

POLICY FOR ORGANISING EVENTS WITH EXTERNAL SPEAKERS

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To inform staff and students of Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford upon Avon College, external/ guest speakers and Conference Centre clients of our policy on organising events involving external speakers. To provide staff with the appropriate pro-forma.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all staff organising events, external/ guest speakers and venue hire clients

RESPONSIBILITY: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

LEGAL CONTEXT: the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

POLICY FOR ORGANISING EVENTS WITH EXTERNAL SPEAKERS

1. Introduction

Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College (hereafter referred to as the College) is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising these events. This applies, therefore, to those hiring our premises as well as our own employees.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of the College whilst following the legislation that we're responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

This policy applies to all external speakers, including those events where delivery is on-line.

2. Objectives

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected whilst balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding policy and that both the College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution

3. Freedom of speech and expression

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Universities and colleges have a history of being open to debate and ideas, with students actively involved in pushing the limits of freedom of expression. 'Academic freedom' is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.

However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe, without risk to the College, and within the law.

If an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event, we are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

4. External speakers and their responsibilities

An external speaker, guest speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of the College and who has been invited

to speak to students and/or staff, or delegates attending a conference in our conference centre facility or in another College room or remotely. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use the College facilities.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on College premises or where the College is being represented by a stand on non-College or university centre premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activity being held on College premises but organised by external venue hire clients

All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy on the College website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's policies including that they:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College (available from Director of Student Services or the Vice Principal HR & Student Services).

5. Guidance for College staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client

Faculty Managers or the relevant support service manager must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes advertisement through any social media platform.

The College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

Any room booking/ event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

The individual/group organising an external speaker should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to the Director of Student Services or the Vice Principal HR & Student Services. Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following: - any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>; talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist; a speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff; a speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial; a link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature; a speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues; a speaker from a political party during an election period.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held

In making recommendations, a Faculty Manager, or support service manager may consult on a wider basis with the College's Safeguarding Panel and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to the College
3. The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff **and/or** to give rise to breach of peace

The Request for Prior Approval for an External/ Guest Speaker (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the relevant Manager no later than 14 days before the planned event. The completed form should be forwarded to PA to the Vice Principal HR & Student Services for logging on the Central Record.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

6. Additional Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event with external speakers

The Conference Centre Coordinator or the Vice Principal Finance, Facilities & IT, if hire is of rooms outside those of the Conference Centre, will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers. This information should be provided no later than 14 days before the booking goes ahead.

The College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Conference Centre Coordinator or Vice Principal Finance, Facilities & IT should refer the decision to the Director of Student Services or the Vice Principal HR & Student Services. Reasons may be as outlined in 5.4.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held

PUBLICATION:

Staff Hub/Intranet: (Y/N)
Website: (Y/N)
Student Hub: (Y/N)

Reviewed By	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date	Total Pages
Hilary Baird	01/02/2016	31/01/2017	31/01/2019	8
Adam Thomas	01/02/2016	09/2018	09/2020	8
Adam Thomas	01/02/2016	09/2020	09/2022	8

Appendix 1

REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKER

The organising tutor, coordinator, manager or client requesting participation of an external/ guest speaker must complete this form and submit it to the Assistant Principal/ Senior Manager/ Conference Coordinator at least **14 days** prior to the visit by the external speaker.

Tutor/ Manager/ Coordinator/ Client:	
Date of Request:	
Course(s)/ Event:	
Scheduled Date for Speaker:	Time(s):
Name(s) of Speaker(s):	
Organisation Represented (where applicable):	
Topic of Speaker:	
Qualification of Speaker to address this topic:	
How does this topic specifically support your curriculum/ event?	
Is there any known or likely media interest in the proposed event? YES/NO	
Have adequate checks been carried out? Yes/No. If yes, please give detail	
Prior Approval Granted	Yes/no
Prior Approval Denied	Yes/no
Assistant Principal/ Senior Manager Name	

Assistant Principal/ Senior Manager Signature	
Date	

Appendix 2

EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL/ GUEST SPEAKERS

Thank you for agreeing to be a guest speaker at Solihull College & University Centre and/or Stratford-upon-Avon College (hereafter referred to as the College), and offering to speak to our staff and/or our students. Security and safeguarding are paramount and, as a guest, we will ensure that if you are attending the College premises, and sign in at the main reception, that you are issued with a visitor's badge and a member of staff is present to meet with you and accompany you during your presentation and attendance.

In accordance with our policies and procedures, we also ask that in the event that a College student contacts you following your presentation, that you notify Adam Thomas (adam.thomas@solihull.ac.uk). Our students are aware that they are not permitted to give guest speakers their names, addresses or home numbers, and to do so would be a breach of the College's policies.

In order to comply with our policies and procedure, any materials and presentations given to our students must not seek to discriminate against any culture, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion, and must be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the student audience. In addition, external/ guest speakers:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge

If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Thomas, Director Student, who will be more than happy to answer your queries and/or any concerns that you may have.

Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford upon Avon College will not, in any circumstances, be liable to guest speakers or to any third party for any loss, damage, cost or other liability which occurs as a result of, or in connection with external/guest speakers providing external/guest speaking services to students at the College. Any liability which results from fraud or from death or personal injury caused by negligence is excluded.

Please complete the following details:

The Expectations and Guidelines for External/ Guest Speakers were presented to

_____ (External/ Guest Speaker) on _____ (Date)

by _____ **Signature** _____

I, _____ (External/ Guest Speaker), have read, understood and agree to all of the conditions above:

External/ Guest Speaker Full Name: _____

External/ Guest Speaker Signature: _____

Name of Organisation: _____

Date: _____
