

External Speaker and Events Policy

1. Policy Statements

- 1.1. The University of Northampton is committed to protecting freedom of speech and wider academic freedom and this policy seeks to maintain this approach within the new regulatory framework created by the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- 1.2. Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights to be protected and are protected by law.
- 1.3. The University of Northampton strongly supports the view that external speakers can bring additional viewpoints and knowledge and such insights can enrich the staff and student experience. The University is happy for external speakers to generate discussion and debate as long as such speeches do not run contrary to existing laws or impinge on the rights and safety of members of the wider University community.
- 1.4. External speakers allow members of the University to experience and challenge different ideas, beliefs and opinions and this is highly valued by the University.
- 1.5. Section 43 of The Education Act (No 2) 1986 requires the university to take reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is protected for members of the University and their visiting guest speakers. As such the University expects all members of the University to protect expression of opinions within the law. In line with expectations reinforced in Section 32(2) of the Higher Education Act 2004 and Section 202(2)(a) of the Education Reform Act 1988 the University will give adequate opportunities to counter such views in a reasoned manner for members of the University who find speakers views repugnant or distasteful.
- 1.6. However, whilst the law provides protection for freedom of speech, this does not enable or entitle speakers to break existing legislation or provide a risk or challenge to public safety.

- 1.7 Safety and welfare is fundamental to the University's policy and practices and freedom to express view may be tempered by the need to secure freedom from harm for staff, students and visitors.
- 1.8 The University of Northampton acknowledges that in regard to external speakers there is a conflict between the laws regarding freedom of speech and those which restrict it. The responsibility rests with the University for creating the balance between ensuring freedom of speech and academic freedoms are protected against the need to minimise the possibility of extremism or unlawful conduct happening on Campus.
- 1.9 This Code is binding on all members of the Board and on employees and students of the University.

2. Legal Considerations

- 2.1. The University has wide ranging and varied obligations under the law and all external speakers should be made aware of the following:
- The University will not tolerate breaches of Criminal Law including, but not restricted to, incitement to terrorist activity, hate crimes, harassment, and breaches of the peace. Organisers should also make sure that any event does not breach legislation concerning assemblies, marches and public meetings.
 - The University will protect rights guaranteed by law concerning individual rights to Freedom of Speech and Equality but will not allow freedom of speech to be used to individual private rights.
 - Private Rights – People have private rights which entitle them to protection from harassment, bullying, threats, defamation and other breaches of their human rights.
 - Attendees are covered by the requirements of the Data Protection legislation and their privacy rights will be protected by the University.
 - The University is covered by the terms of the Equality Act 2010 in our role as education providers and employers and as such we will prevent the unlawful discrimination against students, employees and other individuals attending any event. Therefore, segregation of attendees by gender or other personal characteristic is forbidden at all events held within the University's estate or supported as a University event.
 - The only possible exception to the rule on segregation is events that are for the purpose of collective religious worship and these will need to be agreed in advance via the referral process.
- 2.2 The above is not an exclusive list and other rights and legislation may apply.

- 2.3 Ideas and opinions presented by the External speakers should be open to academic debate and attendees should have opportunities for any counter views to be expressed, and for the speaker to be challenged in an open and restrained manner
- 2.4 Any event should follow the University's policies and guidance relating to Health and Safety.

3 Booking external speaker Procedures

3.1 Anyone organising an event that will include an external speaker or focus on external contributors must follow the Process detailed below with the exception of speakers who are invited to give lectures which form part of validated curriculum. Staff who are intending to invited speakers from professional bodies or industry may seek guidance from the Academic Registrar. Any member of staff inviting an external contributor is responsible for this decision and should be mindful of the prevent guidance.

3.1.1 All speakers taking part in a University of Northampton hosted or run event or activity, on campus or elsewhere, must act in accordance with this Policy and it is the responsibility of the Event Organiser to ensure that Speakers are informed of their responsibilities.

3.2 Local Processing of Requests and Assessment of Speakers

3.2.1 Most external speaker requests will be unproblematic and will be able to be dealt with at a professional services or academic unit level. In these instances please follow the steps outlined below in steps 3.3.

3.2.2 Prior to confirmation of any external speaker, the event organiser will be responsible for assessing the speaker against the following criteria:

- Has the speaker previously been prevented from speaking at Northampton or other institution because of their views or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of existing legislation or University policies?
- Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by speakers may be in breach of existing legislation or University policies?
- Is the proposed speaker/theme likely to attract attendance from individuals/groups that have previously been known to express views may be in breach of existing legislation or University policies?

3.2.3 If the answers to all the above criteria are NO:

3.2.3.1 The event organiser can confirm the external speaker and arrange with them to speak at their event or activity. The Organiser must ensure that the

speaker(s) have been given a copy of the Policy and should be told of their obligations to abide by the law and internal policy frameworks:

- 3.2.3.2 They must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
- 3.2.3.3 They are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.
- 3.2.3.4 They must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- 3.2.3.5 Within a framework of positive debate and challenge seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups
- 3.2.3.6 They are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without the express permission of the Academic Registrar.
- 3.2.4 If the answers to any of the above criteria are unclear:
 - 3.2.4.1 The event organiser must seek guidance from the Academic Registrar or in her absence the Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations whose will have responsibility to further review the speaker(s) against the questions above.
- 3.2.5 Ultimately, if the answer to any of the questions is YES:
 - 3.2.5.1 The event organiser must submit a referral form to the Academic Registrar.
 - 3.2.5.2 Such a referral will need to follow the Referral Process detailed below

3.3 The referral process

- 3.3.1 Download the External Speaker Policy Referral Form.
- 3.3.2 Complete all sections of the form with as much detail as possible.
- 3.3.3 Send the form as an attachment to the Academic Registrar.
- 3.3.4 The University reserves the right to prevent an external speaker from speaking at or attending an event, to refuse to permit an event and/or to halt an event at any time if it reasonably considers there may be a breach of this Policy or of any legal obligation.

4 Complaints procedure

- 4.1 In the event that an individual makes an allegation of a breach of this Policy, they have the right to make a formal complaint, in writing, to the Chief Operating Officer.
- 4.1.1 Possible complaints requiring investigation will include (but are not restricted to):
- 4.1.2 Being prevented from arranging, speaking at or attending an event involving an external speaker/guest;
- 4.1.3 Infringements of freedom of speech, see Freedom of Speech policy and
- 4.1.4 Allegations that an external speaker has breached the terms of the Policy or has otherwise acted in a manner contrary to the legislative or University framework

Please note:

- The Students' Union will be responsible for enacting their own external speaker booking process and policy but the University of Northampton expects that they will ensure compliance with this University External Speaker Policy for all events managed by them on site.
- In the case of Students' Union supported events, the SU will support the student event organisers and will carry out the will undertake the local assessment process with/on behalf of individual students, clubs or societies. In the event that a referral is required, Students' Union will be responsible for making the submission with/on behalf of the student co-ordinator.
- The External Speaker Policy and referral process will be regularly reviewed and updated. It is the responsibility of organisers to ensure that they are following the most recent version of the Policy available within TUNDRA and made available on the University website.

Part 1: Event Organiser details:

Name:

Faculty/Department:

Contact details (tel no. and email)

Part 2: Proposed event details:

Proposed event title:

Proposed event date :

Proposed/preferred venue:

Description (including event format) (max 50 words):

Target audience (profile and size). *Please indicate and give details if you believe the event will attract any groups or individuals that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of The External Speaker Policy?*

Proposed External Speaker(s): *Please inc. links to biographical information and indicate and give details if you believe that any of your proposed speakers have previously been prevented from taking part in an event at the University or an event/activity at another University or similar establishment or have a track record of inappropriate or illegal activity.*

- When complete, please save and submit to the Academic Registrar (via academic.registrar@northampton.ac.uk) as an email attachment.