

External Speakers Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
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Responsible for implementation:	Chief Executive
Responsible for interpretation:	Board of Trustees

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External Speakers Policy

1.0 Scope & Background

- 1.1. The Union supports students to create and deliver a wide range of activity to benefit its wider membership. An aspect of this activity can include inviting external individuals with particular knowledge, experience or skills to speak at Union events.
- 1.2. To ensure that the Union is managing the risk and its responsibilities, this policy outlines its approach to inviting external individuals to speak at Union events.
- 1.3. This policy aims to clearly outline the risks involved in running events, the approval process, the actions that can be undertaken to mitigate those risks and the process to deal with complaints.
- 1.4. The Union recognises the benefit of exposing students to a wide range of views, opinions and experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding of issues and will carefully weigh that against its responsibilities to its members, including the protection from harm, whilst ensuring that all its activity is legally compliant.
- 1.7. The Chief Executive will determine who the appropriate member of staffs are to support the approval process.
- 1.8. As the Union does not own or operate its own facilities, it will work in partnership with City, University of London to ensure that all Union events can take place safely on its campuses.
- 1.9. This policy will take into account the individual, any organisations they are associated with and the topic/event in which they are to be speaker about or at.
- 1.10. An external speaker is any individual that is not a student or staff member of the Union or City, University of London.

2.0 Risks

- 2.1. It is important for the Union to understand the risks involved in inviting external individuals to speak to its members. This section outlines some of the key risks involved.

Rule of Law

- 2.2. All invited guests must respect the rule of law and ensure that their actions do not break any law of the land.
- 2.3. Particular laws in this area include but are not limited to, inciting racial hatred, public disorder, defamation, etc.
- 2.4. The rule of law is paramount and would supersede any other risks associated with an event.

Personal Safety

- 2.5. It is crucial that all members and guests can attend events safely and be protected from harm.

- 2.6 This includes but is not limited to protection from harms such as overcrowding, physical violence, intimidation, threats, etc.

Security

- 2.7 The Union has a duty to protect the security of our campuses and will work with colleagues to ensure that events are managed effectively.
- 2.8 This includes ensuring that appropriate venues are used, entry and exit is clearly defined, access to secured areas is maintained and security personal are aware of any events needing assistance.

Hate Speech

- 2.9 It is a criminal offence for anyone to express hatred towards someone on account of that person's colour, race, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation.
- 2.10 Individuals can be prosecuted under a number of Acts of Parliament including, but not limited to, the Public Order Act 1986, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 and Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

3.0 Approval Process

- 3.1 To effectively manage the Risks associated with external speakers, the Union must have a process in which Student Groups, elected officers, volunteers and staff can request approval of a speaker for a specific event.
- 3.2 This process must be followed for any external individual that is being invited into the institution to give their opinion, knowledge or experience on a specific topic. If an individual is being paid to attend to deliver a particular service or function, then this policy does not apply.

Application

- 3.3 An application for approval of an external speaker must be submitted to the Union at least 4 weeks prior to the event.
- 3.4 An application will only be considered once a fully completed form has been submitted to the Union and is within the time period allowed. Incomplete forms will be returned to the requester with guidance on completion.
- 3.5 This form should include;
- 3.5.1 Details of the student making the external speaker request.
 - 3.5.2 Name, contact details, organisation/company and affiliations of the external speaker.
 - 3.5.3 Information relating to the attendance of the external speaker at the institution prior to the submitted event.
 - 3.5.4 Details of the event, including title, date and time, location, number of expected guests and the topic of the event.

Assessment

- 3.6 Once an application has been received, the Union will undertake an assessment process to identify the risks associated with the speaker, topic and event.
- 3.7 This assessment process will involve research on the speaker, including but not limited to examining news articles, publications and opinion pieces regarding or by the individual, previous events at the institution or similar institutions, review of the topic area and the event details.
- 3.8 Staff may request more information from the requester, or clarification on the event or topic in which the event is taking place. At this point, the review will pause until the information has been received.
- 3.9 After the assessment has been conducted, the external speaker application will be given a Risk Rating based on the research gathered and the foreseen risks with the event.
- 3.10 The Risk Rating will be either Low, Medium or High Risk.

Approval

- 3.11 The approval of each external speaker request will be determined by the risk rating applied to the application.
- 3.12 Low risk events can be approved by a member of staff.
- 3.13 Medium risk events must be approved by a sabbatical officer, with guidance from a staff member.
- 3.14 High risk events must be approved by a review panel.
- 3.15 Each application will pass through each stage in order to be rated. A member of staff will review all applications submitted to identify the Low Risk applications and pass on any that are deemed to be of a higher risk. This goes for Medium Risk applications being referred to the Review Panel.
- 3.16 If an approver is concerned with the risk rating and feels the rating should be higher than initially rated, they can refer the application to the next level of approval.

Review Panel

- 3.17 The Review Panel will consist of two Sabbatical Officers and the Chief Executive Officer, with the Membership Development Manager acting as secretary.
- 3.18 To ensure transparency, a Sabbatical Officer should not sit on the Review Panel if they have already been involved at the Medium Risk level of the approval process.

- 3.19 The role of the Review Panel is to review applications which are rated as High Risk, set the mitigations that can be placed on an event, review the levels of mitigations against events and review appeals based on the process or mitigations imposed.

Mitigations

- 3.20 It may be possible for certain mitigations to be put in place to lower the risk associated with the external speaker or the event.
- 3.21 These mitigations should only be applied to an event if they are appropriate to the risk associated with that event.
- 3.22 Appendix 1 shows a range of mitigations that can be applied to events and at what level risk they can be applied.
- 3.23 Any additional mitigations must be agreed by the Review Panel and a suitable level of risk given.
- 3.24 Events can only have mitigations based on their risk rating or below.
- 3.25 If mitigations have been added, the event cannot go ahead unless these mitigations have been enacted. Failure to follow the instructions will result in disciplinary action. It is the duty of the requester to ensure these mitigations are in place before the event goes ahead.
- 3.26 Mitigations applied to Medium and High Risk speakers or events will be communicated to the requester, stating the reason for the mitigation.

Rejection

- 3.27 The Union has the right to reject an application for an external speaker or event based on the appropriateness of the speaker, the level of risk associated with the speaker or event, resource capability to impose mitigations, procedural reasons or health & safety concerns.
- 3.28 Low risk speakers or events can only be rejected based on procedural or health & safety concern reasons.
- 3.29 Any decision to reject a speaker or event will be communicated back to the requester with details on the reasons for the rejection.

Late Submission

- 3.30 The submission of a request received beyond the stipulated time period will be automatically rejected.
- 3.31 There may be some cases where the time period may be relaxed due to mitigating circumstances. These include, but are not limited to;
- 3.31.1 The speaker is a high profile guest and availability is an issue.

- 3.31.2 A speaker drops out of an event and a previously approved speaker is suggested to take their place.
- 3.31.3 An emergent issue has arisen within the membership that requires immediate attention.
- 3.32 In these cases it is down to the VP Activities & Development to decide on the appropriateness of relaxing the deadline.

University Approval

- 3.33 Once a speaker request has been rated as Low Risk or above, the application will be passed to the University to seek their approval.
- 3.34 The University will undertake their own review process
- 3.35 The University will inform the Union of their decision, which will be communicated to the requester.
- 3.36 If the University's decision is different to the Union, a meeting will be called to discuss any discrepancies.

Timescales

- 3.37 Upon receiving a valid application, the Union will aim to process that application within the timescales outlined below;
 - 3.37.1 Low Risk speakers or events within 7 calendar days
 - 3.37.2 Medium Risk speakers or events within 10 calendar days
 - 3.37.3 High Risk speakers or events within 14 calendar days
- 3.38 There may be times within the academic year where mitigating factors affect the ability to process the applications. Requestors will be informed of any delays effecting their submission as soon as possible. An expected completion date will be given.
- 3.39 Complex applications may take longer than the stipulated times.

4.0 Appeals

- 4.1 A requester dissatisfied with the outcome of either the Risk Rating of a speaker or event, rejection of a speaker or event, or the mitigations placed on an event can appeal the decision.
- 4.2 All appeals must be submitted in writing within 2 working days of the decision.

Appeal Stage One

- 4.4 The first stage appeal will be investigated by the appropriate member of staff and Sabbatical Officer and will normally take place within 2 working days of submission to the Union.
- 4.5 A Stage One appeal will investigate appeals made on Low or Medium Risk Rated events or speakers, mitigations applied to the event or speaker and any decisions based on procedural factors.
- 4.6 The outcome of a Stage One appeal can be;
 - 4.6.1 Uphold the original decision.
 - 4.6.2 Uphold the appeal and issue a new Risk Rating, remove mitigations or reinstate the application through the approval process
 - 4.6.3 Refer the appeal to Stage Two

Appeal Stage Two

- 4.7 The second stage review will be investigated by the Review Panel. This will normally be conducted within 3 working days of the original submission.
- 4.8 A Stage Two appeal will investigate appeals made on High Risk Rated events or speakers, mitigations applied to the event or speaker and any decisions based on procedural factors.
- 4.9 The Review Panel will also hear any appeals based on the application of judgement within an approval.
- 4.10 The outcome of a Stage Two appeal can be;
 - 4.10.1 Uphold the original decision.
 - 4.10.2 Uphold the appeal and issue a new Risk Rating, remove mitigations or reinstate the application through the approval process

Appendix 1

Risk Rating	Approval	Guidance	Mitigations
Low	Staff Member	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The event be subject to additional security measures – such as a security officer present outside or inside the event
Medium	Sabbatical Officer	Staff Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The style of event be changed to include an opportunity to debate or challenge the views of the speaker The event be closed to individuals who are not current students or staff of City, University of London Distribution of publicity material for the event is restricted by location or platform. The capacity for the event is limited to a certain number
High	Review Panel	Membership Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The event be filmed by an independent body The event be observed or attended by City Students' Union staff members, and/or City, University of London or third party officials The event be chaired by an independent or academic chair A note taker being present A copy of any speech to be delivered must be submitted to City Students' Union before the event The event be ticketed only, meaning only those with tickets are allowed into the event