

External Speaker and Event Procedures

1. Procedures

These procedures enable the University to assess the potential risks of an event involving an external speaker in compliance with the Statutory Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism Act 2015. A prevent-related risk may arise from the speaker, the organisation they represent, the topic of the event, or the audience, or any combination of these.

Faculties and professional Services are responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed when making arrangements for an event, to allow the University to assess the potential risk in line with the Prevent Duty.

Executive Deans and Heads of Professional Services are responsible for determining where responsibility for co-ordinating arrangements for an event sits within their areas.

Where the person responsible for an event, 'The Organiser', considers that there may be a potential risk under the Prevent Duty, they are required to complete the External Speaker and Event Form this includes on campus events as well as those delivered via online communication technology, for the latter, the organiser will need to have access to the online event normally this would be a calendar invite or log in details. Please note that audio and/or visual content that is to be presented to an audience may also require the completion of an External Speaker and Event form. The organiser or the organiser's line manager, will be required to have reviewed the audio and/or visual material to assess its suitability for presentation to the events audience. If the Organiser considers that there is no risk of an event in relation to the topic, audience or speaker, then refer to section 2 of these procedures.

The **External Speaker and Event Form** must be:

- Completed to allow Security Services to make an assessment with regards to the safeguarding and wellbeing of students and staff; and to any risk of publicity, positive or negative, for the University;
- Where a risk assessment of a proposed event needs to be made, the form needs to be completed by the Organiser and sent to; security.services@bcu.ac.uk;
- Completed forms should be sent at least two weeks ahead of the planned date of the event and with the support of a University Line manager, Head of Department, Director of service or nominee, or BCUSU <https://www.bcsu.com/get-involved/committee-hub/external-speaker/>;
- The Assistant Director of Security Services or nominee will aim to respond within one week of receipt of the completed form. If required the Assistant Director of Security Services or nomine will seek advice from the Prevent Champion or other member of the Vice Chancellor's Office; or from external contacts.

Where an event has been approved to proceed the Organiser will be required to appoint sufficient stewards to a number approved by the University Security Services to assist them to conduct an orderly external speaker event.

Any variation to the arrangements for external speakers or event should be notified in sufficient time to enable the University to assure itself that the revised arrangements are satisfactory.

The University reserves the right to cancel the booking if any changes to arrangements for the event are not notified to the University in sufficient time, this would also apply to events held via online communication technology.

Where the decision is taken to cancel external speakers or an event, the University will endeavour to ensure that the Organiser receive reasonable notice. It is the responsibility of the Organiser of the meeting or event to ensure that those who may have been expected to attend are notified of its cancellation.

Dealing with potentially controversial events

The University's *Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and External Speaker and Event Policy* makes clear our commitment to open, tolerant debate. While debate about controversial subjects is a legitimate activity within the University, particular care needs to be taken to ensure that balance is observed, and that no platform is given to speakers who promote, condone or encourage others towards violent or non-violent extremism.

The Organiser can mitigate the risk of a potentially controversial event by:

- Reading the *Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and the External Speaker and Event Policy*; and ensuring that they comply
- Ensuring that the event is chaired or facilitated by an experienced individual who will allow for a fair, open and balanced debate/event
- Ensure that the numbers of stewards and security staff are proportionate to the expected size of audience;
- Ensuring that the necessary background checks and due diligence have been conducted and advice sought concerning a potentially controversial topic, audience or external speaker or (associated) organisation; and
- Communicating the ground rules and expectations of the event in terms of freedom of speech, fairness, respect and balance, in advance of and/or before the event.

If in doubt, the Organiser is encouraged to contact the University Secretary for advice.

The University reserves the right to refuse permission to hold events on its premises which might be deemed inappropriate, by the nature of the external speakers present, by the topics discussed or the views likely to be expressed.

The University, through the University Secretary or nominee, also reserves the right to cancel or refuse permission for a controversial event if there are reasonable grounds to expect that the health and safety of the attendees may be at risk or that the law of the land may be breached.

2. Booking rooms for external speaker events

The majority of University space is managed through the timetabling system, which is the responsibility of the Head of Timetabling within Academic Registry. Consequently, usage of rooms to hold events on University premises that are additional to the core teaching timetable, whether involving external speakers or not, must be booked through the Timetabling team's Room Booking Service.

Where events are arranged through the University Events team, rooms will be booked on behalf of the organiser(s) through liaison between the University Events team and the Timetabling team.

Exceptionally, usage of some rooms is managed locally by Faculties. In all instances, however, requests to make use of these rooms should initially be made to the Timetabling team for oversight of room requests, and who will advise on the relevant booking process. This excludes social spaces, such as those looked after by the Library, and which are assumed to be out of scope for the purposes of external speaker events.

3. Review

The *External Speaker and Event Procedures* will be reviewed by the University Executive Group every three years or sooner where new developments in relevant legislation or operational practices require.

Last reviewed: July 2020

Procedures owner: University Secretary

Approved by UEG: October 2020