



University of the
Built Environment
EST. 1919

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III

Horizons, 60 Queen's Road, Reading, RG1 4BS
ube.ac.uk | +44(0)118 921 4696 | enquiries@ube.ac.uk

External Speaker Policy

Version: 11.00

Status: **FINAL**

Date: 02/10/2025

External Speaker Policy

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Policy statement	1
3. Scope	2
4. Implementation	2
4.1 Booking an external speaker	2
4.2 Local Assessment of Proposed External Speaker(s)	3
4.3 Assessment of Academic Conference Speakers or External Speakers as part of normal programme provision	4
4.3.1 Assessment of Academic Conference External Speakers.....	4
4.3.2 Assessment of External Speakers as part of normal programme provision	4
4.4 External Speaker Complaints	5
5. External Speaker Code of Conduct.....	5
6. Monitoring and review.....	6
7. Other related University of the Built Environment policies	6
Appendix A: External Speaker Referral Form	7
Appendix B: Definition of Antisemitism.....	10

External Speaker Policy

1. Introduction

University of the Built Environment (the 'University') welcomes visiting speakers to its premises, on its Virtual Learning Environment and in some instances at external venues. Such speakers bring great diversity of experience, insight and opinion, and spark discussion and debate among students, staff, and visitors alike.

Currently external speakers are used in the following contexts:

- Online or face to face events to students and/or staff to support the learning and teaching curriculum;
- CPD events for the property and construction sector; and
- Events to promote University of the Built Environment; including but not limited to its programmes; annual conference; working with employers and PSRBs.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the University will manage the risks around external speakers and to set out a governing framework for visiting speakers to ensure that debate, challenge, and dissent are not only permitted but expected. It will demonstrate how it seeks to maintain a safe environment where freedom of speech, expression and academic debate can exist in line with the [University Code of Practice Freedom of Speech \(opens new window\)](#). The University is also committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued.

2. Policy statement

The University is committed to providing students with an environment where freedom of expression and speech (within the law) are protected. Within the definition of free speech this includes any speech that is lawful speech which may include speech that is offensive and hurtful to some. It excludes speech that amounts to unlawful harassment or unlawful incitement of hatred and violence.

The University is also committed to promoting academic freedom where academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without disadvantaging themselves by the fact that they have exercised their rights to academic freedom.

University of the Built Environment however believes that a culture of free and open discussion can only be achieved if all concerned are courteous to one another.

External Speaker Policy

The University therefore does not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation and promotes an inclusive culture which promotes equality and inclusion.

The University is aware of its responsibilities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, placing a proportionate amount of consideration on its policies and procedures.

In the context of University of the Built Environment, an external speaker is defined as anyone who is not engaged under any form of contract with the University and is engaged to address groups of students or delegates or for the purposes of CPD or other public facing events.

The approval of external speakers should not be denied on grounds of position or belief or because their views could be offensive, controversial, or provocative if they are still lawful.

The University seeks to ensure that the policy is embedded within the institution's day to day practices, policies and procedures.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of academic life at the University and includes all tutors and guest lecturers within the UK and speakers that are based outside of the UK if they are delivering to students based within the UK. Guest speakers at the University premises in Hong Kong if they are delivering to students outside the UK are out of scope of this policy.

4. Implementation

4.1 Booking an external speaker

The University is committed to providing opportunities for students to meet and share the views of a range of subject specialists. However, in doing so, the University is also committed to ensuring that sufficient checks are undertaken on each individual before they are booked to ensure that they are suitable for Higher Education and pose no threat to students. All external speakers must act in accordance with the law and not breach the lawful rights of others.

The majority of external speakers' requests will be straightforward and can be authorised locally by the relevant Dean of School or Pro Vice Chancellor (Business Development and Apprenticeships) or Director of Student Services. However, where any concerns are raised the referral will be further considered by Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary).

External Speaker Policy

4.2 Local Assessment of Proposed External Speaker(s)

Prior to the confirmation of an external speaker, the event organiser will be responsible for gathering the following information on the External Speaker Referral Form:

- Name and contact details of speaker;
- Whether they are representing a company/organisation;
- Information about the speaker's reputation.

The form will ensure staff assess the speaker against the following set questions:

1. Has the speaker been prevented from speaking at University of the Built Environment or a similar establishment or previously been known to express views that may breach the external speaker code of conduct?
2. Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views / opinions expressed by the speaker(s) may be in breach of the external speaker code of conduct?
3. Does the proposed external speaker have links to or represent a proscribed terror group or organisation on the [Home Office List](#)?
4. Is the proposed speaker's theme likely to attract attendance from individuals / groups that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the external speaker code of conduct?

Please note that the failure of the event organiser to comply with this policy or to answer these questions in an honest and reasonable manner, will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

If the answer to all four questions is **no**, the event organiser can seek approval from either the relevant Dean of School or Pro Vice Chancellor (Business Development and Apprenticeships) or Vice Principal (Student and Registry Services). and book the external speaker for the event or lecture. At this stage, the speaker should be provided with a copy of the external speaker's code of conduct which is contained in section 5 of this policy.

If the answer to any of the questions is **unclear**, the event organiser should seek guidance from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) who has responsibility to undertake a further review of the speaker against the four questions set out above.

If the answer to any of the four questions is **yes**, the event organiser must submit a referral to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) or in the absence of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) their delegated Executive member. When reviewing the referral consideration will be given:

External Speaker Policy

- To University of the Built Environment's obligations under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- The importance of academic freedom (as required by the Education Reform Act 1988).
- To the University's duty to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- To the University's responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- The need to ensure the safety of staff and students at the event where they might be exposed to public disorder.

Where there is insufficient time to investigate before the event the speaker will have to be cancelled.

Where additional information emerges, the University reserves the right to review an external speaker decision made.

4.3 Assessment of Academic Conference Speakers or External Speakers as part of normal programme provision

4.3.1 Assessment of Academic Conference External Speakers

For academic conferences hosted by the University, it will be sufficient to complete a single External Speaker Referral Form for the event, if overall the answer to the four questions is 'NO.' However, if there are concerns about an individual speaker or the proposed title of the session, an individual speaker referral form should be completed.

4.3.2 Assessment of External Speakers as part of normal programme provision

In relation to External Speakers that form part of normal programme provision, it will be sufficient for the event organiser to complete a single External Speaker Referral Form per academic year as opposed to a form for each individual engagement. If there are any concerns at any point about the External Speaker or the theme of a session they plan to deliver, the event organiser should complete a new External Speaker Referral Form for approval.

External Speaker Policy

4.4 External Speaker Complaints

If an event organiser or any member of University staff or students has any concerns about an external speaker or is unhappy with the decision made by Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) they may write to the Vice Chancellor setting out the clear reasons for their concerns and requesting reconsideration of the decision. The decision made by the Vice Chancellor will be final.

Complaints about the External Speakers process should where possible be highlighted to the University at the point that they occur.

5. External Speaker Code of Conduct

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

External speakers must abide by the University's expectations, including but not limited to:

- Allowing and encouraging challenge and debate on opinions and ideas put forward;
- Compliance with the University's External Speaker Policy.
- Compliance with the University's Code of Practice Freedom of Speech.
- Compliance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.
- Compliance with all relevant University Policies and Procedures and instructions relating to health and safety.

External speakers must not, including but not limited to:

- Act in breach of the criminal law (for example generating fear, harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse, violence, particularly as a result of protected characteristics¹).

¹ Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation (Equality Act (2010)).

External Speaker Policy

- Incite unlawful hatred, violence or intolerance. This includes antisemitism as specified by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. ([See Appendix B: Definition of antisemitism](#)).
- Encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism.
- Discriminate against or harass any person or group based on their protected characteristics.
- Defame any person or organisation.
- Promote any illegal organisation or purpose.

Raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary).

6. Monitoring and review

This policy will be subject to annual monitoring and review.

7. Other related University of the Built Environment policies

This policy is supported by the following policies and procedures:

[Code of Practice Chapter Safeguarding and Prevent \(opens new window\)](#)

[Intellectual Property Policy \(opens new window\)](#)

Appendix A: External Speaker Referral Form

Part 1: Event Organisers Details
Name:
Organisation:
Contact Details (telephone no. and email):

Part 2: Proposed Event Details
Proposed Event Title:
Proposed Event Date, time and place:
Description (including event format including whether there will be an appointed chairperson) (max 50 words):

External Speaker Policy

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 University of the Built Environment External Speaker Code of Conduct?

Proposed External Speaker name:

Company / Organisation representing:

Speaker's Email:

Speaker's contact number:

Speaker topic / details:

Speaker reputation (where relevant, please note sources of evidence):

Other information (note anything else you think relevant):

Part 3: Approval

- Has the speaker previously been prevented from speaking at University of the Built Environment, another University or similar establishment or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the **External Speaker Code of Conduct**?

Yes / No

- Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by the speaker may be in breach of the **External Speaker Code of Conduct**?

Yes / No

External Speaker Policy

Part 3: Approval	
To the best of your knowledge does the proposed external speaker have links to or represent a proscribed terror group or organisation on the Home Office List?	Yes / No
Is the proposed speaker/theme likely to attract attendance from individuals/groups that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the External Speaker Code of Conduct?	Yes / No
<i>If the answer to all of the above questions is No approval can be sought by the relevant Dean of School or Pro Vice Chancellor Business Development and Apprenticeships or Director of Student Services linked to the area that the request is related to. If the answer to any of the questions is Yes or unclear this must be referred to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary).</i>	
Approved by Dean of School / Pro Vice Chancellor Business Development and Apprenticeships / Director of Student Services.	Yes/No Date:
Approval Required by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary)	Yes/No Date:

Appendix B: Definition of Antisemitism

The following definition is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (2018) definition of antisemitism and is the standard definition used around the world including by the European Parliament and the British government.

'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Manifestations might include the targeting of the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

External Speaker Policy

- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination (e.g. by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour).
- Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.'

© **Copyright: IHRA 2018**

Reference

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) (2018) 'About the IHRA working definition of antisemitism' [online]. Available at:

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism> [accessed 4 January 2024].