External Speakers’ Procedure

1. Definitions

1.1 Event – Any talk, meeting, reception, conference or exhibition conducted, hosted or sponsored by the University, including those organised by the Students’ Union either on or off-campus (including events hosted by other organisations taking place on University premises).

1.2 Event Organiser – The individual responsible for the on-campus or off-campus event being organised.

1.3 External speaker – an individual not associated with the University who has been invited to speak at an event.

1.4 University Premises – any venue or location in the UK for which the University is directly responsible.

1.5 Working day (for the purposes of this procedure) – Monday to Friday not including bank holidays.

1.6 Risk Mitigating Conditions – conditions placed on an event which must be complied with in order for the event to be able to take place.

1.7 External Speakers’ Panel (ESP) – normally drawn from the broader Leadership Team of the University, who will be familiar with both the University’s Prevent Duty and how the Freedom of Speech policy applies. Responsible for making decisions on behalf of the University where prior assessments have highlighted significant concerns/risks.

2. When to use this procedure

2.1 Whenever an external speaker is organised in relation to an event being held on the University of Sussex owned premises, or off-campus but under the University’s name.

2.2 An external speaker or venue booking should not be confirmed until a decision under this procedure has been made. It is therefore important that the process is started at the earliest opportunity.

Consideration of an Event (see also Appendix One)

3. Self-assessment (Stage 1)

3.1 Initially the Event Organiser must undertake a self-assessment to determine whether further consideration or support is required from the University.
3.2 The Event Organiser must ensure that nothing is done to advertise, publicise or promote the Event through any channel unless and until this self-assessment has been undertaken and no issues have been identified.

3.3 The self-assessment process involves answering the following questions:

a) Are there any concerns about unlawful content that might encourage terrorism or violent extremism?

For example:
- Are they likely to breach UK laws on Hate Speech?
- Are they representing an organisation proscribed by the UK Government?
- Are they likely to raise concerns under the Prevent duty guidance in terms of encouraging violent extremism or terrorism, or drawing people into terrorism?

b) Could there be a public order issue?

It is important to seek further advice if there are concerns but this does not automatically block the event taking place.

For example:
- Has the speaker been refused to speak here or at any other educational establishment before?
- Is the subject of their talk or the organisation they represent likely to mobilise significant opposition such that there might be a risk to safety of the public or members of the University community?
- Does the speaker, or the organisation they represent have a controversial profile in the media and therefore likely to attract a heightened media interest?
- Is the event likely to attract unusual interest or unusually large numbers?
If you want more guidance or advice on ensuring the safety or speakers and attendees then please contact the Security Team: 01273 678234

3.4 The Event Organiser must make themselves aware of the background and reputation of the external speaker in order to be able to clearly consider the above two self-assessment questions. The first consideration should always be whether
the event can be managed safely and whether any measures should be put in place to mitigate any identified risks, in order that the event can take place.

3.5 If the Event Organiser reasonably decides that there are no issues the event can go ahead. **It is anticipated that the vast majority of events organised will fall into this category.**

3.6 The University looks to empower its staff, delegating decision-making to the most appropriate level within the institution. It is recognised within these procedures that significant responsibility is placed in the Event Organiser in assessing all potential risks associated with specific events and/or speakers. With that responsibility comes accountability. Should an Event Organiser have any queries in completing their initial assessment of an event then they should seek advice from their Head of School/Division or relevant USSU Officer who may choose to escalate the request to the Local and/or University-level process if considered necessary.

3.7 Where individual students and/or student groups are looking to arrange specific events then they should also refer to the USSU’s “Guidance on external speakers and freedom of speech on campus”. This guidance specifically requires an “External Speaker Registration Form” to be submitted to the Union for every event held involving an external speaker (or multiple forms where multiple speakers are being invited). This submission will form the basis of a further risk assessment for the specific request being undertaken by Union officers prior to an event being approved.

4. **Local Assessment (Stage 2)**

4.1 If the Event Organiser identifies concerns in relation to the self-assessment questions then they should raise these issues with their:
   - Head of School
   - Head of Division
   - appropriate named officer within the University of Sussex Student Union (USSU) (USSU organised events only)

4.2 The relevant person will consider the self-assessment and the issues identified by the Event Organiser. They may approve the event if the case is straightforward and they assess the risks to be low.

4.3 The Event Organiser should not advertise or promote the event until the local assessment has been undertaken and the external speaker approved.

5. **University Assessment (Stage 3)**
5.1 If the self and/or local assessment identifies significant concerns which are unable to be easily mitigated, then the decision in relation to the engagement of the external speaker will be referred to an External Speakers' Panel (ESP).

5.2 All the relevant information in relation to the event and the external speaker must be forwarded to the Planning, Governance & Compliance Team (who will administer the process), no later than **10 working days** prior to when the event is due to take place.

5.3 The Panel will consider the event and/or proposed external speaker. The Panel may take into account information from (but not limited to):

- Google search
- Previous booking rejected by UoS
- Previous security or media issues
- Liaison with Head of Security and Police/Community Safety
- Home Office list of proscribed groups
- HM Treasury list of designated persons and entities
- Concerned groups
- Student groups
- Chaplaincy
- External bodies e.g. NUS
- AUSCO colleagues
- Other events already scheduled for same time on campus

5.4 Where the ESP grants permission for an Event, that permission may be subject to certain risk mitigating conditions which the Event Organiser must ensure are complied with. These conditions may include (without limitation) instructions on the location, format and scheduling of the Event, for example ensuring the counter argument is represented, prior approval of, and/or limitations on, any publicity material, or requirements for the security measures to be taken at the Event.

5.5 The ESP will aim to make their decision in relation to the event within five working days of receipt of all the relevant information.

5.6 The Event Organiser should not advertise or promote the event until the university assessment has been undertaken and the external speaker approved.

6. **Right to Appeal**

6.1 Where permission is declined, the University shall provide reasons to the Event Organiser. The Event Organiser has the right to appeal the decision within **five**
working days by making representations in writing to the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equality & Diversity)\(^1\). If there is insufficient time to hear 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 five working days of receipt of the appeal, the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equality and Diversity) shall review the original decision and will notify the Event Organiser of the outcome of their appeal.

7. Use of University branding at events outside campus

7.1 Authorisation must be obtained from Director of Communications before the University’s name is in any way used in connection with an event or activity being planned off campus.

7.2 Any use of the University’s name or logo without permission may be subject to legal action in the event of a breach of the University’s Copyright.

\(^1\) Where absolutely necessary the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equality & Diversity) may delegate this decision upwards to a Pro-Vice Chancellor or in exceptional circumstances the Vice Chancellor