

**Freedom of Speech**

**Guide**



5. Where there is a potential for these rights to come into conflict in relation to controversial speakers, the Union (in collaboration with the University) will work to reach sound, evidenced judgements about the organisation or the person in question.

The Students’ Union supports its students and societies in requesting external speakers’ access on campus to deliver guest lecturers and workshops. This document explains the importance of why we have this system in place and explains the process of requesting an external speaker, along with other relevant information which falls in line with the University Freedom of Speech Policy.

6. The president of the society organising any event are responsible for the activities that take place within their society’s events and the submission of the Freedom of Speech form for it.

7. All speakers will be made aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, the university and the Union’s various policies, including that:

- They are no permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.

- They must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law

- They must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and this aid in disrupting social and community harmony

- Within a framework of positive debate and challenge seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups

- They are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission.

1. Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights to be protected and are protected by law.

2. Open debate is central to the culture of academic freedom, the development of student ideas and understanding.

It is protected by an act of parliament relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus.

3. That said student safety and welfare is at the heart of the Union’s policies and practices.

4. As such, the freedom to express view can sometimes be tempered by the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities.



12. The Union’s external speaker request form requires event organisers to provide:

- Expected number of attendees

- Confirm event details

- Confirmation of speaker/ organisation details

15. On receipt of the External Speaker Request form, the compliance lead will investigate the speaker/ organisation

14. On receipt of the form the Societies Coordinator will decide on the Freedom of speech request and forward it to the University Secretary if it is required.

8. Societies must notify the Union of any events that involve external speakers (defined as individuals or organisations that are not part of the Union or the University)

13. Any failure to disclose full speaker details may result in an event/booking being cancelled and could result in referral for Union disciplinary action

11. The Union reserves the right to deny a platform to racist and fascist individuals and groups by debating them as part of the No Platform policy

10. Open debate is central to the culture of academic freedom, the development of student’s ideas and understanding and is protected by an act of parliament relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus.

9. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised until the speaker has been cleared through the appropriate procedures (the Freedom of Speech Application Form)



18. Regulatory steps designed to reduce risk may include:

- Requiring that the event be observed by union, university or third-party officials

- Requiring that the event be stewarded or subject to “security” on the door

- Requiring that an event promoting a particular view includes an opportunity to debate or challenge that view

- Requiring that an event closed to society members only be opened to all members of the union

-Requiring that a copy of any speech to be delivered by the speaker be submitted to the union.

16. In making a recommendation they will assess risk on the following basis:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech as per the university’s code of practice in pursuance of the 1986 Education Act

-The potential for the event going ahead to cause the union to be in breach of its equal opportunities policy

-The potential for the event going ahead to cause the union to fail in its wider legal duties

-The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputational risk to the Union

-The potential for the speaker’s presence on campus to cause fear or alarm to members of the student body

17. They may make one of the following recommendations:

-On the basis of the risks presented to not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead

- On the basis of the risks presented to fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted

- On the basis of the risks presented to permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead without any regulatory steps

17. They may make one of the following recommendations:

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