

## **Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech**

### ***Principles***

1. Lawful freedom of speech is essential to the life of a University, but can only be attained if all those involved not only exhibit a degree of tolerance and forbearance towards views in opposition to their own but also support the concept of rational debate. The University wishes to ensure that the use of its premises is not denied to any individual or body on any grounds connected with their lawful beliefs or views or their policies or objectives, and that staff and students of the University may go about their proper business without fear of intimidation.
2. While the University is required under Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 to protect and promote lawful freedom of speech and assembly, permission to use University premises for a meeting will only be granted to those who undertake to comply with instructions issued by the University in relation to the location, arrangements for and conduct of such meetings, including adequate stewarding and control of entry. The details of such arrangements must be agreed in each individual case. The University reserves the right to withhold permission to use its premises if it has reason to believe that the meeting or the events leading up to it may be in breach of the law. It should be noted that a speaker who, for example, incites an audience to violence or to breach of the peace, or to racial hatred, transgresses the bounds of lawful speech.
3. All of the procedures noted below are subject to the normal legal and safety requirements relating to use of University premises.

### ***Procedures***

4. These procedures relate to meetings and other activities on University premises which might be deemed controversial by the nature of the speakers present or by the views which might be expected to be expressed.
  5. Controversial is taken to mean a meeting or other activity where there is a real possibility that the speaker may not be able to enter or leave the building safely and/or deliver a speech properly unless special arrangements are made. If there exists any doubt about whether these procedures apply to meetings or other activities, organisers should consult the Secretary and Registrar in good time. The final judgement of those matters is vested in the Secretary and Registrar. Appeals against the ruling of the Secretary and Registrar may be made to a special committee comprising at least three members of Council.
  6. Bookings for meetings will only be accepted from members of staff and registered students of the University, and should be made with the Secretary and Registrar or her nominee.
  7. Bookings involving speakers from outside the University must be made no more than three months and no less than ten working days in advance of the meeting.
  8. Organisers of meetings and other activities covered by these guidelines will be required at the time of booking:
    - i) to notify the University of the names of all speakers
    - ii) to notify the University of the purpose of the meeting or activity and the title of any lecture/talk
    - iii) to specify whether the meeting or activity will be
      - a) restricted to members of the club, society or other identifiable group, or
      - b) open to all members of the University only or
      - c) open meeting
- Details of how entry will be controlled must be given and must be

- acceptable to the University.
- iv) to indicate the intended starting and finishing times of the meeting or activity.
  - v) to indicate to the best of their knowledge the likely numbers who will attend the meeting or activity.
  - vi) to provide an outline of the activities to take place during the meeting.
  - vii) to designate a named person who should be a member of staff or student of the University who will liaise with the University authorities and be responsible for ensuring compliance with this Code, and any other regulations of the University, any instruments of government and with the law of the land.
9. Organisers will be required to appoint sufficient stewards to a number approved by the University to assist them to conduct an orderly meeting. Names and contact addresses of the stewards must be notified to the Secretary and Registrar at least one week before the meeting.
  10. Organisers must ensure that nothing in the preparations for or conduct of a meeting or activity infringes the law.
  11. Organisers will be required during the meeting:
    - i) to maintain order
    - ii) to take steps to avoid disorderly conduct
    - iii) to allow reasonable heckling, but to require any person or persons heckling at a meeting in such a manner as to prevent the conduct of business to desist from doing so, and if necessary to call the University's agents to remove such person or persons from the meeting.
    - iv) to ensure that the conduct of any person attending or addressing the meeting does not infringe the law and if necessary to call the University's agents to remove such person or persons from the meeting.
  12. Any variation in the arrangements for the meeting or activity should be notified to the University in advance of the meeting in sufficient time to enable the University to satisfy itself that the revised arrangements are satisfactory. Any changes in the arrangements for the meeting which have not been notified to the University may be deemed to be a reason for cancellation by the University.
  13. The Secretary and Registrar will endeavour to ensure that organisers receive reasonable notice of a decision to cancel a meeting or activity. It is the responsibility of the organiser of the meeting or activity to ensure that those who may have been expected to attend are notified of its cancellation.
  14. No food or drink, alcoholic or otherwise, or any receptacle, containers or other implements which could be used as missiles may be taken into a meeting. Coats, bags, etc, must be deposited in the room provided for this purpose which will be under the control of a steward. Banners and flags on poles may not be taken into a building where a meeting or activity is taking place and must not be used elsewhere on University premises in a manner likely to cause injury or damage, or to incite actions leading to injury or damage.
  15. No member of the press, radio or television shall be admitted to any meeting or activity without the prior approval of the Secretary and Registrar.
  16. The University reserves the right to decide which room shall be used for a particular meeting and to make any arrangements which appear necessary for the safety of people, property or premises. The cost of any arrangements made by the University may be charged to the organisers.
  17. The Secretary and Registrar is empowered to cancel a meeting or activity if she is not satisfied that the organisers of the meeting are willing or able to comply with the conditions specified for that meeting or activity.
  18. The Secretary and Registrar and/or her nominee may be present at, and is empowered to bring to an end, any meeting or activity if there is felt to be a risk to the safety of the

- speaker or any other person, or that the law has been or may be about to be breached.
19. The Secretary and Registrar or her nominee may summon assistance from other members of the University or from the police if this appears necessary to secure the orderly conduct of the meeting or activity or access to or from the meeting room. The cost of such assistance may be charged to the organisers.
  20. In the event of any damage to University property arising out of the meeting or events connected with it, the cost of such damage may be charged to the organisers.
  21. In addition to organisers of meetings or activities specified above, this Code covers the conduct of all persons connected with the meeting or activity. Infringements of or departures from these procedures will render those responsible subject to University disciplinary procedures. If any such action involves infringements of the criminal law which are being pursued by the police or other civil authorities, University disciplinary proceedings will normally be suspended pending the outcome of such proceedings.
  22. The University reserves the right to limit the number of bookings accepted in any session for meetings or activities deemed controversial.