



University Libraries	
Policy Name	University Libraries Noise Policy
Last Revision Date	August 22, 2025; Created in June 2025 in collaboration with Administrative Services, Access Services, Facilities Management, and members from all University Libraries
Effective Date	August 22, 2025
Policy Owner	Administrative Services, Facilities Management
Associated University Policies	George Mason Code of Student Conduct ; University Guidelines on Emergencies ; Library Community Standards and Expectations
Procedures	Mason Police Emergency Procedures

I. Scope.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a comprehensive and guiding process for creating and maintaining a welcoming, comfortable, and safe environment in all University Libraries when considering user noise. This ensures that the University Libraries Noise Policy is clear, accessible, and aligned with the strategic goals of the University Libraries and broader mission of the university.

II. Policy Statement.

This policy serves to provide users with a clear understanding of the noise level allowed in the University Libraries and guidelines for Library Staff to enforce instances of non-compliance. The University Libraries seek to promote free intellectual exploration, research, and learning that supports both individual and collaborative work. To ensure this, there are outlined definitions, floor descriptions, expectations, compliance, and enforcement procedures related to noise.

Defined Noise Areas

Noise areas are designated to support appropriate use of University Libraries spaces at all locations and are identifiable by the noise signage posted within each area whether it be Quiet Study or Group/Collaborative Study. For visual representations of our designated noise areas, see [University Libraries Noise Areas](#).

III. Definitions.

Noise: Any sound activity or behavior that objectively disrupts the intended use or function of a space or noise area.

Noise Signage: Visual signs or notices that communicate expectations around acceptable sounds and levels of noise in different areas of the library.

Quiet Study: Designed for quiet, individual study, or co-studying where minimal noise is expected. Users are expected to minimize noise, use headphones, mute their devices, and speak at a low volume. Noise at a sustained decibel range at or below 55 decibels is acceptable.

Group/Collaborative Study: Encourages interactive and collaborative study where students can expect appropriate volumes of noise in consideration of others. Conversation and group work are expected, but

amplified sound and shouting are not permitted. Noise at a sustained decibel range up to 80 decibels is acceptable.

Library Staff: Any persons working for the University Libraries.

Noise Area (Building, Floor, Section): Assigned location within the University Libraries with a defined noise level (i.e., Quiet Study or Group/Collaborative Study).

Non-Compliance: Behaviors that are inappropriate, disruptive, or inconsistent with the University Libraries policies and the [George Mason Code of Student Conduct](#).

User: Anyone who utilizes the University Libraries resources or facilities.

IV. Compliance

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in corrective action, which could include retraining, loss of privileges, or other appropriate measures as outlined in the noise compliance standards and enforcement procedures below.

Noise Compliance Standards

Users will adhere to designated noise areas as defined within this policy. Users who find an area too noisy are asked to try one of the lower noise areas mentioned above. Should individuals or groups become disruptive and/or non-compliant, George Mason University Libraries encourage users to take initial action by asking the individuals or group to lower their volume in accordance with policy or to relocate to a more appropriate area of the library. Alternatively, or if their own request proves ineffective, users may contact Library Staff with any noise complaints. For any digital reports (e.g., email, virtual reference), please be aware that there may be a delay in response time due to staffing.

- Fenwick Library: Information Desk, call (703) 993-2240
- Mercer Library: Information Desk, call (703) 993-8340
- Mason Square Library: Circulation Desk, call (703) 993-8188

Enforcement Procedures

The actions Library Staff can and will take in response to non-compliance, including steps to address, de-escalate, and if necessary, remove users who fail to adhere to library policies:

1. **First Interaction:** User(s) are asked by either a user or Library Staff to address an identified noise or behavioral issue.
2. **Second Interaction:** User(s) are provided with information about the University Libraries Noise Policy and asked to leave if they cannot comply with Policy.
3. **Third Interaction:** User(s) must provide Mason ID or other form of government ID to Library Staff. University Police (703) 993-2810 may be contacted to escort user(s) out.
 - Incidents may be reported to University Police (703) 993-2810 or Student Conduct.
 - Failure to provide Mason ID Information to any employee of the university when requested within the scope of their authority is in violation of Student Conduct.

Any Library Staff member maintains the right to determine if any individual(s) behavior is egregious or unsafe and warrants immediate enactment of Steps 2 or 3 of the enforcement policy.

V. Forms. A *Noise Policy Warning Informational Handout* will be provided to by Library Staff upon the second interaction.

VI. Effective Date and Review This policy will become effective upon the date of approval by the University Libraries Senior Leadership Team and will be reviewed every two years or as necessary.