# University of Pennsylvania Students Barred from Commencement for Pro-Palestinian Encampment Participation



Three students from the University of Pennsylvania, involved in a pro-Palestinian encampment, were not allowed to attend their college's commencement ceremony at Franklin Field on May 19, 2024. Mira Sydow, a senior majoring in urban studies and English, was among those on mandatory temporary leave and barred from the event. Despite prior negotiations with university officials, Sydow believed she could attend. The university explained that the students had not responded to disciplinary findings received on May 17, maintaining their temporary leave status.

At the ceremony, security permitted entry to Sydow, but she and two others were later escorted out. The restriction holds for the main commencement on May 20, scheduled to host 6,000 graduates. Supporters, including Freedom School Palestine, demonstrated near the venue, while multiple police officers maintained order.

Parallel incidents occurred at MIT and Harvard University, where several students faced severe disciplinary actions, including suspension and prevention from graduating, due to similar protests. Harvard's administration clarified that disciplinary decisions were made by individual schools, which have left many students uncertain about their futures. Students criticized these measures as disproportionate, citing a significant disruption to their academic and professional trajectories.