

Campus-wide Exterior Signage Policy

Effective Date: 8/25/2017

University Signage

The University commenced a campus-wide way-finding signage replacement project in 2003. The design aesthetic is intended to unify all campus signage with an appropriate vocabulary for a premier 21st Century research and teaching institution. Public signage at the University of Pennsylvania serves several purposes:

- Building identification helps members of the campus community find buildings and locations on campus, provides addresses for emergency response personnel, and notes the architects and the construction date of significant works of architecture.
- Directional signage guides first-time visitors to key public destinations, and identifies accessible entries to buildings that do not have accessible front doors.
- Public information signage indicates campus areas equipped for wireless computer communication, and alerts visitors to areas where bicycles, skateboarding, and other specific activities are prohibited.

The determination of text and symbols, inclusion in directional signage inventory, and placement of signage is the responsibility of the Office of the University Architect. The aim is to have as few signs as possible, each with clear and consistent graphics, typography, and message. The placement of signs is likewise intended to be consistent across the campus, and ordered to maximize effectiveness. Signs are placed perpendicular or parallel to building pathways and buildings, oriented for visibility.

The following guidelines are used in the design of the campus signage:

Building Identification Signage

- Standard building signage, plaque: The standard signage for building identification is a 16-inch square aluminum plaque, with the Penn crest in the upper left corner. In all cases, this sign indicates the building name in bold print, and building's emergency address.

- Standard building signage, blade: For buildings where it is not feasible to add a plaque sign, due to location, building material, or sightlines, a blade sign containing this information will be used.
- Architectural significance: When the building is recognized as a significant work of architecture, the architect(s) and construction date(s) are added.
- Internal functions: Because building identification signage is not intended to also serve as a directory of a building's occupants, internal departments or offices are not listed on the building signage. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the University Architect, consulting if and as appropriate with other administrative entities of the university. Exceptions may take into consideration the degree to which the functions are considered a public use. When necessary, a second 16-inch square plaque may be added to include building functions or departments that have a particularly public aspect.
- Accessibility signage: At buildings where the usual front entry is not accessible, an accessibility symbol and an arrow are added to indicate the location of an alternate entry.

Directional Signage

- Purpose: The directional blade signage is intended to inform and direct those who are unfamiliar with the location of public buildings, spaces, or functions on the campus. As is the case for building identification signage, directional signage is not intended to also serve as a directory of building occupants.
- Signage hierarchy: Each directional sign is designed to accommodate a maximum of six destinations, plus public information text if necessary. On each sign, destinations are ordered according to the following criteria:
 1. Proximity to the sign;
 2. Importance of the destination to visitors, taking into account the amount of visitors each destination will likely receive. Key destinations are admissions and alumni offices, venues for public lectures, exhibits, galleries, or sporting events, and public amenities such as the bookstore and the student center;
 3. Creating linked directional signage, to provide sequential, line-of-sight linkages, especially if a change in direction is required to reach the destination.
- Campus Maps: Campus maps are located at strategic entry and gathering points on campus, to provide a comprehensive guide to campus buildings. Maps are oriented in the direction of viewing for ease of way-finding. Campus maps are updated regularly.
- Guides for the everyday campus community: Way-finding and directional signage is not considered critical for everyday members of the campus community. Addresses, websites, and the campus maps are available to assist members of the Penn community to locate classroom buildings, administrative offices, and academic functions.

- Accessibility signage: The University is committed to a fully accessible campus; the major pedestrian networks throughout the campus generally satisfy that commitment. For buildings where the main entrance is not accessible, a graphic symbol indicating an accessibility entry route is provided on the directional signage. Specific maps of each accessible entrance to the buildings on campus can be found [here](#).

Public Information Signage

- The campus is primarily a pedestrian environment, but users of several modes of transportation share walkways and plazas. Signage is provided to ensure the safety of persons walking on campus by alerting visitors where skateboarding, roller-blading, and bicycling are prohibited. Secondary purposes of these signs are to protect campus property from abuse and to assist the university police in enforcing rules of behavior. (In major public spaces, for example Shoemaker Green and Penn Park, such signage includes a list of additional prohibited activities.) Such public information signage typically uses a shorter blade located at major entries to campus and in areas of heavy pedestrian use.
- Wireless-enabled campus areas: As the university expands the areas of campus equipped for wireless communication, a graphic is added to existing signage to inform laptop users where access to Penn's wireless system is available.

Temporary Signage

- There are 7 [kiosks](#) located throughout the campus that serve for the display of temporary signage. Signage installed on these kiosks does not require the approval of the Office of the University Architect.
- For reasons of safety, visibility, maintenance of building finishes and surfaces, stewardship of overall campus character, and/or avoidance of inappropriate commercialism within the campus, signs and posters attached to any building surfaces, related structures or landscape elements such as fences, trees, etc., are not permitted, and will be removed by Facilities and Real Estate Services.