

POLICY FOR ORGANISING EVENTS WITH EXTERNAL SPEAKERS

1. Introduction

Queen Mary's College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where equalities, diversity and inclusion are valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers. It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of Queen Mary's College whilst following the legislation that we are 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. Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for providing 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.

2. Objectives

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected and balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never encouraged or accepted.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students and staff.
- 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 and that both Queen Mary's College as well as the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution e.g. speaker, representatives, film and guidance for researching an external speaker.

3. External speakers and their responsibilities

The term external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of Queen Mary's College, who has been invited to speak to, present or perform to students and/or staff. 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 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 the Queen Mary's College premises or where Queen Mary's College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activities being held on Queen Mary's College premises but organized 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 actions that are unlawful
- 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. (The Principal or a delegated alternate).

4. Guidance for Queen Mary's College staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client

- 4.1. All Heads of Department and Support Staff Team Leaders must be informed of any events that involve external speakers. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This also includes advertisement through any social media platform.
- 4.2. Queen Mary's College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker or performer if the policy is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.
- 4.3. Any room booking/event organisation with an external speaker or performer involved should ideally 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.

- 4.4. 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 Principal or a delegated alternate.
- 4.5. There should always be a member of staff present at events when speakers are invited in.
- 4.6. Automatic exclusion would apply to (but is 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 media 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 single political party only during an election purdah (ie, without an alternative view being represented also.)
- 4.7. In making recommendations, Heads of Department and Support Staff Team Leaders may consult more widely on and the 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 reputational 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.
- 4.8. Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

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

- 5.1. The Community and Events Co-ordinator will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations etc that they are bringing in. This information should ideally be provided no later than 14 days before the booking goes ahead.
- 5.2. Queen Mary's 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.
- 5.3. If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, The Community and Events Co-ordinator should refer the decision to the Principal or a delegated alternate. Reasons may be as outlined above.
- 5.4. Consultation with the local Police force may be necessary if there is a risk of harm to staff or students as a result of this aforementioned process.