

Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

1. This Code of Practice sets out our institutional commitment to freedom of speech. It applies both on campus, and to any event or activity conducted in the University's name off campus.
2. As an academic community the University is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. Core to that concept is the ability to share views and perspectives, to challenge received wisdom, to question and debate, and to put forward ideas that may be unorthodox. We encourage staff and students to share ideas and perspectives and to be tolerant and respectful of those with views different from their own. No individual or group should be harassed or bullied because of their views, and we do not allow discrimination in any form on grounds of religion, ethnicity, gender, or disability.
3. Under the Education (No 2) Act 1986 all higher education institutions are required to have particular regard to ensuring freedom of speech and assembly. This applies to staff, students, and visitors to the University.
4. The University also has a moral obligation to encourage dialogue and tolerance and to minimise the scope for extremism on campus.
5. In particular, the Prevent Duty 2015 requires the University to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". In that context the University has a particular duty to ensure that all events involving external speakers are adequately managed, to ensure that the principles of freedom of speech and anti-extremism are observed.
6. As an academic institution firmly rooted in the City of Birmingham, we do not shy away from controversy or the discussion of controversial subjects. However in keeping with this code, such discussion should always be conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for the views and beliefs of others. Wherever possible opportunities should be provided for views from both sides of any intellectual argument to be heard and discussed.

7. This code of practice applies to:

- All student and staff exchanges and communication whether face to face, in writing, via traditional or social media;
- The organisation of meetings, conferences, assemblies, or similar events that take place on any University campus; as well as those that are organised and sponsored / approved by the University but held on other premises, whether for University staff or students; the public, or a discrete group or association; and
- Any event that involves outside speakers i.e. not staff or students of the University.

For details of arrangements for events see: The *External Speaker and Event Policy*; and *External Speaker and Event Procedures*

6. Review

The University Secretary or designated nominee will review this Code of Practice every three years or sooner where new developments in relevant legislation, or changes to operational practices make such a review necessary. We will carry out reviews in consultation with all relevant internal stakeholders.

Last reviewed: March 2016

Code of Practice owner: University Secretary