

External Speaker Policy

Document Summary

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External Speaker Policy

1: Background

The City College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to the use of external speakers and visitors in activities regardless of who is organising them.

It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting students, staff and the reputation of The City College whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to 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”.

2: Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the student and staff experience is enriched by input from external speakers and organisations and that any benefits and risks are considered and managed appropriately in advance of a speaker event.

3: Scope

This policy is applicable to all circumstances in which an external speaker or visitor has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. The person may be an individual or representative of an organisation.

This policy refers to any activity that would be categorised as promoting radicalisation or extremism. Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to participate in terrorist groups. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

4: Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Confirm the College’s commitment to freedom of speech.
- Balance this with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm.
- Recognise the value that external speakers may bring to the college and seek to encourage the provision of enrichment to students and staff through exposure to high quality visiting speakers and organisations.
- Provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- Collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgements about proposed external speakers ensuring that The City College can meet it’s legal obligations.
- Provide clear instruction for organising an event with external contributions.

5: External speakers and their responsibilities

The term 'external speaker' or 'visitor' is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member at The City College and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. This includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use College facilities.

An 'event' includes but is not limited to any event, presentation, visit, activity or initiative, organised by a student or staff member that is being held on the College premises. It also includes activity held on College premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

All visiting speakers and visitors must 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 undermining social and community harmony.
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge.
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause.

6: Guidance for students and staff of The City College

No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes advertisement through any social media platform.

The City 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.

Any room booking/ event with an external speaker or visitor 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 checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this time frame will be rejected unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances.

The individual organising an external speaker should conduct research into the proposed speaker. The External Speaker Check and Review Form (Appendix 1) must be used. Head of Department approval must be sort before a speaker/ visitor is booked/ confirmed. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, the decision should be referred to the Principal or Director of Studies.

Reasons for doubt include but are not restricted to the following:

- Any person or group linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terrorgroups-or-organisations--2>
- Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist.
- A speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff.
- A speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial.
- A link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.
- A speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues.

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 but are not limited to observation, independent filming, the inclusion of opportunities to debate, or challenge the view being held.

In making recommendations, guidance must be sought from the Principal or Director of Studies. Risk will be assessed on the following basis:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to the College.
- 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.

If consent is given for the visiting speaker or visitor it will be confirmed in writing by the Principal or Director of Studies.

7: Process

The following identifies the process that must be followed when arranging a visiting speaker or visitor:

- Identify the speaker/ visitor who will be speaking to students or staff.
- Complete the External Speaker Check and Review Form (Appendix 1).
- Conduct relevant checks and seek further information where required.
- All forms to be sent to the Head of Department for review.
- All forms with Green outcomes can be approved by the Head Department and the booking/ invitation may proceed.
- All forms with any Amber or Red outcomes must be sent to the Principal or Director of Studies for further review.

- The Principal or Director of Studies will provide written feedback to the Head of Department regarding approval.
- Outcome a) Speaker/ Visitor approved, possibly with additional safeguards and the booking/ invitation may proceed.
- Outcome b) Speaker/ Visitor not approved, feedback provided to Head of Department, possible further communication with Hackney Prevent Leads.