

Introduction

Royal Holloway, University of London is committed to the principles of academic freedom and of free speech within the law. Opportunities to engage with a wide range of thought-provoking opinions and perspectives are encouraged and welcomed. We regularly invite a wide range of speakers to events both on and off campus and each year both the College and the Students' Union run a successful programme of events.

The following procedures have been written to assist all organisers of events which fall under the Scope of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice. This includes:

- third parties who are external to the College;
- staff who are organising talks, seminars and lectures outside of their normal College employment responsibilities;
- staff who are organising the attendance of a visiting lecturer delivering material as part of a taught course and;
- students.

They include important information to ensure events comply with the College Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech and the College Prevent obligations.

Staff and students across the College will sometimes be responsible for organising events involving external speakers. These procedures apply to any such event

1. to be held on College premises;
2. held away from the College campus or premises which is College organised, funded or branded, including events organised by individuals, groups or societies using the College or SURHUL name or resources;

Relationship to the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice

Anybody organising an event where there is demonstrated potential difficulty for a speaker to enter or leave College premises safely and/or to deliver their speech must refer to the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

When booking speakers, staff and students are required to assess whether their event might require consideration under the College's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice. Failure to abide by the provisions of this code may result in disciplinary action.

Key questions to consider when considering whether an event will invoke the Freedom of Speech Code:

- Is there any possibility of a situation arising in which people might experience harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse or violence?
- Is the speaker likely to express controversial views that may attract protest?
- Is the speaker known to have held or expressed controversial views that may attract protest?
- Is the speaker from an area with the political situation may attract protest?
- Is the subject matter related to an area where the political situation may attract protest?
- Is the subject matter likely to evoke a strong emotive response if advertised to the general public?

If the answer is yes to any of the above questions a **Principal Organiser** should be identified and they should follow the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice. Please note that the Code requires the Principal Organiser to notify the Chief Operating Officer 3 weeks in advance of the event.

Speakers on College premises

It should be noted that as College premises are private premises, all meetings which take place therein are classed as private, unless the public is expressly invited to attend.

Speakers must come at the invitation of a recognised collective body within College (e.g. a Faculty, a Department, the Student's Union or a College-recognised trade union).

In the case of speakers invited by a member of staff or student acting on behalf of their department, academic or professional services, or on behalf of a society formally recognised by the department, the Head of Department should have been consulted and given formal approval.

The Student Union and its constituent societies will refer all sensitive or controversial invitations to the College Freedom of Information Officer. Students are expected to err on the side of caution.

In the case of meetings organised by the Council, speakers may be invited by the Council as a group or by one or more individuals. Individuals must consult the Chair or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair of Council for approval.

In the case of meetings held when College premises are hired by external organisations, the contract between the College and such external organisations shall make clear that speakers must abide by the provisions of this Code.

Speakers may not be invited to campus by staff or student acting privately

If a speaker is likely to express views which may attract protest, the Principal Organiser must ensure that there is an opportunity within the organised event for these views to be challenged through, for example, a second speaker or a question and answer session.

Any advertising relating to an event must not depict images which may cause offence or incite counter-action. Advertising material should be proportionate to the nature of the event. Advertising for events which require the invocation of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer at least 3 weeks in advance of the event.