



External Speaker and Events Policy

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Owner (if different from above):	Principal
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Related Policies / Procedures	Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Code of Conduct Safeguarding Policy Prevent Policy Complaints Policy Freedom of Speech Code of Practice Code of Ethics
Effective Date:	01/09/2025

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out how Results Consortium (thereafter the College) manages and approves events involving external speakers. It ensures the College meets its duties under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, balancing legal obligations with the need to protect the safety, rights and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors.

1.2 Under the Act, the College must:

- Allow access to premises regardless of the speaker's views or affiliations
- Protect academic freedom for staff and applicants
- Prohibit the use of non-disclosure agreements in cases of sexual harassment, misconduct, harassment, or bullying.

- The College supports lawful free speech but will not permit content or behaviour that breaks the law or undermines the rights of others.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy covers all events involving external speakers held on the College premises or at external venues where the College is the host or co-host. It applies to UK and international events.

2.2 It includes:

- Public lectures
- Guest speaker sessions
- Research seminars
- Academic symposia
- Student-led events
- Debates, panels and conferences
- Any co- or extra-curricular activity involving external speakers

2.3 Anyone (staff or student) organising an event that involves an external speaker or speakers to be hosted by the College (on campus or elsewhere) or to be hosted at the College's own campus or within any of its premises must ensure that the college's External Speakers and Events Policy is followed.

3. Policy Statement

The College secures freedom of speech within the law and protects academic freedom. Events will go ahead unless there are clear legal or safety risks. Speakers must not break the law, incite hatred or violence or infringe the rights of others. Where needed, the College will apply conditions or refuse permission to ensure compliance to meet its legal duties.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal	Reviews high-risk referrals, decides on approval or refusal and handles formal complaints.
Senior Leadership Team	Approve mitigation measures where required.
Safeguarding/Prevent Lead	Advises on safeguarding risks
Event Organiser	Assesses speaker risk, follows booking process, shares the policy, ensures site procedures, briefs on safety and manages speaker fees.
Line Manager	Supports organisers where speaker risk is unclear.
External Speaker	Must follow this policy when using College premises.

5. Definitions

- **External Speaker:** Anyone not employed or enrolled by the College, invited to speak at an event
- **Event:** An event includes any gathering that involves an external speaker addressing a group, including in a teaching, learning or research setting (class, conference, seminar) or in the context of extracurricular activity.
- **High-Risk Speaker:** May pose legal, safety or reputational concerns
- **Mitigation:** Measures required to reduce risk, e.g. extra security, balance of views
- **Freedom of Speech:** The legal right to express views within the law
- **Academic Freedom:** The right of staff to teach, research and speak freely without penalty

6. Procedures for organising an event

- 6.1 The person organising the event must:
- Undertake a first assessment of the proposed external speaker (as set out below) and, if there are any concerns, escalate the decision about whether to invite that speaker as set out in the booking process.
 - Ensure that all speakers are made aware of and given a copy of the policy.
- 6.2 Failure by a member of staff or student to comply with this policy will be treated very seriously and may be subject to formal action under the College's normal disciplinary processes for staff and students.
- 6.3 External Speaker Booking Process**
- 6.3.1 Anyone organising an event as described above must follow the External Speaker Booking Process.
- 6.3.2 Most external speaker requests will be straightforward and can be handled entirely at a departmental level. However, some may be complex and may require referral for further consideration. The referral process will only apply in a minority of circumstances to events or speakers deemed to be higher-risk.
- 6.3.3 Prior to the confirmation of any external speaker, the event organiser will be responsible for assessing the speaker against the following set of questions:
- **Question 1:** Has the speaker previously been prevented from speaking at Results or another HE provider, or similar establishment, or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the External Speakers and Events Policy?
 - **Question 2:** Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by speakers may be in breach of the External Speakers and Events Policy?
 - **Question 3:** Is the proposed speaker/theme likely to attract attendance from individuals/groups that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the External Speakers and Events Policy?

If the answer to all three questions is NO:

The event organiser can confirm the external speaker and 'book' them to speak at their event or activity in the normal way. (It is required that the external speaker be sent a copy of the External Speakers and Events Policy).

If the answer to any of the questions is unclear:

The event organiser must seek guidance from their line manager or the Principal whose responsibility it will be to further review the speaker(s) against the questions above.

Ultimately, if the answer to any of the questions is YES:

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to submit a referral to the Principal to make a speaker referral submission no later than five working days before the event.

- 6.3.4 In some circumstances, after full consideration of possible mitigating actions, there may be grounds for refusing a request. Grounds for refusal include, but are not limited to, situations where the external speaker may:
- incite those attending to commit a criminal act
 - lead to the unlawful expression of views
 - be in direct support of an organisation which is proscribed or whose aims and objectives are illegal
 - undermine the College's reputation or its values or compromise its ability to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations as a Higher Education provider

6.4 Managing external speakers

- 6.4.1 Any external speaker hosted by the College (on campus or elsewhere) must be aware of, and comply with, the External Speaker and Events Policy. It is the responsibility of the person who is organising the event to ensure that the speaker receives the policy and has their attention drawn to its contents.
- 6.4.2 The person organising the event must ensure that visitor signing in and identification procedures are adhered to. They should be informed of parking restrictions and other important information and protocols relevant to the site.
- 6.4.3 External speakers must be made aware of health and safety procedures and fire and emergency evacuation procedures.
- 6.4.4 If speakers charge a fee for their services, cost must be pre-approved and payment of invoice organised promptly after their visit.

6.5 Mitigation measures

- 6.5.1 Mitigation measures may be required for an event to be allowed to proceed, which could involve changes to the event structure.
- 6.5.2 Examples of mitigation measures may 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
 - making the event ticketed only with ID presented
 - opening the event to the public

- requesting an advanced copy of the guest list for review before the event takes place
- imposing other conditions on how the event is run as deemed necessary by the Senior Leadership Team and the Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead.

7 Complaints procedure

- 7.1 If 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, in writing, to the Principal.
- 7.2 A complaint may include:
- Being prevented from arranging, speaking at, or attending an event of the type envisaged by this policy.
 - Alleged infringements of freedom of speech; and
 - Allegations that an external speaker at an event of the type envisaged by this policy breached or is likely to breach the external speaker code of conduct.
- 7.3 The statutory complaints scheme to be operated by the Office for Students (OfS) While the legal framework is in place, the scheme is not yet operational. The OfS has published interim guidance confirming that, until launch, students must use the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for unresolved complaints. In addition, the OfS published Regulatory Advice 24 which is effective from 1 August 2025, strengthening statutory guidance.
- 7.4 The College adheres to guidance provided by the OfS and promotes this complaints procedure and communicated through student induction, student representative meetings, staff briefings and staff handbooks.