



**London
South Bank
University**

EST 1892

External Speaker Policy

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Approved by	Executive
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**This Procedure is available in accessible formats on request from
govlegal@lsbu.ac.uk**

External Speaker Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure that visiting (or external) speakers can enjoy freedom of speech through discussion, debate and challenge around their chosen topic, whilst ensuring that the University complies with all relevant current legislation.

2. Background

- 2.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, published on the LSBU website. Anyone organising an event must comply with the Code of Practice including the conduct requirements.
- 2.2 LSBU is also required to adhere to the statutory Prevent Duty.
- 2.3 The University is committed to freedom of speech within the law.

3. Impact

- 3.1 Anyone organising an event with an external speaker must ensure an external speaker request form is appropriately completed.
- 3.2 The University may refuse the holding of an Event/Speaker or require changes to be made to the Event and/or speakers, where it reasonably believes the Event or its speakers is likely to:
 - incite criminal acts or other breaches of the law;
 - lead to an expression of views which are contrary to the law;
 - promote or support any illegal organisation, including any proscribed organisation as defined by UK Government;
 - discriminate against or infringe the rights of others;
 - involve activity which is likely to constitute an offence under prevention of terrorism legislation;
 - constitute a threat to public order, or under any health and safety legislation;
 - lead to a risk to the safety of the speaker, those attending the Event or others in the vicinity;
 - lead to damage of University premises or property; or
 - bring the name of the University into disrepute.
- 3.3 Controversial, offensive or distasteful views which are not unlawful would not normally constitute grounds for deciding that an Event should not be held or for imposing conditions or requiring changes to an Event.
- 3.4 The External Speaker Policy applies to all staff, students and visitors. It applies to all Events which include participation by an External Speaker.

4. Support

- 4.1 Staff or students who have any queries or concerns about organising events with external speakers should initially seek advice from the Group Head of Security.

5. Ownership

- 5.1 The Provost has overall responsibility for the policy. The Director of Group Assurance will provide advice to the Provost on any high risk cases. Wider delegated responsibilities are set out in the appendices of this document.

6. Process

- **Appendix 1** provides details for making External Speaker Requests.
- **Appendix 2** provides definitions.
- **Appendix 3** provides external references.

Appendix 1 - How to organise an Event involving an External Speaker

- A1.1 The Organiser of an Event involving an External Speaker must complete an External Speaker Request Form <https://ictserv1.lsbu.ac.uk/forms/externalspeaker> at least 14 calendar days before the Event is due to take place. Late submission of the External Speaker Request Form will mean that the Event cannot go ahead, unless the Director of Group Assurance expressly agrees there is sufficient time.
- A1.2 The Organiser must not advertise or promote the Event until approval to proceed has been given.
- A1.3 The completed form will automatically be sent to the relevant Event Division Manager, who is:
- the Dean of the relevant school, supported by the Director of Operations, for lectures or teaching-related activity and school events (i.e. any event that is being organised by a staff member affiliated with a school); or
 - the Events Team Manager for all events that are not considered day-to-day teaching activity or school events; or
 - the relevant Head of Service for Research Enterprise and Innovation activities; or
 - the Student Union Booking Team who work in conjunction with the Group Head of Security for Events associated with the Student Union.
- A1.4 The Event Division Manager will consider the request and to make an initial assessment of the risk category applicable to the proposed Event. Where the Event Organiser is the Event Division Manager, s/he will refer the request directly to the Provost for consideration.
- A1.5 The Event Division Manager/Provost will determine whether the level of risk associated with the proposed Event is low, medium or high, and thus the level of checks that need to be carried out.

Level of risk	Examples	Level of checks
Low	The topic or subject matter of the Event is clearly described and does not appear contentious e.g. maths speaker addressing maths conference, national power company speakers attending a regular business event for research, enterprise and innovation. There is no history of issues with any previous visit by the same speaker or information from any other agency or institution to suggest otherwise.	Standard Documentation listed in the External Speaker Request Form must be submitted and reviewed.

<p>Medium</p>	<p>The topic or subject matter is open to wide interpretation and/or potential misuse. Vague information or insufficient details to make an informed evaluation have been provided. Any views presented during the event may remain unchallenged by opposing views in the same forum.</p>	<p>Intermediate Documentation listed in the External Speaker Request Form must be submitted and reviewed. Additional fact finding and research is required. The Group Head of Security should be consulted.</p>
<p>High</p>	<p>The topic or subject matter is controversial, is likely to link to proscribed organisations or has potential to radicalise people or be used to draw people into terrorism. Details of the speaker and/or the organisation remain unclear after more information is requested. Information is obtained which suggests that the speaker or organisation involved has held previous meetings elsewhere which have raised concerns. Concerns are raised by Student Union officers or staff. Negative feedback is given by the London Regional Prevent Forum or issues are raised by other universities. The Event is to be held off-site.</p>	<p>Enhanced Documentation listed in the External Speaker Request Form must be submitted and reviewed. Additional in-depth enquiries and fact finding are required. The Group Head of Security and Director of Group Assurance should be consulted. Advice should be sought from external agencies as necessary e.g. the police, regional Prevent coordinator, community groups, local authority, other universities.</p>

A1.6 Where an Event is categorised as high risk, the request should be referred to the Provost for final consideration in discussion with the Director of Group Assurance. Where appropriate, the Provost will liaise with the PVC Compulsory and Further Education in relation to the Event.

A1.7 After completing the above checks, and consideration of the risks set out at paragraph A1.5 above, the Event Division Manager/Provost may, in his or her absolute discretion:

- give approval for the Event to go ahead as planned;
- give approval for the Event to go ahead subject to specified mitigation measures being put in place;
- refuse to allow the Event to go ahead.

A1.8 Mitigation measures may be required for an Event to be allowed to proceed, which could involve changes to the Event structure. The Event Division Manager/Provost should discuss and agree these with the Group Head of Security and the Director of Group Assurance.

A1.9 Examples of mitigation measures which the Event Division Manager/Provost may require (without limitation) include:

- varying the time and/or location of the Event;
- imposing requirements about how the Event is chaired;
- requiring there to be additional speakers to provide an opposing view i.e. a debate rather than a talk by one party
- making the Event ticketed only or specifying that attendees must show valid ID;
- opening the event up to the general public;
- requesting an advance copy of the guest list for review before the Event takes place;
- placing restrictions on the numbers able to attend or restricting the Event to University staff and students only;
- enhancing security arrangements including possible police attendance or a minimum number of stewards;
- imposing conditions on how the Event is advertised;
- refusing admission to media representatives;
- restricting the display of banners or placards at the Event and its immediate surrounds;
- requesting a script/outline from the speaker in advance;
- imposing other conditions about how the Event is run.

A1.10 The Event Division Manager/Provost will notify the Organiser of the proposed Event of his/her decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days of receipt of the External Speaker Request Form. The Organiser has the right of appeal against the decision in accordance with paragraph A1.12 below.

A1.11 If, after approval has been given, there is any material change proposed to an Event (including changes to the venue, speakers or format), the Organiser must notify the Event Division Manager/Provost as soon as practicable. The Event Division Manager/Provost will review the request in light of the new information provided and may impose further mitigation measures or withdraw permission for the Event to proceed.

A1.12 The Organiser must ensure that a copy of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice is provided to all External Speakers and any external organisation booking an Event at the University, and require them to abide by its terms in addition to any specific mitigation measures imposed.

A1.13 Appeal

A1.14 The Organiser has the right to submit an appeal against the decision of the Event Division Manager/Provost within 5 working days of the date of the decision, by making written representations to the Vice-Chancellor. If there is insufficient time to consider the appeal before the scheduled date for the Event, the Event may have to be postponed pending the outcome of the appeal.

A1.15 Within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal and after having consulted the Event Division Manager/Provost, the Vice-Chancellor or nominee will review the original decision, and notify the Organiser of the outcome of the appeal. Where appropriate, the Vice-Chancellor or nominee may also consult

the University's advisors from local communities and/or independent members of the Board of Governors.

A1.16 Records

A1.17 An audit trail of actions taken must be maintained in all cases. All forms and records are kept centrally and are subject to audit, discussion and sharing of good practice.

Appendix 2 Definitions

The term "Events" refers to meetings, lectures, seminars, gatherings, assemblies, demonstrations, marchers and other events or activities of any description which:

- are held on premises which the University or its subsidiaries own or in respect of which the University or its subsidiaries hold a lease or habitually use by licence or permission, including those premises occupied by the London South Bank University Student Union ("Student Union"); or
- are affiliated, funded or branded in a manner which suggests an association with the University, its subsidiaries or the Student Union.

"External Speaker" means a speaker who is not a member of staff or student of the University.

The "Organiser" of an Event means:

- where an Event is organised by a Department (department, school, division, team, professional service group or similar body of the University), the person in charge of that subject/function;
- where an Event is organised by the Student Union, the President of the Student Union (or a member of the Student Union Executive in his or her absence);
- where an Event is organised by an outside person or body, the person authorising the Event on behalf of the University;
- in all other case the person organising the Event.

Free speech is a qualified privilege subject to the limits imposed by law including those governing the protection of national security; health and safety; prevention of crime; charities; human rights; equality and discrimination; and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

“Freedom of speech lies at the heart of universities’ missions. In fact universities in England and Wales have an express legal duty to secure freedom of speech. But free speech is not open-ended or absolute; universities must take account of other considerations, including a range of relevant legislation”.

External Speakers in higher education institutions, Universities UK, 2014

Appendix 3 - External resources

- *Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales*, HM Government, 2023
- *How can universities prepare for the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act*, Universities UK, 2023.
- *External speakers in higher education institutions*, Universities UK, 2014
- *Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities*, Universities UK. 2011
- *Compliance Toolkit Protecting Charities from Harm*, Charities Commission , 2013
- *Promoting good relations on campus: a guide for higher and further education*, Equality Challenge Unit, 2012
- *Managing the risks associated with external speakers*, National Union of Students, 2011
- Safe Campus Communities website: www.safecampuscommunities.ac.uk
- True Vision Stop Hate Crime website: www.report-it.org.uk