



# Ruskin College Oxford

<b>Name of policy:</b> Events and Speakers Policy and Procedure
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<b>Related policies:</b> Policy on Prevent Duty and Safeguarding Adults at Risk; Safeguarding Children and Young People; Health and Safety Policy; Social Media Policy; Public Information Policy

## Events and Speakers Policy and Procedure

Ruskin College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This is consistent with our mission and our core values which have been agreed after consultation with all staff. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers to ensure the college has a uniform process. It also details the approach adopted by the college to ensure that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of Ruskin College whilst following the legislation which we are responsible for upholding. This is in line with college's commitment to safeguarding and its Duty of Care. This policy is consistent with the Equality Act 2010 and the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities in the exercise of their functions, must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

### 1. Objectives

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are valued, protected and balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students, staff and members of the public who are guests of Ruskin College.
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that College policy is consistent with our legal obligations (e.g. Equality Act 2010).
- To collaborate with others to ensure that judgments about proposed external speakers are based on sound evidence so that the College's reputation and Duty of Care are protected.
- To encourage and provide a space for open discussion and debate that does not degenerate into verbal abuse, harassment or threats of physical violence.
- To reinforce that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that Ruskin College adheres to legal and social policy obligations and that all bookings and events comply with this policy and guidance.
- All bookings must be approved in advance by the Principal or member of the Senior Leadership Team using the marketing approval process.

## **2. Freedom of speech and expression**

2.1. 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. Universities and Colleges 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.

2.2. However, 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 College and within the law.

2.3. Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event. We are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

## **3. Safeguarding and Prevent Duty**

3.1 The college Adult Safeguarding Policy needs to be read in conjunction with this policy. It is essential that all staff and visitors to Ruskin Hall wear their College ID at all times. The ID needs to be clearly visible with the aim of ensuring that the campus is safe for all. Failure to wear a College ID may result in disciplinary action. For conferences and events, participants who are not staff will be signed in and out of the building.

## **4. External speakers and their responsibilities**

4.1. An external speaker or visitor is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member at Ruskin College 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.

4.2. An event is any meeting, presentation, visit, activity or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on the Ruskin College premises or where Ruskin College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. It also 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 Ruskin College premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

4.3. All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's policies including that they:-

- Ensure everyone at Ruskin College must wear visible identification on a lanyard at all times

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
- Should not encourage, glorify or promote any acts of hatred, violence or terrorism towards any individual or social group that includes acts carried out by individuals, groups or organisations
- 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 faiths or Black and Minority Ethnic 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 Principal

## **5. Guidance for Ruskin College staff and students organising an event with an external speaker or venue hire client**

5.1. The Principal (Safeguarding Lead) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed of any event that involves external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised, considered or confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes any form of advertisement including any social media platform.

5.2. Ruskin College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

5.3. Any room booking/event with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

5.4. Health and Safety. It is essential that the College health and safety policy is followed in preparation, during and after the event. The event organisers have responsibility to ensure that all measures are taken to ensure the event is safe. No alcohol is to be sold, served or made available without the express permission of the SLT. This is to safeguard the College community.

5.5 If the individual/group is in any doubt about the speaker's suitability or they are unable to guarantee that the speaker or event does not contravene these guidelines they should discuss the matter with the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance. For example, reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>

5.6 The Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will make a decision based on one of the following grounds:-

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead

- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- 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; prior visibility of content of presentation.
- That the event may go ahead on the basis that the individuals and/or groups organising the meeting are present throughout the duration of the event and responsible for the conduct of speakers.

5.7 In making recommendations, the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team may consult on a wider basis and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

1. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
2. The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputational risk to the College
3. The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff and/or to give rise to breach of peace.

5.8 The External speaker consent form (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team no later than one term in advance of the planned event. The completed form will be logged on the Central Record.

5.9 Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and support the policy.

## **6 Additional Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event with external speakers**

6.1. The Warden will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations etc that they are bringing in. This information should be provided no later than 1 term before the booking goes ahead.

6.2. Ruskin College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

6.3. If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the Warden should refer the decision to the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Reasons may be as outlined in 5.4.

6.4. In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:-

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- 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; prior visibility of content of presentation.
- That the event may go ahead on the basis that the individuals and/or groups organising the meeting are present throughout the duration of the event and responsible for the conduct of speakers.

**Linked Policies:**

- Safeguarding Children
  - Safeguarding Adults
  - Health and Safety
  - Social Media Policy
  - Policies related to Public Information
- This is a live policy and because of the nature of legislation and social policy it may be subject to change. It will therefore be revised on an annual basis.

**Approval Form for the use of external speakers at Ruskin College**

1. Complete **all** boxes and ensure that you have signed the form.
3. Forward to the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to obtain consent.
4. When complete, this form should be forwarded to the Academic Registrar for central logging.

NAME OF PERSON REQUESTING EVENT:	
NAME OF GROUP:	GROUP SIZE:
NAME OF PERSON TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVENT:	
NAME OF OUTSIDE SPEAKER(S):	ORGANISATION THEY REPRESENT:
ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION THEY REPRESENT:  POSTCODE:	TEL:
Is there any known or likely media interest in the proposed event? If yes, give reasons  YES/NO	
Does the organiser guarantee the speakers suitability in with this policy? YES/NO  (Please note that if the answer is No, the event will not be approved)	
I would like to invite/accept the (group): of authors/creatives, as described above	

On (topic):	
In (room):	
On (date):	

**CONSENT APPROVAL:**

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:	DATE OF SUBMISSION:
APPROVED YES/NO	DATE:
PRINCIPAL / SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER	
SIGNATURE	