

## Policy on Photographing and Filming on Harvard Property

Revised April 2022

**1. Purpose** – As an educational institution, Harvard University seeks to further its mission of education, research, and public service, and to minimize activities that disrupt or are inconsistent with that mission. In furtherance of this objective, this policy requires advance permission for, and in some cases, limits or does not allow, photography and filming of University buildings, facilities and property, with the exception of still photography and film work produced on behalf of Harvard University and its Schools.<sup>[1]</sup>

**2. Advance Permission Required** – Any individual or organization wanting to engage in photography or filming on Harvard property for broadcast, public dissemination, or commercial usage of any type needs advance permission.

All requests should go initially to the Communications Office of the School or unit involved, for which contact information can be found at [harvard.edu/media-relations/contact](https://www.harvard.edu/media-relations/contact). For requests involving the University, inquiries should be submitted to Harvard Public Affairs and Communications (HPAC) via digital form at: <https://www.harvard.edu/media-relations/resources-for-media/access-to-campus/>.

In determining whether permission should be granted, Schools and units may consult with HPAC, the President and/or Provost's Office, Dean of the affected School, and/or other University officials as appropriate.

**3. Criteria and Limits** – Generally, photography or filming that is carried out by the University, its Schools, or an educational or non-profit entity, and is intended for educational or public affairs use will be permitted (subject to logistical and security concerns detailed below, including advance notice). Photography or filming which is carried out by a commercial or entertainment entity designed primarily for entertainment or commercial use, will generally not be permitted.

For example, the makers of an educational documentary on the life of Franklin Roosevelt might be permitted to film footage of Harvard Yard, while the makers of a film of a bestselling novel about Roosevelt set at Harvard would not be.

Filming or photography for advertising or promotion of commercial products or services is not allowed.<sup>[2]</sup>

Access to a School's campus or University property for filming or photography by the news media will be at the discretion of the Communications Office of the individual School or unit involved, or the HPAC Director of Media Relations or their designee.

In reviewing any request for photography or filming, the following will be considered:

- Whether the purpose of the photography or filming furthers the University's educational mission, as explained above.

- The level of potential disruption to students, staff and faculty.
- The expense, inconvenience and/or potential damage to property of the University.
- The potential for misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the University's association with the project.

**4. Exterior and Interior Filming** – Generally, permission to photograph or film will be limited to pictures of the exterior of buildings or facilities.

Filming of Harvard exteriors from a location not on Harvard property may not disrupt University activities. For example, a film crew trying to photograph a scene of Harvard Yard from a public space on Massachusetts Avenue may not cause disruption by say, placing floodlights in such a way that they disturb students in the Yard buildings, or by trying to block pedestrian access through the gates for a clearer shot.

In the exceptional case where filming or photography of interior property is permitted (for example, a video or still photographs being produced by Harvard for its own use, or a press conference filmed for a major announcement), a number of special circumstances in addition to the general ones of disruption, etc. listed above need to be considered, including:

- *Have all the participants (including students or audience members) been notified of and given permission for their appearance in the filming?*
- *Are alternative seats available for any audience member who does not wish to be filmed?*
- *Have copyright permissions been granted from all potential copyright holders?*
- *Are all representations of Harvard University or its Schools consistent with the University's Use-of-Name policies and guidelines? (For example, promotional material for a video, even if it is educational, should make sure that any reference to Harvard University is consistent with the policy and has advance permission).*

**5. Signs or Insignia of the University or its units** – Any photography or filming that includes official signs, insignia or emblems of Harvard University or its Schools (e.g. clearly identifiable banners, diplomas, shields) must have advance permission from the Trademark Program, which can be requested via email at [trademark\\_program@harvard.edu](mailto:trademark_program@harvard.edu). Press invited in to cover University or School events are excepted from this requirement. Schools may develop categories of banners, insignia, etc., with these offices for “blanket” pre-approval.

**6. Promoting a Video** – The names and trademarks of Harvard University or any of its units may not be used in promoting a film or other project without specific advance permission of the HPAC Director of Media Relations or their designee, and the Trademark Program, even when permission to photograph or film has been given.

**7. Compensation and Indemnification** – When permission is granted by the appropriate Communications Office (School, unit, HPAC, or a combination), the individual or entity engaging in the filming or photography must agree to :

- a) Pay any location fee assessed by the respective Communications Office.
- b) Indemnify the University against any loss resulting from the activities.
- c) Compensate the University for any costs or damage.
- d) Comply with any other terms or limitations, including those intended to minimize disruption or security risks.

**8. Individual faculty and students** – Individual faculty members with photography or filming requests, or questions about this policy, should contact their School's Communications Office or Public Information Officer. This is not intended to limit the current practice of permitting a School or the University to film educational activities for their own non-commercial use, or of permitting HPAC or individual faculty members from engaging in limited, non-disruptive filming or photography for educational or institutional purposes (such as an interview with a news program or videos and photography for use in University communication) in their offices or other University space, with advance notice to the local communications office or HPAC. Individual Schools or Units may have additional local policies.

Likewise, students with photography or filming requests should also contact their School's Communications Office. Students may not engage in filming or photography on University property intended for commercial distribution or public dissemination without advance permission as described above. Any student film or photography project using University facilities must comply with the University's Use-of-Name policies and guidelines.

As is also current practice, offices or other University property should not be used for private purposes such as photography that would promote a commercial product or service. Similarly, faculty should always obtain permission from their local Communications Office before filming or photographing classes or other activities in University facilities for broadcast or public dissemination. Classroom filming, when permitted, requires the permission of students, and the setting up of an additional section for students who may not wish to be filmed.

**9. Social Media** – Guidelines outlined in this policy also apply to photo and video usage on social media. Individuals may use photos and videos taken on University property on personal, non-commercial social media accounts in ways that do not suggest endorsement by the University. Social media use of photos and/or videos for commercial purposes by anyone requires permission from HPAC or the School or unit Communications Office and is generally not permitted.

For example, if an individual wanted to post a picture of themselves in front of the Widener steps to share their visit to Harvard with friends, it would be acceptable. However, if an individual wanted to post a picture of themselves in the same place, but to promote a product or service or for other commercial use, it would require permission from the Communications Office.

**10. Third Parties using University Facilities must follow these rules** – When rooms or facilities are rented to, or otherwise used by, third parties not affiliated with the University, they must agree to be bound by these rules, as well as the University policy on the use of

Harvard's name. Local units that rent or donate space for outside use should include these rules in any agreements with third parties, or otherwise ensure notification and compliance.

**11. Questions** - Questions on the application and interpretation of this policy should be directed to HPAC at [media@harvard.edu](mailto:media@harvard.edu)

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[1]. This policy is intended to guide University officials in their dealings with outside entities who wish to photograph or film on University property. The restrictions in this policy are not intended to limit photography or filming by official University representatives, such as HPAC or School Communications Offices, for university purposes. Students involved in non-commercial projects should be guided by their Schools (see section 8).

[2]. In the case of a request for photography that is connected with a product officially licensed by the University through its Trademark Program, HPAC and the Trademark Program will work together to determine appropriate permissions and conditions.