

Regent College London

External Speakers Policy

Purpose

1. This policy governs how the College will consider requests from students and staff to have external or visiting speakers talk to students and/or staff. It applies to staff, students and external visitors.

Context

2. External speakers play an important role at the College, allowing students and staff to be exposed to a range of information, ideas and opinions.

3. Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Higher education providers have a history of being open to debate and ideas with students at the forefront of pushing the limits of freedom of expression. 'Academic freedom' is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.

4. At the same time, the College has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm. We want all our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the College; and within the law.

External speakers and their responsibilities

5. For the purposes of this policy, an 'external speaker' is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of Regent College London, or one of its contracted partners, and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use College facilities.

6. An 'event' is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group, individual or staff member that is being held on the College premises or where the College is being represented at another premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair and online. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown, as well as activities being held on College premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

7. All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's policies including that they:

- must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law

- are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to, or seek to avoid insulting, other belief systems, or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge
- are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College.

Procedure for organising an event involving an External Speaker

8. The organiser of an event involving an external speaker must complete an External Speaker Request Form. The completed request form should be submitted 10 working days before the booking. Late submission of the External Speaker Request Form may mean that the event cannot go ahead unless the Prevent Lead (or their nominee) agrees to deal with the request in a shorter time.

9. The organiser may not advertise or promote the event until approval to proceed has been given.

10. The completed form will automatically be sent to the relevant people, who are:

- the College's Prevent Lead (or their nominee)
- the Academic Dean and Head of School (of the relevant school) for lectures or teaching-related activity and school events (i.e. any event that is being organised by a staff member affiliated with a school);
- the Director of Students.

11. The Prevent Lead (or their nominee) will consider the request and to make an initial assessment of the risk applicable to the proposed event. The Prevent Lead (or their nominee) will determine whether the level of risk associated with the proposed Event is low, medium or high by reference to the matrix at the end of this document, and thus the level of checks that need to be carried out.

12. After completing the above checks, and consideration of the risks set out in the matrix, the Prevent Lead (or their nominee) may, at his or her discretion:

- give approval for the event to go ahead as planned;
- give approval for the Event to go ahead subject to specified mitigation measures being put in place;
- refuse to allow the Event to go ahead.

13. Examples of mitigation measures which the Prevent Lead (or their nominee) may require (without limitation) include:

- varying the time and/or location of the event;
- imposing requirements about how the event is chaired;

- requiring there to be additional speakers to provide an opposing view i.e. a debate rather than a talk by one party
- making the event ticketed only or specifying that attendees must show valid ID;
- opening the event up to the general public;
- requesting an advance copy of the guest list for review before the event takes place;
- placing restrictions on the numbers able to attend or restricting the event to College staff and students only;
- imposing conditions on how the event is advertised;
- refusing admission to media representatives;
- requesting a script/outline from the speaker in advance;
- imposing other conditions about how the Event is run.

14. The Prevent Lead (or their nominee) will notify the Organiser of the proposed Event of his/her decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days of receipt of the External Speaker Request Form.

15. If, after approval has been given, there is any material change proposed to an event (including changes to the venue, speakers or format), the organiser must notify the Prevent Lead (or their nominee) as soon as practicable. The Prevent Lead (or their nominee) will review the request in light of the new information provided and may impose further mitigation measures or withdraw permission for the event to proceed.

Records

16. An audit trail of actions taken must be maintained in all cases. All forms and records are kept centrally and are subject to audit, discussion and sharing of good practice.

17. Regular reports on the operation of this policy will be made to the Board of Directors.

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<i>Policy owner</i>	<i>Quality Manager</i>

Annex A

External speaker risk management matrix

Risk Rating	Rating Description (Examples)
<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The speaker or guest is a known expert in their field and is not known to be controversial, or to hold controversial views. ii. The speaker or guest's presence on the College premises is not likely to be regarded as provocative in any way. iii. The topic is not controversial nor is it likely to be regarded as offensive by anyone but the speaker may hold a strong position on their topic. iv. Access to the event is limited to the Regent College students and staff only but attendance may be high. v. It is very unlikely to attract adverse media attention or require staff or security presence.
<p style="text-align: center;">Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The topic may be regarded by some as controversial and this could be a cause for concern even if attendance is likely to be low. ii. Or the speaker/guest and /or topic are controversial. iii. There may be adverse media attention and a member of RCL staff or security should attend. iv. The speaker has been refused permission to speak at another institution before. v. Attendance at the event is high and is open to externals; vi. The event is being held at an external venue.
<p style="text-align: center;">High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The speaker/guest and or topic are extremely controversial and will definitely attract adverse media attention. ii. The speaker/guest has been refused permission to attend an event at Regent College London and other institutions before. iii. High attendance is expected at the event. iv. The speaker/guest and/or topic may attract protest from other students or outside organisations. v. Security presence would be essential.