



# External Speaker Policy

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## Introduction

Navitas UPE embedded colleges operate within host Universities in the UK and in Continental Europe. UK Universities have a long and rich history in welcoming visiting speakers from around the world to campuses. Such speakers have brought and continue to bring great diversity of experience, insight and opinion, enriching our events and activities and sparking discussion and debate among our students, staff and visitors alike.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set in place a governing framework for Birmingham City University International College Staff, Students and contracted Tutors for scheduled events they organise with external speakers to ensure that this proud heritage, where debate, challenge and dissent are not only permitted but expected, can continue for current and future generations, while safeguarding our institution, its staff and students. The policy outlines the context for the approval of external speakers and events. This policy aims to ensure that Birmingham City University International College event organisers are aware of the framework we operate within when facilitating external speakers and the measures that may be required to support their event. It should be read in conjunction with the associated External Speaker Booking Procedure and Booking Form.

## Organising an event

Anyone organising an event that involves a speaker or speakers to be hosted by Navitas UPE colleges must ensure that:

- This policy and associated processes are followed;
- All such events have a completed External Speaker Booking Form submitted to the College CDP approval at least 14 days in advance of the event taking place;
- Any requested modifications are implemented before the event takes place
- Anyone (staff or student) organising an event that involves an external speaker or speakers to be hosted on their host Universities (on campus or elsewhere or within any of its premises (Inc. Students' Union and, Halls of Residence and external client hosted events) must ensure that our host Universities External Speaker Policy and Code of Conduct are followed.
- An event includes any gathering that involves an external speaker addressing a group, including in a teaching, learning or research setting (class, conference, seminar) or in the context of extracurricular activity.
- The person organising the event must:
  - A Undertake a first assessment of the proposed external speaker (as set out below) and, if there are any concerns, escalate the decision about whether to invite that speaker as set out in the booking process.
  - B Ensure that all speakers are made aware of and given a copy of Navitas UPE Code of Conduct.
- Please note that failure by a member of staff or student to comply with this policy will be treated very seriously and may be subject to formal action under the University's normal disciplinary processes for staff and students.

Under no circumstances should an event take place if an External Speaker booking form has not been completed. Failure to comply with the External Speaker policy will result in the room booking being cancelled and may be subject to formal action under the Birmingham City University International College normal disciplinary processes.

## External Speaker Booking Process

Anyone organising an event as described above must follow the External Speaker Booking Process.

Most external speaker requests will be straightforward and can be handled entirely at a local (departmental) level see below. However, some may be complex and may require referral to Navitas UPE Academic Registry for further consideration. The referral process, see below, will only apply in a minority of circumstances – to events or speakers deemed to be higher-risk.

### **Local assessment of proposed external speaker(s)**

Prior to the confirmation of any external speaker, the event organiser will be responsible for assessing the speaker against the following set of questions:

**Question 1:** Has the speaker previously been prevented from speaking at the host University or another University or similar establishment or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the External Speaker Code of Conduct?

**Question 2:** Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by speakers may be in breach of the External Speaker Code of Conduct?

**Question 3:** Is the proposed speaker/theme likely to attract attendance from individuals/groups that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the External Speaker Code of Conduct?

### **If the answer to all three questions is NO:**

The event organiser can confirm the external speaker and ‘book’ them to speak at their event or activity in the normal way. (It is required that the external speaker be sent a copy of the External Speaker Code of Conduct).

### **If the answer to any of the questions is unclear:**

The event organiser must seek guidance from their college CDP (informing Navitas UPE Academic Registry), whose responsibility it will be to further review the speaker(s) against the questions above.

### **Ultimately, if the answer to any of the questions is YES:**

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to submit a referral to Navitas UPE Academic Registry.

- To make a speaker referral submission: please use the External Speaker Referral Form (the Speaker Policy Review Process provides a detailed overview of the referral submission process and subsequent steps).
- The External Speaker Policy and approval process will be continually reviewed and updated in response to legislative changes and other factors. It is the responsibility of those organising events to ensure that they are acting in accordance with the most recent version of the Policy, which will be published by Birmingham City University International College on its website.

## **Managing external speakers**

Any external speaker hosted by Birmingham City University International College Staff or students (on our host Universities campus or elsewhere) or, to be hosted at the Students' Union and, Halls of Residence, must be aware of, and comply with, the External Speaker Code of Conduct.

It is the responsibility of the person who is organising the event to ensure that the speaker receives the Navitas Code of Conduct and has their attention drawn to its contents. The protection of freedom of speech does not allow a speaker to break the law or breach the lawful rights of others. All speakers and attendees are expected to act with civility, consideration and respect for others in our colleges, our host Universities and the local community. It should be noted that these provisions do not create a broad right not to be offended; the expression of views which some people may find objectionable or offensive is not prohibited generally by law.

Event organisers have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no enforced segregation by any protected characteristic takes place at any event, unless it is specifically for religious worship or practice or for reasons of health and safety, and that attendees have the freedom to choose where they sit. Event organisers must not knowingly facilitate discrimination by others at the request of an external speaker or an individual attending or wishing to attend an event.

## **Data Sharing**

Where it deems that there is a legitimate reason to do so, the Navitas Academic Registry reserves the right to share information on the external speakers it has hosted, and/or those it deemed to be a risk, with other relevant agencies.

In accordance with its obligations as detailed in the Prevent Duty Guidance 5, the host College will report any major incidences of concern involving external speakers on campus to the Office for Students (OfS).

## **Complaints procedure**

If an individual (staff, student or external visitor) considers there to have been a breach of this Policy, they have the right to make a formal complaint Navitas UPE Academic Registry in Oxford (see NPR 10a Student Complaints)

## **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by Navitas UPE Academic Registry, unless there are internal or legislative changes that necessitate earlier review.

The Policy was last reviewed on 12 February 2020 by the UPE Academic Board.