KEELE UNIVERSITY SPEAKER & EVENT APPROVAL PROCEDURE



KEELE UNIVERSITY

SPEAKER/EVENT APPROVAL PROCEDURE

October 2021

SPEAKER & EVENT APPROVAL PROCEDURE



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to set out the University's approach and process for reporting, assessing, and managing Speaker/Events so that the commitments and requirements detailed within its Freedom of Expression Code of Practice can be maintained and supported.
- 1.2 Keele University is committed to safeguarding freedom of expression throughout its community and upholding academic freedom of enquiry in its teaching, research, and associated activities. The University values the rights, responsibilities, and dignity of all individuals, accommodating their wide range of views even where they are controversial, unpopular, and provocative. This includes ensuring free and open discussion can take place in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance, and in compliance with University policies and procedures and statutory duties, referenced within this document.
- 1.3 The University will therefore take all reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of expression within the law is secured for members of the University and for visiting speakers. However, where there are legitimate concerns regarding the legality of a Speaker/Event and/or there are risks to the safety, or wellbeing of participants, or our wider community, then it may be necessary for the University to direct that reasonable, necessary, and proportionate measures should be taken to address these risks, in order that the Speaker/Event can be enabled to proceed. Under exceptional circumstances where reasonable measures are considered insufficient to meet the risks concerned, then by necessity a Speaker/Event may have to be proscribed from taking place. Under this procedure this situation is considered a measure of last resort. This is explained in more detail in Annex 'D'.
- 1.4 The legal basis for this procedure is provided within Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, but also is associated with elements of other legislation and guidance including:-
 - Equality Act 2010;
 - Human Rights Act 1998;
 - Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (also known as the 'Prevent duty'); and
 - EHRC guidance.

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2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies where speaker activities/events involve:
 - a. Any External Speaker¹; or
 - b. **Any** Speaker, including staff, students or alumni, where it is expected, or reasonably foreseeable that there may be a risk of non-compliance with the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, (The full criteria for determining risk is detailed at Annex 'A').

where these activities/events are:

- c. hosted on any University premises or land; or
- d. on any other premises or land elsewhere (including events enabled by digital technologies, such as video and teleconferencing) where the speaker activity/event is affiliated to, funded or branded as associated with Keele University, Keele Students Union or Keele Postgraduate Association (including their societies).

Any speaker activities/events which have been identified as containing potential risk as outlined at Annex 'A', must be formally approved by the University in order that it can seek to ensure that they can take place safely and legally. See Annex 'B' for procedural flow-chart and [Click Here] to link to on-line application form.

¹ An external speaker is not a member of the University (e.g. not staff, student, alumni, or an officer of the university. Academic speakers on short-term or casual contracts are classed as 'staff' within this procedure)

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3. Responsibilities of the Event Organiser

- 3.1 Where a speaker activity/event falls within the scope of this procedure then the organiser has a responsibility to **initially** record the details of the speaker and activity/event using the appropriate on-line form, normally **no later than 4 weeks prior** to the date of the event.
- 3.2 All Speaker/Event Organisers should have read the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice and confirm as part of the Speaker/Event Approval process, that they will ensure, as far as is reasonable and practicable, that their event / speaker(s) will be made aware of the requirements of the Code. The Event organiser should encourage Speaker/Events to be fully compliant with this Code of Practice and must report any grounds for concern that a Speaker/Event is likely to breach this.
- 3.3 Where the criteria at Annex 'A' does not apply to the speaker activity/event and therefore no risk is identified, then at the point that an on-line submission is saved, the system will provide confirmation that the speaker details have been recorded against a unique reference number and that the event can proceed as stated, without formal investigation and separate approval being required.
- 3.4 Where the person submitting expresses a belief that criteria at Annex 'A' may apply, then the system will require additional information before confirming the submission has been recorded against a unique reference number. The University's 'Designated Officer(s)' will be automatically notified, and this will trigger a process of information gathering and risk assessment, which the organiser has a positive obligation to support.
- 3.5 It is the responsibility of the activity/event organiser to comply with all conditions and instructions issued by the University associated with the conditional approval of a speaker activity/event under this procedure. It should be noted that where expenditure is or has been required as part of a condition for speaker approval, then the organiser's School, or Directorate, or team, may be required to meet these costs.
- 3.6 Failure on the behalf of a coordinator to comply with the requirements of this procedure or the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice (including a failure to disclose any serious material changes to risk that they were aware of) may result in formal investigation and disciplinary action being considered/taken.
- 3.7 A fuller explanation of key responsibilities of the Speaker/Event organiser along with a flow-chart detailing the reporting/approval procedure is provided at Annex 'B'. Information for accessing support and guidance is also provided within that Annex.

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4. Responsibilities of Designated Officer(s)

- 4.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost oversees the Speaker and Event Approval Procedure and has appointed Designated Officer(s) who have responsibility for overseeing the Speaker Approval Procedure and for providing periodic reports on its operation. The Designated Officer role will be routinely undertaken by:-
 - The Head of Security; or in their absence
 - The Security Operations Manager,
 - The Director of Student Services and Success, or
 - The Head of Residence Life.
- 4.2 The key responsibilities of a Designated Officer under this procedure are outlined within Annex 'C'.
- 4.3 Designated Officers, under the delegated authority of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, have responsibility to consider and undertake risk assessment of proposed Speaker activity/events where the criteria at Annex 'A' is considered may apply. This will involve making an initial determination whether they are Low, Medium, or Highrisk in nature and then take certain actions depending on the risk level identified. This decision is made within the context of the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice. The designated officers may make this decision seeking academic input where relevant and appropriate.
- 4.4 Designated Officers may conduct post event de-briefings in respect of any Speaker/Event in order to identify whether it had taken place successfully, whether there were any incidents or problems of note and to identify whether any learning points can be gained.

5. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

5.1 Low Risk Events

- 5.1.1 If the Designated Officer determines that the speaker activity/event proposed is low risk, the application should be approved by them, under delegated authority on behalf of the University and the decision communicated to the organiser promptly.
- 5.1.2 In Low-Risk cases, the Designated Officer(s) shall have authority to issue reasonable guidance to the speaker activity/event organiser in support of their event, in respect of assisting their compliance with the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice. This reasonable guidance does not constitute 'conditional approval'.
- 5.1.3 The Designated Officer will maintain Speaker Approval records that will include:
 - a) details of the research/investigation undertaken into a submission
 - b) the risk assessment outcome and the grounds / rationale for this,
 - c) any advice, guidance or policy direction/clarification given.

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5.2 Medium/High Risk Events

- 5.2.1 If the Designated Officer determines that a speaker activity/event is medium/high risk, then the Designated Officer shall discuss the case with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, to review this initial assessment and then if confirmed to convene a Speakers' Approval Panel, which will be chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.
- 5.2.2 Ahead of the panel meeting the Designated Officer will gather information on the proposed speaker and subject matter of the activity/event. This may include:
 - a review of the proposed content of the speech if this is known/provided (this
 may be in the format of a detailed abstract, rather than the intended speech in
 full),
 - a check whether the speaker is associated with an organisation on the Home Office's list of proscribed groups and organisations,²
 - if necessary, consulting any relevant external parties (for example: the DfE Regional Prevent Lead, the Police, officers at other universities)
 - completion of a formal risk assessment, if deemed necessary
 - obtaining Executive approval to formally notify external authorities where there
 is an identified risk or likelihood of breaches of the criminal law.
- 5.2.3 Full records of activity and decisions taken in respect of Medium/High Risk events will be maintained for audit/review purposes.

6. Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost and Speaker Approval Panel

- of speaker activity/event applications in Medium/High Risk cases and will determine whether they should be approved, approved with conditions, or in extreme cases proscribed from taking place. A Speaker Approval Panel will be formed to help them discharge this responsibility and provide appropriate legal, operational, and ethical guidance and support to enable a full understanding of each case to be gained prior to a decision being made. Additional guidance is provided in respect of the Panel membership, considerations and operation within Annex 'D' of this procedure.
- 6.2 The decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost will be communicated to the speaker activity/event organiser in writing **no later than a week** before the planned activity, (providing that the appropriate notice periods have been adhered to by the organiser).

² See the Home Office website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2

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7. Complaints

- 7.1 Any individual that has a concern or complaint about non-compliance with this Procedure should report this to the Designated Officer(s) in the first instance, who will conduct, or request that an investigation takes place.
- 7.2 If the individual remains dissatisfied, a formal complaint should be addressed to the Secretary to Council. A complaint may include (a) being prevented from arranging, speaking at, or attending an event of the type envisaged by this Procedure, (b) alleged infringements of freedom of expression or academic freedom (please refer to the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice), and (c) allegations that an external speaker at an event of the type envisaged by this Procedure breached or is likely to breach the Procedure.
- 7.3 The complaint should include the original referral documentation, copies of any relevant correspondence regarding the event and any other evidence that the complainant wishes to have considered. The Secretary to Council may request independent evidence from other parties before making a decision. The Secretary to Council will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing as soon as possible and their decision is final.
- 7.4 If the complaint relates to the actions of the Keele Students Union or the Keele Postgraduate Association, then it should be reported via their respective complaints' procedures. After exhausting the students' unions procedures, then the matter may be referred to the Secretary to Council.
- 7.5 Students shall have the right to refer a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if they remain dissatisfied, after exhausting all internal procedures.

8. Compliance and Enforcement

- 8.1 The University reserves the right to monitor any event on its premises, particularly in terms of compliance with any special conditions attached to the approval of the speaker, as well as to assess general compliance with this Procedure and other relevant University policies and procedures.
- 8.2 While an event is in progress on its premises, the University shall have the right to require the activity/event organiser to terminate the event if there is a reasonable belief that it is likely that conduct arising from it risks:-
 - personal/public safety, or
 - a breach of the law, or
 - a material breach of this Procedure, or the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, or any of the conditions imposed under it.

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In such instances, all persons including external visitors may be asked to leave University premises and the matter would be reported to a Designated Officer for investigation.

- 8.3 All events must comply with the Code of Practice in respect of the Room Conditions, and the booking contract. See link below:

 https://www.keele.ac.uk/timetabling/roominformation/roomconditions/
- 8.4 Any members of the University who breach this Procedure or the provisions of the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice may be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with University Regulations and Policies.

9. Implementation and Review

- 9.1 The Designated Officer shall be responsible for reporting on the operational effectiveness of this procedure to the Prevent Steering Group, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, who will maintain strategic ownership and oversight of its implementation. The operation of this procedure will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, with a formal review of the document at least every three years and in accordance with the University Policy Framework. This document will be made available on the University's website within the Policy Zone.
- 9.2 Due to its link with the University's compliance with the Prevent duty, review or revision of this procedure may constitute a reportable event to the Office for Students (OfS) under Regulatory Advice 16. When reviewing or revising this policy and procedure, due consideration should be given to the University's Reportable Events procedure. If reportable, a submission must be made to the OfS within 5 days of approval, therefore, this consideration should take place via the Prevent Steering Group during to review process, prior to the changes being approved. .

10. Associated Policies & Procedures

- 10.1 The following University/KSU/KPA governance documents should also apply and be complied with when organising an event on University premises:
 - Freedom of Expression Code of Practice
 - Gender Segregation Joint Code of Practice
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Strategy & Objectives
 - Religion and Belief Policy
 - Bullying & Harassment Procedure
 - Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
 - Social Media Guidance
 - Third Party Access Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure
 - Estates & HR procedures, such as Fire Procedures, Health & Safety Procedures, etc.

These documents can be found within the University's Policy Zone: http://www.keele.ac.uk/policyzone

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Document Name	Speaker/Event approval procedure
Owner	Head of Security
Version Number	1.2
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	19th February 2020 as part of Freedom of Expression Code of Practice submission (This procedure is fully compliant with the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice and consistent with the EA undertaken during the development of the Code of Practice – the 'parent policy' for this procedure)
Approval Date	11 th October 2021
Approved By	University Executive Committee
Date of Commencement	25 th November 2021
Date of Last Review	1 st March 2016
Date for Next Review	8 th July 2022 - NOTE: changes to this procedure are OfS 'Reportable Events'.
Related University Policy Documents	Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, Gender Segregation Code of Practice; Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure; Social Media Guidance; Group Social Events Code of Conduct; various Estates and Human Resources policies and procedures. Reportable Events Procedure
For Office Use – Keywords	

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Annex 'A' Criteria for assessing potential Speaker/Event risks

When considering whether a Speaker/Event should be reported as containing risk it is important that the organisers not only assess whether its subject is highly controversial, but also reflect on its potential impact on others. The below list has been produced to assist with this assessment.

In determining whether there is a potential risk of infringement or non-compliance with the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice the following criteria should be considered:

- 1. Whether any element of the speaker/event activity in question may be likely to:
 - a. discriminate against any individual or group (with a protected characteristic) on any of the grounds of discrimination provided in the Equality Act 2010. Formal requests for gender segregation at meetings (save for those solely used for religious worship or practice) is prohibited on these grounds in accordance with the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance and the <u>Gender Segregation Joint Code of Practice</u>
 - b. constitute a **criminal offence**, or incite others to commit criminal acts;
 - c. incite others towards **hatred**;
 - d. be considered within the law to be **obscene**, **or grossly defamatory**;
 - e. conflict with the University's commitments, policies, and procedures to provide a safe and supportive environment for its members, free from bullying, victimisation, or discrimination, or threaten any person's right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- 2. Whether the Speaker/activity/event, or normal University business may be disrupted to the extent that public order is not maintained, or the safety of any person or the security of university assets may be at risk. In determining this organisers should consider:
 - a. the prior conduct associated with the Speaker/Event and its participants, as well as any prior conduct from others that may be likely to attempt to protest against, disrupt or prevent the Speaker/Event from taking place.
 - b. the public profile of the speaker (including if they have been prevented from delivering a speech at the University, or at other universities previously);
 - c. whether the timing or location of the activity may generate risks in respect of its coincidence with other local or national occasions or events.

If any of these things are considered likely to apply then the presence of risk should be indicated via the on-line Speaker/Event approval form, Link to FORM> or a Designated Officer contacted and informed via speakerapproval.designatedofficers@keele.ac.uk to ensure appropriate arrangements are made.

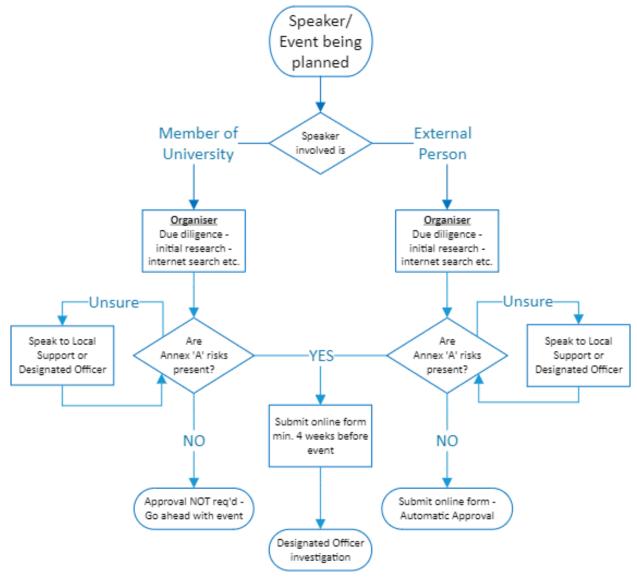
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ANNEX B

Responsibilities of the Speaker/Event Organiser

The below flow-chart has been produced to explain the key responsibilities of a Speaker/Event organiser.



To support this flow-chart, the following specific guidance is also provided to help organisers to suitably discharge their responsibilities.

1. The organiser of the speaker activity/event should have an understanding of the background of the speaker and the nature of the subject matter, in order that they can assess whether the criteria at Annex 'A' apply, prior to recording their assessment on the web-form. Existing professional knowledge, or a simple web-search and discussion with the Speaker is likely to be sufficient for these purposes in the majority of cases.



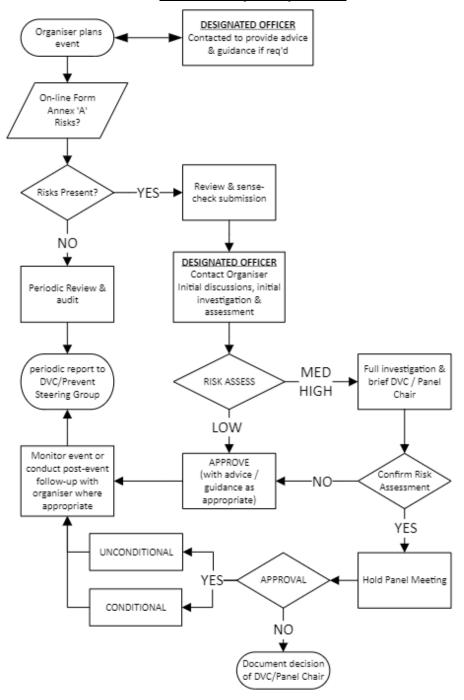


- Where an organiser of a speaker activity/event is unsure about whether the criteria at Annex 'A' applies or not, then they can access informal support, advice/guidance from one of the following sources:-
 - For Student Societies, student groups or for Students' Union events The Students' Union Activities Team (Tel: 01782 733826, email <u>su.activities@keele.ac.uk</u>)
 - For Faith based groups members of the University chaplaincy team (Tel 01782-733393, email chaplaincy@keele.ac.uk)
 - For all other groups/areas one of the Designated Officers speakerapproval.designatedofficers@keele.ac.uk
- The organiser of a speaker activity/event must immediately notify the University of any material changes to an approved activity to the Designated Officer(s). Where the material changes relate to aspects of the criteria outlined in Annex 'A', then this information should be immediately reported to one of the University Designated Officers speakerapproval.designatedofficers@keele.ac.uk
- The speaker activity/event organiser shall, so far as it is reasonably practicable, ensure that effective arrangements are in place to appropriately manage a speaker activity/event in terms of it operating in accordance with the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice and in a lawful way. In the case of all external Speakers the speaker activity/event organiser is responsible for taking all reasonable measures to ensure that external speaker(s) understand the University's expectations and their personal obligation to comply with our Freedom of Expression Code of Practice. An email address for external speakers is requested as part of the on-line submission, which automatically sends an email to the Speaker providing a link to the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice in support of these efforts.
- If legal obligation and/ or the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice appear to be in danger of being contravened, the organiser or other person in charge should provide appropriate warnings and, in the case of a continuing lack of order, either require the withdrawal or removal of persons concerned by security or bring the activity/event to a close. In these circumstances a full report of the circumstances should be provided to a Designated Officer for investigation.
- Failure to comply with this procedure and the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice may be considered as a disciplinary offence for students under University Regulations, and for staff.
- There is a positive obligation on the part of the activity/event organiser to make the Designated Officer aware of any information suggesting that there is risk of breaching this procedure or the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice prior to it taking place. The Event Organiser should retrospectively report any problems that have come to light after the event has been held.





Annex 'C'
Process chart 2 - Responsibilities of Designated Officer
and subsequent process



The Designated Officer(s) will provide advice and guidance to other members of staff or students in respect of the Speaker Approval Procedure in general as well as on a case-by-case basis, where appropriate, in order that aspects of risk can be properly assessed and sound decisions made, in keeping with the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice.

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- The Designated Officer(s) will periodically undertake audits, reviews and compliance tests in respect of the operation of this procedure, including checks of external speakers automatically approved where 'no risk' has been identified. The findings arising from these audits will be reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost and the Prevent Steering Group.
- On receipt of a Speaker Approval Request where risks outlined in <u>Annex 'A'</u> are present, the Designated Officer will commence a process of research and investigation in order to undertake a risk assessment.
- The Designated Officer may on occasions call on support from functional areas across the University to assist them in respect of their role, particularly in respect of liaison and support where organisers are:
 - students, when assistance from the Students' Union/KPA and Chaplaincy Officers may be required; or
 - external clients/groups, when assistance from the Events team may be called upon.
- The initial research to inform the risk assessment conducted by the Designated Officer may include:
 - An internet search on the external speaker and the subject matter of the proposed event;
 - A search on social media on the external speaker;
 - Consultation with appropriate academic staff or staff within professional services;
 - Consultation with wider University/Students' Union Officers, or groups, in order to better understand the potential impact of any Speaker activity/event;
 - Consultation with external parties, for example: the Police or Police Prevent team, the Regional HE Prevent Lead, Designated Prevent lead officers at other universities.
- Where breaches of this procedure or the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice are reasonably believed to have taken place, (including where complaints have been made in line with Section 7 of this procedure), then a Designated Officer may conduct an investigation (or request others to investigate where more appropriate) with the findings being reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

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Annex 'D' DVC/Speaker Approval Panel Guidance

- 1. The Speakers Approval Panel will normally include the following membership:
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost (Chair)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor Education (Prevent lead & Deputy Chair)
 - Head of Security / or deputy
 - Director of Student Services & Success / or deputy
 - Associate Director: Strategy & Policy
 - Students' Union Professional Services representative (as appropriate)
 - Keele Postgraduate Association representative (as appropriate)
 - Event Organiser (as appropriate)
- 2. Where the circumstances of the speaker activity/event require it, the Pro-VC may coopt additional members to this Panel, which may include:
 - Head of Legal / Solicitor
 - Director of HR / Senior HR manager / Equality and Diversity lead
 - Director of Strategic Communications & Brand / Senior representative
 - Keele Events Team representative
 - Representative from the Chaplaincy Team
 - Representative(s) from a student society or other campus-based group
 - Representative from third party organisation/clients linked to the proposed event or group(s) potentially impacted by it
 - Representative from local Emergency Services
 - Regional HE Prevent lead
 - Staffordshire Police Prevent Team, or Police representative
 - Other members as appropriate to the need, at the discretion of the Chair
- 3. The Speakers' Approval Panel can be convened to meet either face-to-face or by virtual/electronic means through technology, depending on urgency/logistics.
- 4. In considering the approval of a speaker activity/event, the Panel shall review the information gathered during the investigation (including that provided by the organiser) in order that they can reasonably assess:
 - a. The presence of risks to personal safety;
 - b. The presence of risks to the security of University assets;
 - c. The presence of other risks associated with potential breaches of law;
 - d. The presence of risks associated with potential breaches of the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice or other commitments, policies or procedures not included above.
- 5. The Panel will balance any of the risks outlined above that it considers to be of legitimate concern against the ability of the organiser(s) and University to mitigate and manage them appropriately. The panel has a positive obligation to seek to enable Speaker/Events to take place in accordance with the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice.

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- 6. Having fully explored the Panel's views and considered the University's duty and commitments to Freedom of Expression balanced against identified risks, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost shall decide whether it is reasonable for the activity to proceed without any conditions or restrictions being required. If this is the case, then they will grant its approval.
- 7. Where unconditional approval is not possible, due to the presence of risk (as outlined in 4 above) the Panel will consider whether the introduction of support measures³ may help mitigate identified risks and enable the Speaker/Event to proceed legally and safely. If this is the case, then the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost will grant conditional approval that the Speaker/Event can take place dependent on certain specified support measures, conditions or restrictions being met.
- 8. Where conditional approval is justified, measures required may include (but are not limited to):
 - a) that the activity be ticket only and/or a restriction on the numbers of people attending be imposed;
 - that an adequate number of suitable stewards must be available, in addition to any University security staff that the Panel may feel should be present to maintain good order;
 - That special arrangements be made for the chairing of a meeting, and agreements regarding the circumstances in which the meeting may or must be terminated prematurely be agreed;
 - d) that the presence of a balancing view, or range of views, be added to the event;
 - e) that the activity be restricted to staff and students of the University;
 - f) that conditions on whether and how the activity is advertised be imposed;
 - g) varying key aspects within the original request for approval in respect of the time, date, location or nature of how the Speaker/Event takes place (e.g. through use of appropriate technology); or
 - h) refusing admission to specific other parties.
- 9. If following the Panel's fullest consideration of reasonable support options and its commitments to the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, the Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost, or other Chair of the panel decides that risks cannot be mitigated sufficiently to enable the proposed Speaker/Event to take place safely and within the law, then they may decide, as a measure of last resort, that the activity be proscribed from taking place.
- 10. All decisions and considerations made by the Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost, or other Chair of the Speaker Approval Panel in respect of the operation of this procedure will be documented in order to support transparency and audit.

³ Any measures associated with conditional approval must be specific, necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances and aspects of risk that they are intended to mitigate against.