



External Speaker Policy

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Date first published: March 2022
Version No. 1
Approved by: Academic Board
Owner: Registry
Date updated: March 2022
Review Date: March 2023

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Introduction

UCFB/GIS (the 'institution') prides itself as an institution that regularly welcomes visiting speakers to its campuses. Our students regularly have the opportunity to hear from leading figures in the sports and business world as part of the Careers and Employability offer at UCFB/GIS.

Such speakers bring great diversity of experience, insight and opinion, enriching our events and activities and sparking discussion and debate amongst our students.

Purpose

The policy applies to the whole UCFB/GIS community which includes staff, students, and external visitors. It is intended to act as a guide to external speakers to ensure that they can enjoy freedom of speech through discussion, debate and challenge around their chosen topic whilst at the same time ensuring that the institution complies with all relevant current legislation.

This policy also gives guidance to UCFB/GIS staff that are organising external speakers.

Freedom of Speech

At UCFB/GIS, we understand the importance of securing freedom of speech and that the concept of imposing limitations has the potential to provoke strong opinions.

We believe that open, challenging debates rather than silencing the views of those we do not agree with helps to build tolerance and address prejudice and discrimination. This Policy takes steps to secure academic freedom, and freedom of speech, and is subject to the duty of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

The institution expects external speakers to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others.

We have 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 for students and communities. We want all of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the institution; and within the law.

Prevent Duty

Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the Act") imposes a duty on Higher Education Institutions when exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This operates in conjunction with the HEI's commitment to freedom of speech and the rationality underpinning the advancement of knowledge.

Definition

An 'external speaker' or 'visitor' is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of UCFB/GIS, 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 UCFB/GIS facilities.

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An 'event' is any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on UCFB/GIS premises or where the institution is being represented by a stand on non-institution premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair, or held online. It includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activity being held on UCFB/GIS premises but organised by external venue hire clients

Organising an external speaker

External speakers may be arranged by any member of the staff or student body and the booking will be registered on a central record of all invited speakers by the Employability & Career Planning team. It is incumbent on the UCFB/GIS staff or student member to conduct a background check before arranging for an external speaker. This can be done through various methods including, for example, internet search engines, social media etc. Once completed, the booking form will need to be signed off by the arranger's line manager (or Course Leader for a student). If there is any doubt as to the suitability of the external speaker, the booking request should be forwarded to the Referral Panel for consideration.

Speakers will be booked with the aim of providing students an engaging and insightful experience that is relevant to their area of study or future education and career opportunities. All invited speakers should be made aware of the UCFB/GIS External Speaker, and Academic Freedom Policies and agree to abide by the principles set out within.

All external speakers will be made aware of their target audience and will agree topics for discussion with the event organiser(s) prior to the event. UCFB/GIS will aim to mitigate any risks involved and will risk assess any topics which are deemed to be controversial. These may include topics that are of a religious or political nature.

Considerations will be taken if such topics are deemed to risk the safety of the speaker, attendees and/or the institution's reputation and if so, the decision will be referred to the Referral Panel*. UCFB/GIS reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced, or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

To avoid any doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the following list of proscriptions (which are not exhaustive) shall be applied:

- Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations, as described at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2/proscribed-terrorist-groups-or-organisations-accessible-version>
- Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist
- Any speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff
- Any speaker accepted in mainstream reporting lines as being highly controversial
- Any links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature **and** who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues
- Speakers from a political party during an election purdah.

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*In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made, with the approval of the Referral Panel:

- a) To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- b) To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- c) To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- d) To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held
- e) To make direct referral via the Channel Initiative to the local constabulary.

Managing external speakers and attendees

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure all procedures are put into place in order for an event to run smoothly on the day. This will include ensuring the external guest has a nominated person to meet and greet them on the day and that they have a positive experience when visiting the institution. The event organiser should also ensure rooms are booked and prepared for delivery and that any IT support is available.

Management of attendees should also be considered and factored into any pre-planning and communication. This may include asking attendees to take their seats early for larger events in order to manage entry to the event.

During the event all speakers and attendees are expected to act with civility, consideration and respect for others in the institution

Conduct

External speakers are expected to act in accordance to the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others. Speakers are expected to:

- Abide by the venue's health and safety instructions
- Comply with the UCFB/GIS Academic Freedom Policy
- Be open to challenge and questioning in the spirit of academic debate
- Give due consideration to any questions sent in advance, where necessary

During an event, speakers should not:

- Use inappropriate language
- Advocate or incite hatred or violence or encourage breaking the law
- Encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- Discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation
- Discriminate against anyone on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity
- Defame any person or organisation
- Raise or gather funds for any external organisation without the express permission of UCFB/GIS.

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This list is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable behaviour; UCFB/GIS reserves the right to cancel or halt an event anytime if it feels there may be a breach of the External Speaker Policy or of any legal obligation or duty of care to our students or staff.

Referral Panel

The Referral Panel meets to consider any External Speaker requests which are not, or cannot, be signed off by a line manager or Course Leader. This may be because there are potential concerns regarding the external speaker in terms of institutional reputation or potential for controversy. The Referral Panel will meet as required, and will typically consist of:

- Head of Marketing or nominee
- Head of Employability & Career Planning or nominee
- Head of Academics (relevant to location or nature of the event)
- An elected Student Representative

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