



External Speaker and Events Policy

Version: 2

Revision date: 28/07/2021

Due for review: 28/07/2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out a governing framework relating to external speakers and events at University Centre Quayside (UCQ).
- 1.2 This guidance should be read alongside policies governing health and safety, safeguarding and Prevent, the use of the UCQ name and brand, equality and diversity, academic freedom and freedom of speech, data protection and UCQ's strategic plan and core values.
- 1.3 This policy aims to provide an environment where freedom of speech and academic freedom are promoted, balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred and/or violence is never acceptable.
- 1.4 As an Office for Students (OfS) registered provider of higher education in England, UCQ have a statutory duty to secure freedom of speech (Education (No 2) Act 1986) and academic freedom (Education Reform Act 1988) for all staff, students and visitors. UCQ's commitment to protect the principle of academic freedom and freedom of speech is set out in GP-009 Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.
- 1.5 UCQ have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 as an education provider, employer and service provider. UCQ must not unlawfully discriminate against students, employees and other individuals to whom services are provided.
- 1.6 UCQ is also subject to the Prevent duty under section 26 (1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. As such, UCQ must balance its legal duties whilst protecting the welfare of the UCQ community.
- 1.7 This policy applies to all staff, students and visitors of UCQ and covers all events hosted by UCQ (on site or elsewhere) and events hosted by external organisations that take place on a UCQ premises.

2. Organising an event

- 2.1 Organisers of events involving external speakers should note that any unanticipated costs incurred as a result of the event, including those related to security, health and safety are the responsibility of the organiser(s). Failure to adhere to this policy will result in the organisers being referred for disciplinary action as set out in UCQ's Disciplinary Procedures for staff and students.
- 2.2 Anyone organising an event that involves an external speaker or speakers to be hosted by UCQ (on site or elsewhere) must ensure that this Policy is followed and an External Speaker Risk Assessment is carried out. An event includes any gathering that involves an external speaker addressing a group, including in a teaching, learning or research setting or in the context of co-curricular or extra-curricular activity.
- 2.3 Students cannot independently book UCQ space for the purpose of an event or make use of the UCQ name for an event without prior approval from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

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- 2.4 The Principal Organiser must adhere to the UCQ Brand Guidelines (BG-001 and BG-002) for marketing, documents and communication material. All communication and marketing material related to the event must be approved by the SLT prior to circulation.
- 2.5 The Principal Organiser must ensure that all speakers are provided with this External Speaker and Events Policy before approval is granted by the SLT.

3. External speaker and events booking process

- 3.1 The person leading the organisation of the event (the *Principal Organiser*) must undertake a risk assessment of the proposed external speaker using form QD OPS 006 and ensure that this risk assessment and appropriate escalation take place in a timely fashion.
- 3.2 For events involving a single speaker, this will normally be a minimum of 15 working days before the date of the event. For larger events involving multiple speakers and/or taking place over multiple days (for example an academic conference or major exhibition), this will normally be a minimum of 2 months before the date of the event.
- 3.3 The Principal Organiser should in the first instance discuss the event with the appropriate line manager or head of service. It is the responsibility of the Principal Organiser to submit a risk assessment, counter-signed by the appropriate line manager, to the SLT for decision. If required, sign off may also be required by the Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to decision by the SLT. The SLT may:
- a) Approve the request, or
 - b) Decline the request, or
 - c) Return the request to the Principal Organiser seeking further information, or
 - d) Approve the request with conditions, including (but not limited to):
 - Restrictions on hospitality provision, including the consumption of alcohol
 - The appointment of an independent Chair to oversee the event
 - Specified arrangements governing health, safety and security for the event
- 3.4 Where an independent Chair is appointed (normally where the event takes the form of a meeting, debate, lecture, conference or similar event), the Chair will as far as possible be responsible for ensuring that both the audience and the speaker(s) act in accordance with the law and with the provisions of this policy. The audience and speaker(s) will be under a duty to comply with the Chair's rulings relating to the conduct of the event, to the agreed arrangements for the event and to the policies of UCQ. The Chair has the discretion to request the removal of individuals acting in a disorderly manner or persistently disrupting the event. The Chair may suspend or close the event if in his/her opinion it can no longer be conducted in an orderly manner or the safety and security of those in attendance is under threat.

- 3.5 The declining of a request or the withdrawal of permission will only occur in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances include (but are not restricted to):
- a) Failure to submit the risk assessment within the normal time frame, or
 - b) A significant risk of public disorder such that the health and safety of staff, students and visitors is put at risk, or
 - c) A significant risk of substantial damage to UCQ property, or
 - d) A serious concern that the law will be broken by those speaking at or attending the event, or
 - e) A significant risk of major disruption to the operation of the UCQ's activities, or
 - f) A significant risk that the costs associated with making the event safe (e.g. Covid-secure, security provision, facilities management) were beyond the budget of those organising the event, such that UCQ was likely to face a significant financial loss, or
 - g) Views expressed or likely to be expressed constitute extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism.

- 3.6 The SLT will notify the Principal Organiser in writing of a decision as soon as possible.

4. Advice and support

- 4.1 Advice and support regarding the risk assessment and booking process is available from the following individuals:
- a) Principal, or
 - b) Vice Principal, or
 - c) Professional and Administration Services Officer (for booking queries only).
- 4.2 Where after the risk assessment has been completed, there are concerns that one or more of the proposed speakers for the event might express views that are prohibited by law, including those that can be constituted as hate speech or extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism, then advice should be sought from the Strategic Safeguarding Lead as the designated "single point of contact" for the Prevent duty.

5. Complaints procedure

- 5.1 In the event that an individual (staff, student or external visitor) considers there to have been a breach of this policy, they have the right to make a formal complaint. This should be done using the UCQ Complaints Procedure available on the UCQ website.
- 5.2 A complaint may include:
- a) Being prevented from arranging, speaking at or attending an event of the type envisaged by this policy, or
 - b) Alleged infringements of freedom of speech or academic freedom, or
 - c) Allegations that an external speaker at an event of the type envisaged by this policy breached or is likely to breach UCQ's Prevent duty obligations.

- 5.3 The complaint should include the original risk assessment documentation, copies of any relevant correspondence regarding the event and any other evidence that the complainant wishes to have considered.

6. Guidance for external speakers

- 6.1 This guidance exists to ensure that all speakers taking part in a UCQ hosted or run event or activity, on UCQ premises or elsewhere, act in accordance with this policy.

- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the Principal Organiser to ensure that:

- a) this guidance and the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy is communicated to all external speakers prior to approval of speaking
- b) all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the requirements within it are upheld during the running of the event or activity.

6.3 Freedom of speech

- 6.3.1 The Education Act (No 2) 1986 requires UCQ to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for its employees, students and visiting speakers. As such, UCQ requires all employees and students to tolerate and protect the expression of opinions within the law whether or not these opinions are repugnant to them.

- 6.3.2 However, whilst the law promotes and protects freedom of speech, it also places limits on those freedoms in order to maintain public order and safety and to ensure that there is no breach of the law. UCQ recognises that in this context a conflict exists between the laws which promote freedom of speech and those which restrict it and consequently acknowledges that it has a legal responsibility to create a balance between minimising the possibility that extremism or unlawful conduct will arise on premises and ensuring that it meets its legal obligations in relation to securing freedom of speech.

6.4 Legal Context

- 6.4.1 Higher education institutions operate in a complex legal environment and so it is vital that all individuals involved in the external speaker process, including the speakers themselves, understand the legal framework and context that governs this area. Examples of some of the relevant areas of law are:

- a) People are entitled to protection from harassment, defamation and unlawful breach of their human rights, as well as from unfair treatment under equality law
- b) Hate crimes, harassment, breach of the peace and terrorism all come under criminal law.
- c) Civil legislation and local Council bylaws governing public meetings, public processions/assemblies and public order may be of relevance, including legislation governing health and safety.

6.5 Conduct

6.5.1 UCQ expects external speakers to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others. UCQ reserves the right to not permit an external speaker to speak at or attend an event, to refuse to permit an event and/or to halt an event at any time if it reasonably considers there may be a breach of this policy or of any legal obligation.

6.5.2 During the course of the event at which he or she participates, no speaker shall:

- a) Act in breach of the criminal law.
- b) Incite hatred or violence or any breach of the criminal law.
- c) Encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism within the UK or abroad.
- d) Spread hatred and intolerance.
- e) Discriminate against or harass any person or group on the grounds of their sex, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, nationality or state of origin, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief (including non-belief), sexual orientation or age.
- f) Defame any person or organisation.
- g) Raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of UCQ

6.5.3 During the course of the event, all speakers shall:

- a) Comply with this External Speaker and Events Policy.
- b) Present ideas and opinions, in particular those that may be contentious or potentially offensive, in the spirit of academic debate, being open to challenge and question.
- c) Follow UCQ's policy on and instructions relating to security, health and safety.

6.6 Enforced Segregation

6.6.1 UCQ have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 as an education provider, employer and service provider and thus must not unlawfully discriminate against students, employees and other individuals to whom services are provided.

6.6.2 Enforced segregation is not permitted in any academic meetings or at events, lectures or meetings provided for students, or at events attended by members of the public or employees of UCQ. Enforced segregation is therefore not permissible for any event covered by this policy.

6.7 Arrangements for sharing information about external speakers

6.7.1 Where it deems there is a legitimate reason to do so, UCQ reserves the right to share information on the external speakers it has hosted, and/or those it deemed to be a risk, with other relevant agencies.

6.7.2 In accordance with its obligations as detailed in the Prevent Duty Guidance, UCQ will report any major incidences of concern involving external speakers on site to the Office for Students (OfS).