and made clear that intimidation and harassment would not be tolerated. After joining the university in November 2024, current President Fry reaffirmed this stance in response to the vandalism of an off-campus residence affiliated with a national Jewish fraternity. In a university-wide message, he [emphasized](#) that such acts are deeply unsettling but will not weaken the community's resolve to support Jewish life and to take decisive action against antisemitism.

3. Institutions must ensure Israeli students, faculty, and staff feel welcome and protected on campus.

Best Practices for Fostering Collaboration with Israeli Institutions

- Brandeis University has built and sustained strong relationships with Israeli institutions through a wide range of academic, cultural, and leadership initiatives. These include the Hassenfeld Israel Immersion Program and the Israel Summer Internship Program, both of which offer students direct engagement with Israeli society. The University also hosts robust programming through its Schusterman Center for Israel Studies, convenes thought leaders via the Ruderman Executive Leadership Summit, and has an Israel Initiative Fund.
- American University (AU) has developed and maintained meaningful relationships with Israeli institutions by partnering with several Israeli universities to offer AU students study abroad opportunities in Israel. It also advances academic engagement through the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies, which is dedicated to the scholarly study of modern Israel and regularly hosts Israeli scholars, writers, and artists to share their work and perspectives on campus.

4. Universities should also publicly reject the discriminatory Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement — including the recent promotion of soft and shadow boycotts — and uphold policies that promote inclusion, academic freedom, and equal treatment for all.

Best Practices for Countering BDS

- CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez has consistently denounced the BDS movement when anti-Israel resolutions have been passed by CUNY-affiliated

groups, affirming that such positions do not reflect the views of the university. He has repeatedly reaffirmed CUNY's commitment to academic freedom and global engagement, with clear public statements issued over [multiple years](#) – most recently in [February 2025](#) – underscoring that CUNY will not participate in any form of BDS activity.

- American University has [consistently](#) denounced the BDS movement when anti-Israel resolutions have been passed on campus, making clear that such resolutions do not reflect the university's official position and will not be implemented. In its public statements, AU has emphasized that BDS actions run counter to the institution's commitment to free expression, its core values of inclusion and belonging, and its ability to advance community priorities such as student support, scholarships, and research.
- In April 2025, when a BDS referendum passed on campus, Georgetown University's administration [responded](#) within 30 minutes by issuing a public statement unequivocally rejecting the referendum and reaffirming the university's opposition to BDS.

For more information on the BDS movement on campus, see here: <https://notoleranceforantisemitism.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/what-bds-guide-understanding-and-countering-calls-divestment-and>

For more information on soft and shadow boycotts on campus, see here: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/understanding-and-countering-soft-and-shadow-boycotts-israel>

5. University leaders must actively show up for Jewish students – not just in words, but through visible actions that affirm their safety, belonging, and full participation in campus life.

Best Practices

- Michigan State University (MSU) has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to supporting its Jewish community through sustained partnerships and direct engagement. Senior university leaders regularly meet with representatives from Hillel, Chabad, ADL, and the Zekelman Holocaust Center, and attend key religious and cultural events including Shabbat dinners, Passover celebrations, and memorial vigils. The Serling Institute for Jewish Studies collaborates with Hillel and Chabad on forums addressing antisemitism and its faculty contribute to Jewish life across the state through public lectures and educational programs. MSU also facilitates ongoing educational visits to the Zekelman Holocaust Center.
- The University of Pittsburgh demonstrates its support for its Jewish campus community through meaningful partnerships and public engagement. In March 2025, the University hosted the powerful traveling exhibition Lessons from The Tree of Life, highlighting artifacts and stories from the Pittsburgh synagogue

shooting to promote reflection, remembrance, and education. The University also partnered with the JCC to host the 2025 JCC Maccabi Games — marking the first time the Games were held on a university campus.

- Emory's Dean of Religious Life and Jewish Chaplain co-chair the monthly meetings of the Jewish Life Working Group, which seeks to support vibrant Jewish life on campus and promote an inclusive culture. The group sponsors annual Emory Hanukkah and Yom HaShoah observances and also meets to address other events and issues (including antisemitism) as they arise.
- In October 2024, Johns Hopkins University's leadership, student affairs, and public safety collectively supported Hopkins Hillel and local Jewish religious leaders and community members to host an outdoor vigil on campus, which occurred peacefully and without incident.

6. All students, faculty, and staff should receive mandatory education on antisemitism — including how it manifests today — incorporated into other non-discrimination and harassment trainings. Trainings must be grounded in clear definitions, include real-world examples, and empower community members to recognize and challenge antisemitism in all its forms.

Best Practices

- At SUNY Rockland Community College all college employees are required to complete the SUNY system training on recognizing and preventing discrimination under Title VI, VII, and IX, with the Title VI module specifically addressing shared ancestry discrimination and antisemitism. In August 2024, the college hosted a dedicated antisemitism workshop led by ADL's New York office. The training was delivered live and recorded for broader access across campus. Participation was mandatory for key staff, including the Executive Director of Student Engagement and College Life, Student Involvement staff, student conduct officers, and members of the College's Executive Cabinet.
- New York University (NYU) has implemented robust training initiatives to combat antisemitism and promote inclusion. All degree-seeking students are required to complete a Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH) training that includes explicit examples of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. Additionally, all NY-based employees must complete state-mandated harassment training that now includes sections on antisemitism and other forms of discrimination. NYU also offers a comprehensive "Jewish Ally Zone" training open to the entire community, which has reached hundreds of participants since its launch in 2021.
- Georgetown University launched a mandatory educational training program in January 2025 for over 500 student organization leaders. The training focuses on understanding and preventing discrimination and harassment based on protected categories, including antisemitism.

- Johns Hopkins University (JHU) works in close partnership with Hopkins Hillel to strengthen campus education on Jewish identity and community. In collaboration with Interfaith America, JHU has also provided a religious pluralism educational series for university employees, which included a dedicated session on antisemitism.
- Amherst College has taken concrete steps to ensure incoming students and key campus leaders are equipped to recognize and address antisemitism. All first-year students, orientation leaders, and community advisors are required to complete a training that includes content on antisemitism. Additionally, key student-facing staff attended a multi-day workshop on antisemitism during summer 2024 at Brandeis University, deepening their understanding of how to support Jewish students and promote an inclusive campus climate.
- Queens College launched a voluntary three-session bias training series during its second annual Diversity Week in April 2024. Hosted by the Office of Compliance and Diversity, the program was open to students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and addressed unconscious bias, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in campus interactions, classrooms, and community spaces.

7. Universities should promote structural reform, intellectual diversity, and institutional transparency.

Best Practices

- Following the release of the April 2025 report on antisemitism at Harvard University by the University's Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias, the University [committed](#) to establishing "a University-wide initiative to promote and support viewpoint diversity." As part of their efforts, the University is also [working](#) with faculty to strengthen existing academic review processes for courses and curricula.
- In July 2025, Columbia University finalized an agreement with the federal government resolving multiple ongoing investigations by federal agencies. As part of the resolution, the University [committed](#) to maintaining a Senior Vice Provost dedicated to promoting excellence in regional studies, who will lead a comprehensive review of Columbia's region-specific academic programs, starting with the Middle East. The review will assess curriculum balance, leadership, hiring practices, and curricular processes, and will include recommendations to the President and Provost to ensure academic excellence, transparency, and complementarity across the University's regional studies offerings.
- Following the outbreak of the 2023 Israel-Hamas War, Dartmouth College immediately announced a series of public forums and other programming, driven by the College's chairs of Jewish and Middle Eastern Studies, to foster dialogue and aid the campus community in understanding the background and nature

of the conflict. This effort has expanded into a broader [Dartmouth Dialogues initiative](#), with events attracting 14,900 people during the 2024/25 academic year.

8. Universities should invest in opportunities for dialoguing across differences. Specifically, institutions should invest in structured dialogue programs, facilitated discussions, and initiatives that promote empathy, active listening, and shared understanding.

Best Practices

- Washington University in St. Louis' Division of Student Affairs offers "[Dialogue Across Difference](#)," an eight-week course that teaches undergraduate students how to explore difficult topics such as politics, religion, race and gender in a positive and productive way. Aimed at fostering civil discourse, antisemitism is included within this course.
- Alongside a [Dialogues Across Differences Initiative](#), which now includes a required component in first-year orientation, American University has launched a campus-wide [Civic Life project](#), guided by a cross-campus Steering Committee and featuring the inaugural Student Civic Life Fellows program. The Fellows participate in a leadership course focused on facilitating tough conversations on complex issues.

Develop and Administer an Annual Survey to Assess the Campus Climate With Respect to Antisemitism

Universities should conduct annual climate surveys, focus groups or interviews of students, faculty, and staff to assess antisemitism on campus – measuring experiences, perceptions of safety, trust in reporting systems, and efficacy of remedial measures. Results must inform institutional policies and demonstrate a serious, data-driven commitment to addressing antisemitism and creating a respectful learning environment.

Best Practices

- In June 2025, Columbia University [released](#) findings from the Harmful Exclusion Alleviation Longitudinal Study (HEALS), a comprehensive campus climate survey completed by over 9,000 students. The results revealed that Jewish and Muslim students felt significantly less comfortable on campus than their peers during the 2023–2024 academic year. These findings echoed what the university’s Task Force on Antisemitism heard directly from nearly 500 students during more than two dozen listening sessions in Spring 2024.
- To assess the prevalence and impact of antisemitism on campus, Stanford University [established](#) the Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias Subcommittee in 2024, which held over 50 listening sessions with undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents – engaging more than 300 members of the Stanford community. It also conducted nearly four dozen individual interviews, including with senior and mid-level administrators such as deans and vice-provosts, to assess the prevalence and impacts of antisemitism on campus.
- In July 2025, Brown University reached a settlement with the federal government to resolve three open cases related to its compliance with federal nondiscrimination obligations. As part of the agreement, Brown [committed](#) to hiring an external firm to conduct a comprehensive campus climate survey and a social media harassment study. These efforts will include a focus on the experiences of students with shared Jewish ancestry. The initiative aligns with ongoing efforts by Brown’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion to assess the campus climate and builds on previous campus climate assessments the university has undertaken.

To access ADL’s model free of charge campus climate survey instrument, designed to assess the prevalence and impacts of antisemitism on campus, see here: <https://notoleranceforantisemitism.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/adl-gratz-model-campus-climate-survey>

Reaffirm Faculty Professional Responsibilities to Uphold Core Academic Values

Universities must reaffirm that faculty hold professional responsibilities that preclude coercion and political indoctrination of students. Given the power imbalance between faculty and students, institutions must safeguard academic spaces from bias that undermines open inquiry and creates a hostile environment for students in protected groups.

Best Practices

- In October 2023, American University [affirmed](#) clear boundaries around faculty participation in protests by issuing a memo clarifying that faculty members may engage in such activities in a personal capacity, as long as it does not interfere with their instructional responsibilities, including teaching or holding office hours.
- CUNY Baruch College's academic freedom policy [affirms](#) that faculty have the right to discuss relevant material in their teaching but explicitly prohibits introducing political or controversial topics unrelated to the course subject.
- Cornell University has emphasized the responsibilities that accompany academic freedom by reaffirming that, while faculty retain broad rights to free expression, their primary role in the classroom is to teach the assigned subject matter and hold class as scheduled. To support this, Cornell has [enhanced](#) its training and resources for faculty and graduate student Teaching Assistants. The Center for Teaching Innovation has overhauled guidance materials — including by developing a new resource, Engaging Viewpoint Diversity in the Classroom — which explicitly reference the university's obligations under Title VI and IX.

By implementing these steps and building on established best practices, campus administrators can work toward creating a welcoming environment where Jewish students, faculty, and staff — and all members of the campus community — feel safe, supported, and fully included from the outset of the academic year.