

Loughborough University External Speaker Policy

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Change History

Change Date	Changed by	Changes
18/01/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1 amended to state '14 days' notice' • Appendix 1 added.
19/01/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small textual amendments to 1.1, 2.3, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.6, 4.11 & 5.1. • Addition of paragraph 4.2 • Addition of guidance frameworks to section 7.
20/01/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment of Section 4 and addition of Appendix 3 to show slightly varied procedure for London.
28/01/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insertion of 'or civil' in paragraph 3.5.
18/02/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insertion of 'or association' in paragraph 2.1. • Typographical amendment to paragraph 3.4. • Amendment to paragraph 3.5 to read 'including (but not limited to) the following examples'. • Insertion of 'or their nominee' in paragraph 4.1.
02/03/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to paragraph 2.3 and insertion of paragraph 3.10 in light of comments from Senate on 02/03/16.
28/06/16	Manuel Alonso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small typographical and branding changes to Appendix 1. • Minor typographical change to paragraph 5.1. • Addition of Appendix 4; Standards for External Speakers.

01/12/23	Samuel McGinty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced reference to Freedom of Expression Code of Practice in 1.1 • Update to registered name of Imago in 2.2 • Minor typographical change in 4.6 • Minor typographical change in 4.10
05/07/24	Samuel McGinty	<p>Following approval at Council in June 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete word “normally” from para 1.3 • Delete word “wellbeing” from para 3.4(a) • Additional sentence at the end of 2.1 • Insert HE (FOS) Act 2023 in the list of relevant legal and guidance frameworks
08/09/25	Samuel McGinty	<p>Following the publication of the Office for Students Regulatory Advice 24 and as [approved at Council in XXXXX/approved by the COO and Chair of Council pursuant to delegated authority]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5(b) added to reflect OfS guidance as to content; • 4.5 amended to clarify the presumption in favour of an event going ahead; • Changes to 4.6, 4.11 and 4.12 around security arrangements and passing on of costs; • Deletion of Appendix 1 and insertion of link to online form; and • Other minor typographical changes or changes to reflect the examples in the OfS guidance.

External Speaker Policy

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1. Loughborough University is committed to protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom. This is enshrined in our [Code of Practice on Freedom of Expression](#) and [Statute XXI](#), paragraph 2 (i) which notes that ‘staff, while engaged in the provision of learning, teaching or research in accordance with their terms and conditions of service, have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions.’
- 1.2. Loughborough University also acknowledges its obligation under Section 43(1) of the Education Act 1986 which requires universities to ‘take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the establishment and for visiting speakers’.
- 1.3. External Speakers will be accorded the same freedom of expression as University staff and students. However, freedom of speech is not open-ended or absolute and Loughborough University is also committed to ensuring that proper account is taken of its obligation to ensure relevant legislation is adhered to.
- 1.4. This policy sets out the legal framework and considerations within which external speakers will be permitted to speak on University premises and at University-branded events, and details the procedure which will be used to arrive at such judgements.

2. Scope of this Policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to any situation in which an external speaker (defined as any individual who is not a member of Loughborough University, whether staff member or student, or Loughborough Students Union) is invited to speak on University premises or at a University-branded event at any location by a student society or association or by an external visitor using University premises. References to external speakers includes visiting speakers and the terms may be used interchangeably.
- 2.2. For the sake of clarity this includes premises operated by Imago @ Loughborough Limited as well as University premises at Loughborough and at the Loughborough University campus in London.
- 2.3. Staff organising such events are referred to paragraph 4.2 of this policy, which outlines their responsibilities.

3. Principles

- 3.1. As set out in 1.1 and 1.2 above, Loughborough University is committed to protecting freedom of speech and will therefore support the diverse range of societies and organisations at Loughborough who wish to invite external speakers.

- 3.2. In determining whether an external speaker should be allowed to speak on University premises or at University-branded events, the University will balance the right of freedom of speech and academic freedom and its obligations under the relevant legislative and guidance frameworks. A list of the relevant frameworks in this context is included at the end of this policy.
- 3.3. Decisions made about external speaker requests will be evidence-based, will be taken on the basis of an assessment of risk and will be timely.
- 3.4. The presumption will be to permit external speakers to speak on University premises or at University-branded events with appropriate mitigation or safeguards in place where necessary, except for situations in which:
 - a) the University determines that the presence of a speaker presents an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of its community, or;
 - b) the presence of a speaker is likely to result in criminal or civil law being broken, or;
 - c) the presence of a speaker is likely to leave the university in breach of its statutory obligations.
- 3.5. In broad terms, Loughborough University will not provide a platform for external speakers in the following instances (though the final decision will be subject to the procedure outlined in Section 4 below):
 - a) Where it is likely that criminal or civil law will be broken, including (but not limited to) the following examples:
 - the use or threat of violence;
 - incitement to violence;
 - incitement to hatred or harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic as specified in the Equality Act 2010;
 - support for, or encouragement of support for, a proscribed organisation (including providing money or other property for a proscribed organisation) as specified in the government's list of [Proscribed Terrorist Organisations](#);
 - b) Where it is likely that the views expressed by the speaker present a risk of members of the University (students or staff) being drawn into terrorism and where this risk cannot be adequately mitigated by any of the steps outlined in Section 4.6 below.

Where an organiser invites a speaker who they might reasonably have suspected would use the platform to break the law, they may be in breach of the law as well as the speaker.

- 3.6. A record will be kept of all decisions taken in relation to external speaker requests and will be held securely in accordance with the University's [Data Protection Policy](#).
- 3.7. Loughborough University will not permit gender segregation except for the purposes of religious observance.
- 3.8. Loughborough University will share information on external speakers, within appropriate legal boundaries, with other Higher and Further Education institutions in accordance with the provisions of the statutory [Prevent Duty Guidance](#).

- 3.9. All external speakers will be given clear information outlining the standards and principles to which they are expected to adhere at Loughborough University. A copy of this information is included as [Appendix 3](#).
- 3.10. Any threats or attempts from third parties or other members of the University to disrupt events or intimidate external speakers will be dealt with through University Health and Safety policy or, where appropriate, University disciplinary policy.

4. Procedure

- 4.1. Student organisers of events at which an external speaker will be present will be required to give the University Security Manager and the President of Loughborough Students Union (or their nominee) at least 14 days' notice of the event. The process is outlined in Appendix 1 (In the case of Loughborough University London, requests should be sent to the Operations Director, London and the LSU President. The London-specific process is outlined in Appendix 2).
- 4.2. Staff organisers of events will be expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and will be expected to escalate any concerns about speakers as per the procedure set out in 4.6 below.
- 4.3. Details of the event and the external speaker should be provided via the online form here [Loughborough University: Guest Speaker Request Form](#).
- 4.4. Organisers should not publicise the details of the meeting until 7 days have elapsed following the sending of the form.
- 4.5. The University will determine, on the basis of information obtained directly or through partner organisations, whether the external speaker is likely to present any of the risks outlined in section 3.5 above, having regard to the need to protect and promote the free speech of staff, students and visiting speakers. The starting position will be that the event will be permitted to proceed, unless there are legitimate reasons for it not to proceed.
- 4.6. Where there are such concerns, the Chief Operating Officer may require that one or several of the following conditions are met in order to allow the external speaker to proceed:
 - That the event be filmed by the University for monitoring and evidential purposes.
 - That the talk and any accompanying literature, including promotional materials, must be in English.
 - That the event be attended by specified members of University staff.
 - That the text of the speech delivered is submitted to the University in advance.
 - That the speaker accepts questions from the audience on the subject of the talk for a specified time.
 - That the talk is reorganised so that the speaker is required to speak as

part of a panel.

- That the time or location of the event be varied, including moving online.
 - That the University is provided with an advance copy of the guest list.
 - That admission to the event is by means of tickets issued in advance.
 - That the meeting is declared public, allowing the presence of police and members of the public.
 - That the organisers cover the costs of any exceptional security arrangements (see 4.12 below).
 - Any other condition which the Chief Operating Officer deems necessary and proportionate in line with this policy.
- 4.7. Where the University deems that the steps outlined above will not provide sufficient mitigation of the risks presented by the external speaker, the Chief Operating Officer may deny permission for the event to proceed.
- 4.8. Decisions will be communicated to the event organiser with as much notice as possible. This communication will indicate:
- Whether the event is permitted to proceed;
 - Whether any conditions (see 4.6 above) are to be imposed on the event to allow it to proceed;
 - Wherever possible, the basis on which this decision has been reached.
- 4.9. Failure to provide the University and Students Union with sufficient notice of the event may in itself be grounds for refusal of an external speaker request.
- 4.10. The organiser or chair of the event has a duty to ensure that the speaker adheres to the standards and principles outlined in this policy. In the case of conduct which breaches these standards and principles, the organiser or chair should issue appropriate warnings, and if the unacceptable conduct continues, should halt the event or require the speaker to leave. Regard should be had to the University's commitments to Free Speech and Academic Freedom in making such decisions.
- 4.11. A record will be kept by Security of all decisions regarding external speakers in line with the University's [Data Protection Policy](#).
- 4.12. Wherever possible the security needs of any event will be met within existing scheduled resources and the costs will not be passed on to the event organiser save in exceptional circumstances. The factors set out below will in most cases increase the security costs required and the University may then pass on such additional costs to the event organizer:
- a) The location – for example, selection of a venue with multiple entrances, which all need to be covered by physical security, will increase the need for additional staff resource, including planning and on the day;
 - b) The date - events taking place on weekends, bank holidays and University closure days will incur additional resource (due to reduced staffing levels in Security on those days) and such staff being entitled to a premium on their pay;

- c) Timing - events taking place outside of the University's ordinary office hours will similarly likely require additional resource (due to reduced staffing levels in Security outside business hours).
- d) Previous disruption - where the planned speaker has appeared at other events which have attracted protests or disruption, which would, in the reasonable opinion of the University, indicate a need for enhanced security resources for the planned event.

5. Right of Appeal

- 5.1. Appeals against the decision of the Chief Operating Officer must be made in writing to the Vice-Chancellor within 3 working days of the decision being communicated to the event organiser.
- 5.2. The appeal should state clearly the grounds on which the appeal is being made.
- 5.3. The case will be considered by the Vice Chancellor and a decision will be shared with the event organiser within 3 working days.

6. Oversight and Governance of this Policy

- 6.1. Oversight and governance of this policy rests with University Council.
- 6.2. The policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis or sooner if there is a change to any relevant legislation.

7. Relevant Legal and Guidance Frameworks

Education Act (1986)

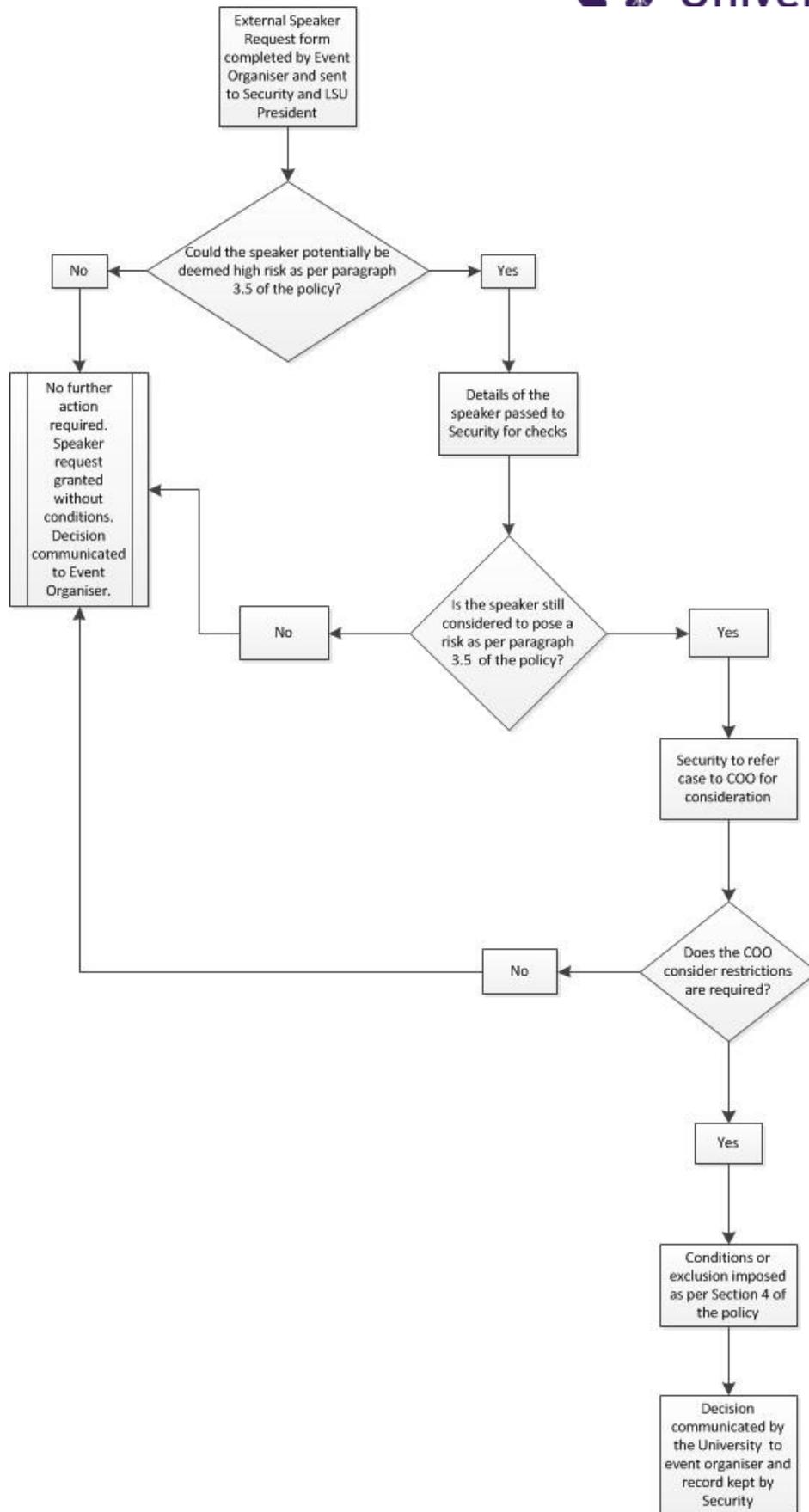
Equality Act (2010)

Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015) and the accompanying [Prevent Duty Guidance for Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales](#).

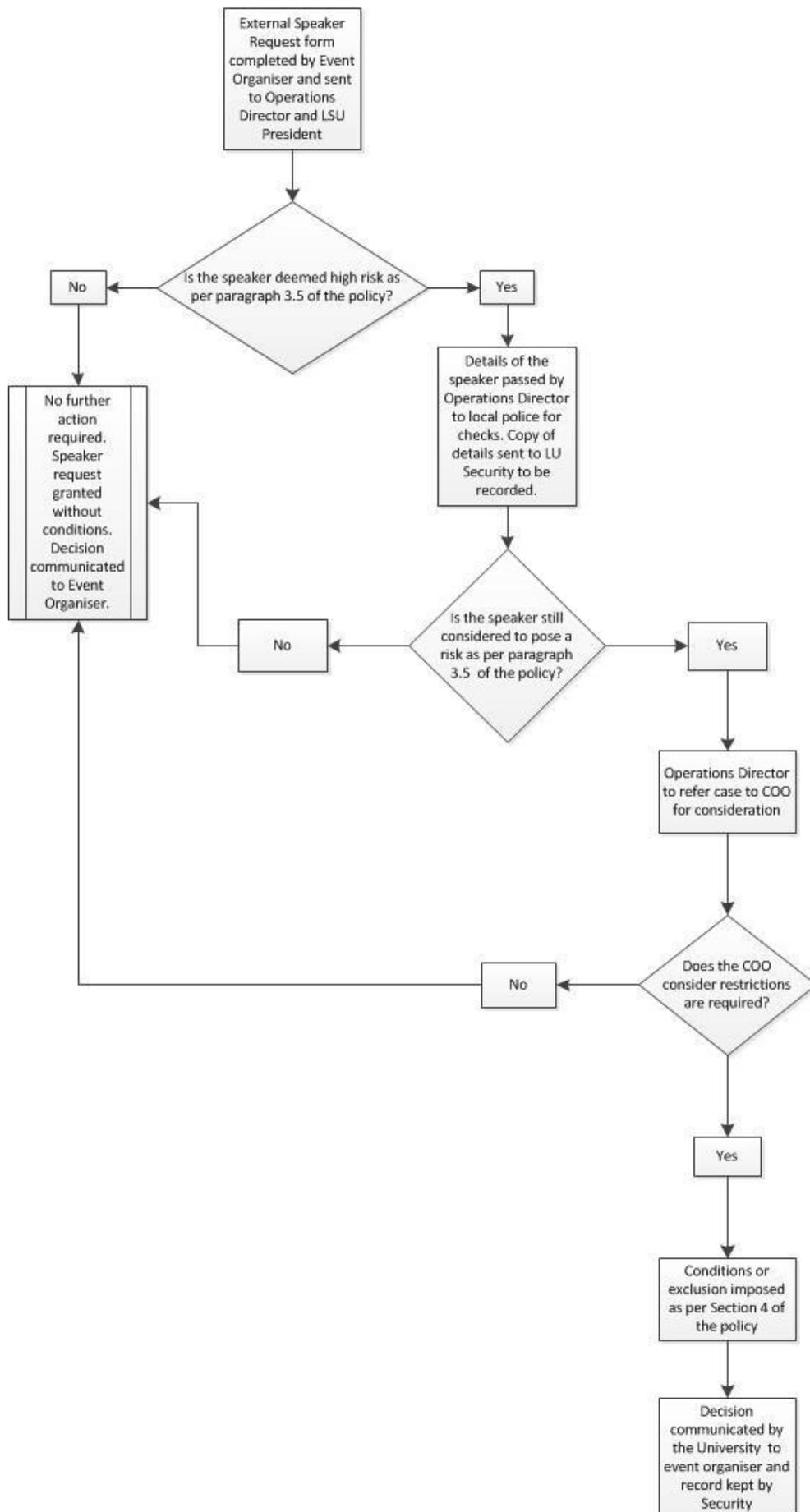
[Universities UK guidance on External Speakers in Higher Education Institutions](#).

[Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance on Gender Segregation at Events and Meetings](#).

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023



Appendix 2: Loughborough University London External Speaker Decision Flowchart



Standards for External Speakers at Loughborough University and Loughborough Students' Union

Loughborough University is committed to promoting and protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom. We also acknowledge our statutory obligation to 'take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the establishment and for visiting speakers'.

As such External Speakers will normally be accorded the same freedom of expression as University staff and students. However, freedom of speech is not open-ended or absolute and Loughborough University is also committed to ensuring that proper account is taken of its obligation to ensure relevant legislation is adhered to. Speakers are advised to familiarise themselves with the University Policy on External Speakers available at

www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/policy/externalspeakers/ExternalSpeakerPolicy_FINAL.pdf.

In line with this policy external speakers are required to adhere to the following standards while speaking on Loughborough University premises or at Loughborough University branded events.

- Speakers are expected to co-operate with University, Students Union or Imago staff in providing any information requested in a timely and transparent manner. Failure to do so may result in an event not being permitted.
- The University will not provide a platform for speakers who:
 - Use or threaten violence;
 - Incite others to violence;
 - Incite others to hatred or harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic as specified in the Equality Act 2010;
 - Provide or encourage support for a proscribed organisation as specified in the government's list of Proscribed Terrorist Organisations.
- The University may place conditions on an external speaker on the basis of a risk assessment and in line with its policy. Speakers are expected to adhere to any such conditions.
- Speakers are expected to adhere to instructions given by the chair of an event or any other University or Loughborough Students' Union officer who is present.

Where a speaker does not adhere to the standards set out above they may be asked to leave the premises and may also be prevented from speaking at future events.