

External Speaker Code of Conduct

Guidance relating to external speakers at Plymouth Marjon University

This code of conduct exists to ensure that all speakers taking part in an event or activity hosted or run by Plymouth Marjon University, on campus or elsewhere, act in accordance with the University's External Speaker Policy and UK legislation. It should be read in conjunction with the External Speaker and Events Policy, Code of Practice and Process. It is the responsibility of the Principal Organiser (the individual from within Plymouth Marjon University e.g. member of staff or student who makes the External Speaker submission according to the University's Code of Practice) to ensure that:

- This Code of Conduct is communicated to all External Speakers (once approved and confirmed via Stages 1, 2, if necessary, and 3 of the External Speaker Booking Process).
- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the requirements within it are upheld during the running of the event or activity.

Rationale for the Code of Conduct

Freedom of speech, human rights and academic freedoms are rightly regarded as important foundations of a modern democratic society. These concepts are familiar to Plymouth Marjon University and its staff and students. Providing an environment where academic freedom can thrive is an essential part of our mission and we seek to encourage wide ranging debate within our teaching and research, that is not afraid to address controversial issues. Part of the process of encouraging vibrant, thought provoking and challenging debate on controversial issues involves the presence of External Speakers on university or students' union premises. Although most speakers are uncontroversial, some may express contentious or even inflammatory or offensive views or their presence on campus may be divisive. Whilst

the law protects freedom of speech and academic freedom (see section 3) the law also places limits on those freedoms and breaching the lawful rights of others (for example by using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, particularly with a view to inciting hatred or drawing others into terrorism) is unlawful¹. This Code of Conduct for External Speakers has been developed and will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the rights and freedoms of our staff, students and visitors are effectively secured in the context of the University's legal obligations rather than as an attempt to curtail the healthy exchange of ideas that external speakers provide.

The Legal Context

Universities operate in a complex legal environment. Examples of some of the relevant areas of law are given below:

- Individual Rights – People are entitled to protection from harassment, defamation and unlawful breach of their human rights, as well as from unfair treatment under equality law.
- Legislation relating to organisational structures and processes – Health and Safety law, Data Protection and Contract law are also relevant to the University's areas of activity.
- Criminal Law – Hate crimes, harassment, breach of the peace and terrorism all come under criminal law. There is also legislation around public meetings, public processions/assemblies and public order, which may be of relevance. Public law – Freedom of Speech and some duties under the Equality Act 2010 are captured under public law.

¹ N.B. There is no right not to be offended: the expression of views, which some people may find objectionable or offensive is not prohibited generally by law.

It is vital that all individuals involved in the External Speaker process, including the speakers themselves, understand that a wide-ranging legal framework governs this area. The expectations stated within the University's External Speaker and Events Policy and Code of Practice and Process, and this External Speaker Code of Practice, derive from this legislation.

Conduct

The University expects External Speakers to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others. Examples of the University's expectations are provided below.

The examples provided are for guidance and not intended to constitute an exhaustive list of unacceptable conduct by external speakers. The University reserves the right not to permit an external speaker to speak at or attend an event, to refuse to permit an event and/or to halt an event at any time if it reasonably considered there may be a breach of the External Speaker policy or of any legal obligation.

During the course of the event at which he or she participates, no speaker shall:

- Act in breach of the criminal law.
- Incite hatred or violence or any breach of the criminal law.
- Encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism or violent extremism.
- Spread hatred and intolerance.
- Discriminate against or harass any person or group on the grounds of their sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religious or other similar belief, sexual orientation or age.
- Defame any person or organisation.

- Raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the University.

During the course of the event at which he or she participates, all speakers shall:

- Comply with the University’s Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.
- Comply with the University’s External Speaker Policy.
- Present ideas and opinions, in particular those that may be contentious or potentially offensive, in the spirit of academic debate, being open to challenge and question.
- Follow the University’s policy on and instructions relating to health and safety.

Segregation

Universities have duties under the Equality Act 2010² (Equality Act 2010 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 30 October 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date) as education providers, employers and service providers. As such universities must not unlawfully discriminate against students, employees and other individuals to whom services are provided. Segregation by sex is not permitted in any academic meeting or at events, lectures or meetings provided for students, or at events attended by members of the public or employees of the university or Student Union. Segregation is therefore not permissible for any event covered by the External Speaker Policy and this Code of Conduct. The only exception to this is events that are for the purpose of collective religious worship.

Issuing Institution	Plymouth Marjon University
----------------------------	----------------------------

² [Equality Act 2010 updated](#)

Issuing Authority	Board of Governors
Document Title	External Speaker Code of Conduct
Document Reference	L:\Student Support\Prevent
Version	0.6
Custodian	Prevent – Senior Point of Contact
Document Date	26 th March 2016
Last amended	13th February 2020
Sensitivity	Unclassified
Circulation	Staff
Effective from	Date of most recent amendment
Review date	As required in accordance with regulatory change
Effective until	Until superceded
History	Minor changes made following Prevent Working Group 02 meeting 14/6/16. Minor changes made following Prevent Working Group meeting 13/2/20.