

Middlesex University

Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

Summary

To ensure its compliance with the statutory Prevent Duty and in order to ensure that it is meeting its wider legal duties in respect of free speech, the University must be delivering in the following areas:

- x Policies and procedures for approving external speakers and events on campus;
- x ~~The Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech~~ The Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech' describes how the university is meeting its statutory obligations by following a proportionate and risk-based approach. The Code of Practice makes a clear distinction between events that are deemed to be of low or very low risk and events that are deemed to be of higher risk. This Code of Practice describes how the University trusts its staff to carry out an initial risk assessment and choose a course of action to mitigate the risk.

The University is required by law to take the steps that, having particular regard to the importance of freedom of speech, are reasonably practicable for it to take in order to secure freedom of speech within the law for:

- x Staff;
- x Students; and
- x Visiting speakers.

Furthermore, the use of university premises and the terms on which any such premises are provided is not to be denied to any individual or body on any grounds connected with:

- x In relation to an individual, their ideas or opinions;
- x In relation to a body, its policy or objectives or the ideas or opinions of its members.

The University is committed to ensuring the academic freedom of its academic members of
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and proper academic discipline is maintained throughout. The University has a right to protect its good name and reputation.

other function which has been duly authorised to take place on Middlesex University premises or branded events off-campus.

The object of the procedures outlined below is:

- a) To specify arrangements for the management of meetings and other functions on University premises, branded events off-campus

comply with all reasonable instructions from the event organisers in terms of conduct and behaviour.

In the case of meetings or functions that come within the provisions of this Code of Practice and are organised by members of staff, the names of visiting speakers must be approved by the University prior to invitation. This includes self-approval by the sponsor if deemed low or

the event not be a permanent employee of 0.6FTE or above the risk assessment must be completed by a line manager who is a permanent employee of 0.6FTE or above.

If the answer to all of the speaker, subject matter, audience and risk factors, questions is

If the Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service's team receive a request from a member of the University to book a room for an event which appears might not be in connection with official University business, the requestor shall be asked for such information as is reasonably required to establish that the purpose of the booking is to accommodate a *bona fide* University meeting or function. Bookings will not be confirmed until such information has been obtained.

In the case of meetings booked or arranged by a club or society of the Students' Union the Students' Union shall conduct any investigations and checks in accordance with its own regulations and procedures and shall consult the Director of Governance where the risk level is moderate or greater. The Students' Union shall make known to the Director of Governance or his/her designated officer the outcomes of those checks and any evidence gathered. For on-campus events, normal Estates, Facilities, and Management Service protocols should be followed for room bookings and events on University premises.

Any person making an accommodation booking request who has grounds for believing that a breach of the peace or a criminal offence might occur at a meeting must give notification to the Head of Security of such likelihood at the time of making the booking request or as soon as possible after such likelihood becomes apparent.

Under these circumstances, accommodation bookings may be confirmed only by the Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service or an officer authorised to act on his/her behalf. Where such a booking has been made on behalf of a club or society of the Students' Union, the appropriate regulations and procedures in relation to external guests and speakers must have been followed for that booking and the Head of Security or the Director of Governance reserve the right to refuse the booking if it has not been followed.

Any member of staff who receives a request for a booking for a meeting which, in his or her opinion, could give rise to difficulties in ensuring freedom of speech or the safety of a speaker must make a prompt notification to the Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service or other designated officer. The notification should give as far as possible the information specified above. To the extent that information is not available, details must be sought urgently from the organiser of the proposed meeting or the person submitting the request. It is the responsibility both of those making the booking requests and those receiving booking requests to make appropriate notification as specified above. If

there is any doubt about whether a meeting is likely to give rise to difficulties, the Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service or other designated officer must be consulted.

On receipt at any time

The organisers may be required, after due consultation, to comply with any or any combination of the following conditions if the Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service or other designated officer considers that difficulties may be encountered. The following list is exemplar rather than exhaustive. This provision extends to events organised by clubs and societies of the Students' Union, which are covered by its regulations on external guests and speakers.

- a) Only members of staff of the University and/or registered students of the University may attend.
- b) The public either may, or may not, be invited or admitted.
- c) If guests are to be allowed to attend, only those whose identity is known to the organisers shall be admitted.
- d) Admission shall be restricted and controlled by ticket, identity card or both.
- e) Special arrangements for the checking of admission shall be instituted.
- f) Where appropriate a specified number of stewards shall be provided by the organisers and required to be present throughout the meeting and also whilst the audience is assembling or dispersing.
- g) Where appropriate the names and addresses of stewards (including a chief steward) shall be supplied in advance by the organisers for approval by the Head of Security or other designated officer of the University.
- h) The cost of these stewards or other services shall be met by the organisers.
- i) Identified members of the University shall be present in order to assist in the maintenance of good order.
- j) Any speaker shall enter and leave by specified routes and shall be escorted under specified arrangements.
- k) No food or drink, alcoholic or otherwise, or any other items which could be used as/or contain missiles shall be taken into a meeting and University security staff and/or stewards

opinion of the chair, such conduct continues after a warning, the chair has a duty to close the meeting.

o) The Chair shall be instructed in advance by the organisers about his or her duty to decide whether a meeting or function should be terminated, and about procedures for requesting the police to be summoned in case of breach of the peace or a criminal act, or threat of either occurrence.

p) Stewards provided by the organisers shall be briefed by the organisers about their duties and responsibilities including being made familiar with local fire and emergency procedures.

q) Such other instructions as may be given about the conduct of a meeting or function or the conditions in which it may be held.

r) The text of the speech should be provided in advance.

s) Provision for a video or audio recording of the event should be made, the cost of which should be borne by the organisers.

The Director of Estates and Facilities Management Service or other designated officer will monitor compliance with conditions. Organisers may be required to pay any costs necessarily incurred by the University to ensure compliance with this Code of Practice or to make good any loss or damage caused as the direct result of a meeting or function being held.

Security for student and department led events will continue to be met by the University's Security Department and there will be no charge for space or other facility services.

Security for external events will be determined after the event is considered and the event risk assessed. Numbers of security required will be agreed with the organisers and will be based on each particular event. Payment for security will be agreed and paid for by the organiser of such external events. There may be a charge for space dependant on timings and impact on University business. Any charges will be discussed and agreed on with the organiser'.

For branded events on line where external speakers are involved – the organiser should liaise with the Director of Governance and ensure conditions are met before the event goes ahead.

Request Refused – Appeals Process

A person or body which has made a request to book accommodation on the premises, if aggrieved by a decision made in respect of the booking, may make an appeal to the Vice-Chancellor. Such an appeal will be heard by the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Vice-

The term “chair” is deemed to mean the person in the chair at a meeting, or the presiding officer or convenor.

Teresa Kelly,
Director of Student Governance
August 2024 (to be reviewed annually)