



Version Control Statement

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External Speaker & Events Code of Practice

Providing an environment in which intellectual and scholarly freedom can thrive is essential to the teaching and experience offered to students at Futureworks. As such, it is important that Futureworks ensures the foundations of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, enabling new ideas to be advanced and encouraging open and free debate. The *Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy* ensures that the tenets of academic freedom and freedom of speech are upheld, within the law, for members of the institution and for external speakers invited to make use of Futureworks' facilities.

Whilst the law promotes and protects freedoms of speech and debate, the law also places limits on those freedoms. Crucially, the protection of freedom of speech does not extend to allow a speaker to break the law or breach the lawful rights of others - e.g. using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, particularly with a view to inciting hatred or drawing others into terrorism.

High Risk Events that require approval from the Safeguarding Panel

A *High Risk Event* is any activity involving visitors or guests in which one of the following is likely to be the case without additional controls in place:

1. the expression of views which may be contrary to the law
2. the commission of, or incitement of persons to commit, an unlawful act
3. organisation of an event by, or on behalf of, any organisation or group which is outlawed under UK law.

The safeguarding panel also reserves the right to review any event and request that the organiser follow the *High Risk Event* procedures.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of events or guests would not fall into any of these 3 categories. Where this is the case, the approval of the safeguarding panel would **not** be required before the event can go ahead. The name of the all guest speakers and the title of each event or talk should still be recorded by the Prevent Lead and made available to the Safeguarding Panel when reviewing risk levels.

Approval by the appropriate line manager or budget holder may still be required as part of normal operational practice which is outside the scope of this policy.

It is also envisaged that the majority of talks, workshops and masterclasses will be facilitated by staff who have completed Prevent duty awareness training.



Organising a High Risk Event

Anyone (staff or student) organising a *High Risk Event* that involves an external speaker or activity to be hosted by or at Futureworks, must ensure that this Policy and the *External Speaker Code of Conduct* are followed.

Prior to organising a *High Risk Event*, staff must:

- Read and comply with the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.
- Submit a written proposal for the event.
- Complete the High Risk External Speaker Booking Form as appended here and submit this to the institutional Prevent Lead.

There are three stages to the process:

- Submission of an Event Proposal.
- Review of an external speaker request.
- Communication of a decision about an external speaker.

Stage 1: Submission of a High Risk Event Proposal

1. The person organising the *High Risk Event* is required to undertake an initial consideration and assessment of the proposed Event. The proposal should cover:
 - The rationale for holding the event.
 - Risks of racialisation without further control measures.
 - Control measure that could be considered.
 - Other Health and Safety Risks such as controlling access to the building.
 - The *External Speaker Code of Conduct* should guide the aspects to be considered.
2. The organiser should **not** extend a firm invitation or advertise the *High Risk Event* until they have received written approval of the request.
3. All *High Risk* external speaker requests must be received **at least four weeks prior** to the event. Requests submitted later than this will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the Vice-Principal.
4. The Prevent Lead will inform the organiser whether or not the request has been approved.
5. If the nature of the *High Risk Event* changes after approval, the Prevent Lead must be notified immediately of the changes. Futureworks reserves the right to cancel an event if further information emerges about the proposed event, which may be in breach of the *Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy*.

Stage 2: Review of an external speaker request.

1. External speaker requests will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Panel, which will involve consideration of the full legal context as outlined in part 1 of the [Universities UK \(UUK\) guidance on External Speakers in Higher Education Institutions](#) and the Government's List of [proscribed terrorist groups or organisations](#) banned under UK law.
2. The three decisions that can be reached in reviewing the external speaker request are:
 - a. Request approved.
 - b. Request approved with conditions (e.g. how the event is run, who will chair the meeting, maximum numbers at the event, etc.).
 - c. Request rejected.
3. *High Risk Events* involving external speaker(s), where risks have been identified, may still be allowed to proceed as long as mitigating factors have been identified and addressed. A list of possible mitigating actions is outlined in Appendix 3 (below).



Stage 3: Communication of Decision

1. Decisions on *High Risk* external speaker requests will be communicated to the principal organiser as listed on the request form in Appendix 1 (below). If the request has been declined, the reason(s) for this will be provided to the principal organiser.
2. The decision will be communicated within five business days of the request being received.
3. The decision will include any conditions that apply to the event.
4. The Prevent Lead will send an electronic copy of the *Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy* and the *External Speaker Code of Conduct*, who should pass them on to the approved external speaker. The approved external speaker will be required to confirm in writing that they understand and will abide by the Code of Conduct.
5. The Principal Organiser and the approved external speaker retain the right to amend their request in light of new information or material changes to the planned event.

Information Sharing

1. Where it is deemed necessary to share information about High Risk external speakers with other institutions or with the police, this will only be permissible in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
2. Futureworks may share information about High Risk speakers and events with other providers (including other authorities and the police) where this is absolutely necessary and there are very good grounds for believing that a breach of the law may have taken/will take place.
3. A record of refused/conditioned speakers will be conveyed to the Office for Students Regional Prevent Co-ordinator in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation .
4. A record of requests, refusals, conditions and appeals will be conveyed to the Board of Directors in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Appeals Procedure

1. The principal organiser and the external speaker have the right to appeal the decision made regarding an external speaker request to the Chair of the Futureworks Safeguarding Panel in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal.
2. The appeal must be submitted within seven business days of receiving official notice that the external speaker cannot attend the event.
3. The appeal can be made on one of the following grounds only:
 - a. Futureworks has not followed its procedure.
 - b. Further information has subsequently been made available, which could alter the decision taken.
4. Staff and visiting speakers may raise concerns through the OfS Free Speech Complaints Scheme.
5. Students may submit complaints through the institution's complaints procedure or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).