

External Speaker Approval Policy
Approved by Trustee Board
17th May 2011

The Union notes:

1. That a number of publications relating to best practice regarding University External Speaker Approval have recently published. Examples include the Caldicott enquiry, the Universities UK report and the Counter Terrorism Protective Security Advice for Higher and Further Education.
2. Section 43 of the Education Act (No. 2) 1986 states that “persons concerned in the government of any establishment... shall 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.”
3. The Human Rights Act 1998 secures various rights including freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 9), freedom of expression (Article 10), freedom of assembly and association (Article 11).
4. The Public Order Act 1986 provides that without any violence occurring an offence may still take place when someone believes that immediate unlawful violence will be used or provoked or when harassment, alarm or distress is caused. The same Act makes inciting racial or religious hatred an offence.
5. The Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006 also set out the offences related to terrorist offences which include supporting proscribed organisations in speeches and raising money to support them.
6. According to the Equality Act 2010 where speech or conduct related to a protected characteristic is intended to have the effect of violating another’s dignity or creating a “hostile, intimidating...environment” it shall be considered harassment.
7. There is need for clear guidelines on where the limits of free speech lie when speakers are invited by the Union or its recognised groups, including Clubs, Societies & Projects.
8. The College Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech must be adhered to by all members of the College and on all College business, including that of the Union and its recognised groups.

Imperial College Union believes:

1. In the principles of freedom of speech and expression within the limits of the law
2. That we have a duty of care to students of different faiths, backgrounds and lifestyles
3. That the opportunity, within the law, to hold and challenge extreme views should be protected in the policies we uphold as a Union
4. That the College Secretary should be consulted where the balance between Freedom of Speech and its lawful restrictions exists

Council
23rd May 2011

5. That no platform policies limit the freedom and right of our students to choose which views they hear. We recognise that we have a responsibility to allow extreme views to be challenged.

Imperial College Union resolves:

Process:

1. Requests for rooms and other spaces shall be received via an online system. Where an external speaker shall be leading or speaking at an event their details will be submitted through this system
2. Bookings shall not usually be accepted less than 2 weeks before the date of the event taking place. Permission will usually NOT be granted in these circumstances
3. The details of the event required include, title, date, organisers name & contact details, number of attendees and details of scope of advertising.
4. Speaker details required are:
 - a. speaker full name and organisation
 - b. speaker contact details
 - c. title of talk and subject matter
 - d. if the speaker has attended an event at Imperial College before
 - e. other establishments the speaker has spoken at before and any where permission has been refused
 - f. any notable details about the event eg. Security issues, media interest, controversial aspects of the talk or speaker
5. If this information or any other requested by ICU is withheld or not promptly provided when requested an event may be cancelled. The Union disciplinary policy may be implemented against the event organiser and/or committee in the event of disrepute, disorder or unlawfulness arising from the speaker or attendees. College or police action may also be consequences.
6. If College Security feel the physical security of the building, attendees or College members cannot be guaranteed the event must be cancelled. Appeals should be made to the College Secretary.
7. Conditions including but not limited to ticketing, restricting entry to Imperial members only or extra Security may be imposed on any event at the discretion of the Union President, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies), College Security or the College Secretary. Additional College Security, if required by the College, shall normally be paid for by the College.
8. Any group of people in College who could be intimidated, harassed or undermined by the content of talks should be informed at least 1 week before the event to allow their opinions and concerns to be addressed.
9. Approval or refusal, when there is doubt between conflicting legislation, shall be granted by the College Secretary.