

General Guidance: Contacts with Law Enforcement**

Law enforcement personnel sometimes approach Princeton University students, faculty, and staff to ask to speak with them for a variety of reasons, including, *for example*, to obtain factual information pertinent to an ongoing investigation, to ask about an individual who is undergoing a background check in connection with government employment or a security clearance, or to learn about countries or technologies of interest. If you receive a request from any federal, state or local authority asking to speak with you in connection with an investigation or for any other purpose, please consider the following:

1. You have the right to decide whether or not to speak with law enforcement, as you wish. The choice is yours. You are not legally obligated to agree to meet with law enforcement or to answer their questions. Even if a law enforcement agent approaches you in person at your home, office or on campus, you do not have to make a decision on the spot; instead you can ask for the agent's contact information and get back to them after you have pondered the request and/or had the opportunity to seek guidance from an advisor.
2. You have the right to consult with an attorney before answering questions from law enforcement.
3. If you do agree to speak with a law enforcement agent, you ***must tell the truth***. Not doing so is a crime and, if the questions pertain to University matters, being less than honest and straight forward may also be a violation of University policy.
4. If you agree to speak with a law enforcement agent, you may impose any conditions you deem appropriate. For example, you may ask to be accompanied by your attorney or by a colleague who can take accurate notes. If the subject of the law enforcement agent's inquiry relates to your work or studies at the University, do bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate administrator and to the University's Office of the General Counsel.
5. If the authorities wish to perform a search of your property (e.g., your computer, your apartment, your cell phone, etc.), and request your consent to do so, you may or may not agree to such a search of your personal property. However, ***you may not consent to a search of University property***, including electronic searches, without authorization from the Office of the General Counsel. Should you receive such a request, please direct the agent to call the University's Office of the General Counsel at 609-258-2500.
6. Similarly, if a law enforcement agent approaches you to request University records, or records that pertain to other University students, faculty and staff, you must direct the agent to the Office of the General Counsel. If you are served with a subpoena for documents relating to the University, please forward the subpoena to the Office of the General Counsel immediately, and the OGC will handle the response.

For additional general information about your legal rights related to inquiries by or contacts with law enforcement, please visit <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/what-do-when-encountering-law-enforcement-questioning>

***This document contains general guidance and is not intended as a substitute for consultation with an attorney about specific matters.*

V. 2 – January 2020