



**London  
South Bank  
University**

EST 1892

# Visiting Speaker Policy

Policy last reviewed	July 2025
Approved by	Executive
Published on	LSBU website under About Us, Policies and procedures <a href="https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/policies-regulations-procedures">https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/policies-regulations-procedures</a>

This Procedure is available in accessible formats on request from [legal@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@lsbu.ac.uk)

## Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose .....	1
2. Scope – who and what is covered by this policy?.....	1
3 Who is responsible for this policy? .....	2
4 Support and guidance .....	2
5 Procedure for organising an Event involving a Visiting Speaker .....	3
6 Appeal .....	6
7 Records.....	6
Appendix 1 - External resources.....	7

# Visiting Speaker Policy

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. The University is committed to the principles of free speech and freedom of expression; it fully supports the free expression of opinions within the law, and the upholding of the principles of academic freedom in all activities of the University, as further detailed in its [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#).
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that visiting 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.
- 1.3. Free speech is 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.
- 1.4. The University is also required by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have in place policies and procedures to mitigate the risks of people being radicalised or drawn into terrorism. This includes making sure that risks around visiting speakers and events are rigorously assessed and managed. You can find the University's Prevent Policy [here](#) and on LSBU's website under About Us, Policies and Procedures tab.
- 1.5. This Visiting Speaker Policy should be read in conjunction with the [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#). Anyone organising an event must comply with this Code of Practice including the conduct requirements. Any breach of the Code of Practice may lead to the University taking disciplinary action against the organiser or anyone else involved in the event.

## 2. Scope – who and what is covered by this policy?

- 2.1. This policy applies to all University staff, students and visitors. It applies to all Events which include participation by a Visiting Speaker.
- 2.2. The term “Events” refers to meetings, lectures, seminars, gatherings, assemblies, demonstrations, marches and other events or activities of any description which:
  - 2.2.1. 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
- 2.2.2. are not held on University premises but are affiliated, funded or branded in a manner which suggests an association with the University, its subsidiaries or the Student Union; and
  - 2.2.3. in either case, are not events that are part of the internally authorised curriculum of a course or academic programme or the research event series of a Department (college, department, school, division, team, professional service group or similar body of the University)
- 2.3. “Visiting Speaker” means a speaker who is not a member of staff or student of the University. The “Organiser” of an Event means:
- 2.3.1. where an Event is organised by a Department , the person in charge of that Department;
  - 2.3.2. 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);
  - 2.3.3. where an Event is organised by an outside person or body, the person authorising the Event on behalf of the University;
  - 2.3.4. in all other case the person organising the Event.
- 2.4. “Speech”, for the purpose of this policy, includes written materials such as banners, leaflets, placards or materials displayed electronically.

### **3. Who is responsible for this policy?**

- 3.1. The Provost has overall responsibility for the policy but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Group Head of Security. All relevant members of staff have been made aware of the policy.
- 3.2. The Group Head of Security will liaise with the Group Solicitor and the Group Director of Assurance to review this procedure from time to time (and at least every two years) to ensure that its provisions continue to meet our legal obligations and reflect best practice.

### **4. Support and guidance**

- 3.1 Staff or students who have any queries or concerns about organising Events with Visiting Speakers should seek advice from the Group Head of Security and Estates Customer Services, who shall be the single point of contact for questions about the process.
- 3.2 Further guidance can also be found in a number of external resources, as listed in Appendix 1.

## 5. Procedure for organising an Event involving a Visiting Speaker

- 5.1. The Organiser of an Event involving a Visiting Speaker must complete a Visiting Speaker Request Form <https://ictserv1.lsbu.ac.uk/forms/VisitingSpeaker> at least 14 calendar days before the Event is due to take place. Late submission of the Visiting Speaker Request Form will mean that the Event cannot go ahead unless the Group Head of Security in consultation with the Group Director of Assurance expressly agrees that there is sufficient time.
- 5.2. The Organiser must not advertise or promote the Event until approval to proceed has been given.
- 5.3. The completed form will automatically be sent to the relevant Event Division Manager, who is:
  - 5.3.1. the Dean/Executive Dean and Director of Operations/College Director of Operations of the relevant school/college 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
  - 5.3.2. the Events Team Manager for all events that are not considered day-to-day teaching activity or school events; or
  - 5.3.3. the relevant Head of Service for Research and Innovation Services activities; or
  - 5.3.4. the Student Union Booking Team who work in conjunction with the Group Head of Security for Events associated with the Student Union.
- 5.4. The Event Division Manager will consider the request and 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.
- 5.5. The University will use the three step framework for assessing its compliance with its duty to secure free speech, based on Office for Students (“OFS”) guidance set out below. The steps are:
  - 5.5.1. Step 1 – Is the speech “within the law”. The OFS guidance sets out what this means and gives examples of what makes speech unlawful.
  - 5.5.2. Step 2- If yes, are there any “reasonably practicable steps” to secure the speech? If yes, take those steps. Do not restrict the speech. The OFS guidance illustrates factors that are likely or unlikely to affect what is “reasonably practicable”.
  - 5.5.3. Step 3 – If there are no reasonably practicable steps which can be taken, are any restrictions “prescribed by law” and proportionate under the European Convention on Human Rights? The OFS guidance sets out that any restrictions on speech must be compatible with these requirements, if

indeed there are no reasonably practicable steps to secure it.

5.6. The starting point is that an Event should go ahead, however the University may refuse the holding of an Event or require changes to be made to the Event and/or speakers where it reasonably believes (from the nature of the speakers or from similar activities in the past whether held at the University or otherwise) the Event is likely to:

- incite criminal acts or encourage unlawful violence;
- 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 the UK Government;
- directly discriminate against and/or incite hatred on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation 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 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;
- include the denial of the right to hold or to express an opposing opinion;  
or
- incite any other breaches of the law.

5.7. Contentious or unpopular 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.

5.8. 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
<b>Low</b>	The topic or subject matter of the Event is clearly described and there is no history of issues with any previous visit by the same speaker or information from any other agency or institution to raise concerns e.g. maths speaker addressing maths conference, national power company speakers attending a regular business event for Research and Innovation Services.	<b>Standard</b> Documentation listed in the Visiting Speaker Request Form must be submitted and reviewed.

<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>The topic or subject matter is open to wide interpretation and/or potentially unclear. 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><b>Intermediate</b> Documentation listed in the Visiting 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><b>High</b></p>	<p>The topic or subject matter 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><b>Enhanced</b> Documentation listed in the Visiting Speaker Request Form must be submitted and reviewed. Additional in-depth enquiries and fact finding are required. The Group Head of Security and Group Director of 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>

- 5.9. Where an Event is categorised as high risk, the request should be referred to the Provost for final consideration in discussion with the Group Director of Assurance. Where appropriate, the Provost will liaise with the PVC Compulsory and Further Education in relation to the Event.
- 5.10. After completing the above checks, and consideration of the risks, the Event Division Manager/Provost may, in his or her reasonable judgement:
- 5.10.1. give approval for the Event to go ahead as planned;
  - 5.10.2. give approval for the Event to go ahead subject to specified mitigation measures being put in place; or
  - 5.10.3. refuse to allow the Event to go ahead.
- 5.11. The University may decide that mitigation measures as are reasonably necessary in all the circumstances are required for an Event to be allowed to proceed, which could include changes to the Event structure. The Event Division Manager/Provost should discuss and agree these with the Head of Security and the People and Organisational Development Compliance.
- 5.12. The University shall ensure that its mitigation measures go no further than is necessary to address the risks it has identified. Examples of mitigation measures which the

Event Division Manager/Provost may require (without limitation) include:

- 5.12.1. varying the time and/or location of the Event, including moving it online;
  - 5.12.2. imposing requirements about how the Event is chaired;
  - 5.12.3. requiring there to be additional speakers to provide an opposing view  
i.e. a debate rather than a talk by one party;
  - 5.12.4. making the Event ticketed only or specifying that attendees must show valid ID;
  - 5.12.5. opening the Event up to the general public;
  - 5.12.6. requesting an advance copy of the guest list for review before the Event takes place;
  - 5.12.7. placing restrictions on the numbers able to attend or restricting the Event to University staff and students only;
  - 5.12.8. enhancing security arrangements including possible police attendance or a minimum number of stewards;
  - 5.12.9. imposing conditions on how the Event is advertised;
  - 5.12.10. refusing admission to media representatives;
  - 5.12.11. requesting an outline from the speaker in advance; or
  - 5.12.12. imposing other conditions about how the Event is run.
- 5.12 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 Visiting Speaker Request Form. The Organiser has the right of appeal against the decision in accordance with paragraph 6 below.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 The Organiser must ensure that a copy of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice is provided to all Visiting 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.

## **6. Appeal**

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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.

## **7. Records**

- 7.1. 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 1 - External resources

- *Prevent duty guidance for higher education institutions*, HM Government, (2015) - [Published 7 September 2023](#)
- [How can universities prepare for the Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act? \(universitiesuk.ac.uk\)](#)
- *Protecting charities from abuse for extremist purposes*, Charity Commission 2022
- *Promoting good relations on campus: a guide for higher and further education*, Equality Challenge Unit, 2012
- True Vision Stop Hate Crime website: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)
- Office for Students Regulatory advice 24: Guidance related to freedom of speech
- Gov.uk policy paper: Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, updated 27 February 2025