

Policy on Graffiti

Policy Title	Policy on Graffiti
Policy #	02.103.2
Policy Owner	Vice President for Administration and Finance
Contact Information	Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Vice President for Administration and Finance at (401) 874-2433
Approved By	Administrative Policy Committee
Effective Date	August 17, 2021
Next Review Date	No later than June 30, 2026
Who Needs to Know About this Policy	Faculty, staff, students, and Affiliates of the University
Definitions	<p>Graffiti. Unauthorized and unlawful writings or drawings made on a wall or other surface</p> <p>University Affiliate. Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, research fellows, professional program participants, club sports coaches, and volunteers as well as employees and associates of the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, URI Research Foundation, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not considered University Affiliates, except for those with an ongoing presence on the University campus as regular operations support staff.</p>
Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy	RIGL §11-44-21.1
Reason for Policy/Purpose	To prohibit the placement of Graffiti on the surfaces of property located on the University's campuses, to minimize incidents of Graffiti on University or third-party owned or controlled property, to ensure prompt identification and removal of Graffiti, and to seek appropriate disciplinary or legal action against persons responsible for Graffiti on the University's campuses.
Forms Related to this Policy	None

Policy Statement

The University upholds freedom of expression for all members of the University community. However, Graffiti is not protected speech, and in many cases may be considered the illegal defacement of property, punishable as a crime under Rhode Island General Law (RIGL § 11-44-21.1). In the first and second conviction for this crime a person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; upon a third conviction the person shall be guilty of a felony.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clearly state that the placement of Graffiti on the surfaces of property located on the University's campuses is prohibited, and violations of this prohibition may lead to the commencement of criminal legal proceedings or appropriate disciplinary action against the individuals responsible for the Graffiti.
- Minimize incidents of Graffiti on public or private property on the University's campuses;
- Ensure prompt identification and removal of Graffiti with as little damage as possible to the property and in a way that enables the URI Police to gather evidence for prosecution.

The University strives to remove all Graffiti within twenty-four (24) hours. However, Graffiti can at times be difficult to remove and must be done with care in order to not leave the surfaces damaged. Swift removal of Graffiti is important because allowing Graffiti to linger may attract more Graffiti and because taggers may also move to another area if they see their work removed quickly and consistently.

If the Graffiti is on third-party owned or controlled property located on a University campus, the University has the right to direct that third party to promptly remove the Graffiti from the property or to relocate the property to a different location off of the campus.

All incidents of Graffiti must be reported to the URI Police Department immediately upon discovery and will be removed after being documented by the URI Police. The URI Police Department may decide to pursue criminal complaints against individuals who are believed to be responsible for defacing property on campus with Graffiti. The University may also, in some cases, investigate and, when merited, take appropriate disciplinary action against employees, students, or University Affiliates responsible for Graffiti on campus, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. No Graffiti removal should be performed by any office other than Facilities Operations since improper removal can cause permanent damage to surfaces. Graffiti that is deemed offensive or possibly a hate crime will additionally be reported by the URI Police Department to other appropriate University departments as well as the University of Rhode Island Bias Resource Team.

Exceptions

None

Policy Review and Revisions

(Versions earlier than the first policy number may be paper only)

Policy #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Policy
02.103.1	July 30, 2018	n/a	n/a
02.103.2	August 17, 2021	Scheduled Review	Language changes for clarity; Addition of language on hate crimes, private property; clarifies that graffiti is prohibited.