

VISITING SPEAKER PROCEDURE

APPROVED BY SELT ON February 2025

Applies to:	
Harrogate College	✓
Keighley College	✓
Leeds City College	✓
Leeds Conservatoire	X
Leeds Sixth Form College / Pudsey Sixth Form College	✓
Luminate Group Services	✓
University Centre Leeds	✓

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1. INTRODUCTION

Luminate Education Group is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This procedure details the college approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students and the reputation of Luminate Education Group, whilst following the legislation we are responsible for upholding. It aims to ensure that all visiting speakers are suitable and do not promote hate or extremist views. This procedure is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Exception: Where employers, education or civic partners are contributing to curriculum delivery and development aligned to schemes of learning or to careers and progression, the link curriculum / careers contact will maintain oversight of the content and supervise the sessions, recording the input using localised departmental processes.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected and balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students, in turn reducing permissive environments.
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers ensuring that the college can meet their legal obligations.
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate.
- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding legislation and that both the college and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- Taking action to limit the potential harm and influence of radicalisers, as well as extremist narratives and content which can reasonably be linked to terrorism.

3. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law. Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. Universities and Colleges have a history of being open to debate and ideas with students at the forefront of pushing the limits of freedom of expression. ‘Academic freedom’ is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context.

However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, students, and communities. The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities. We want all our events, activities, and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the college; and within the law. Freedom

of speech is not an absolute right, and it does not include the right for individuals to harass others or incite them to violence or terrorism.

Sometimes an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event. We are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

4. EXTERNAL SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

An external speaker is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member at the college or one of its contracted partners and who has been invited to speak to students. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another organisation. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use college facilities. This policy also applies to any external organisation wanting to use rooms at the college.

An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity, or initiative organised by a student group/society, individual or staff member that is being held on the college premises. It also includes events where external speakers are streamed live into an event or a pre-recorded film is shown. It also includes activity being held on the college premises but organised by external venue hire clients.

5. GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENTS ORGANISING AN EVENT WITH AN EXTERNAL SPEAKER OR VENUE HIRE CLIENT

Heads of Department must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be published or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this document. This includes advertisement through all websites and social media platforms.

When deciding whether to host a particular speaker, it should consider carefully whether the views being expressed, or likely to be expressed, constitute views that are used to encourage people into participating in or supporting terrorism, or are shared by terrorist groups.

Luminate Education Group reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the procedure is not followed or if health, safety, and security criteria cannot be met.

Any room booking/event organisation with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 14 days before the date of the event. This is to allow for the organiser to have made adequate safeguarding checks as well as allowing time for alterations to the event if necessary. Any request made outside of this period will be rejected unless there are extenuating circumstances.

When an event takes place consideration should be given to topics covered and whether they may raise any sensitivities for students.

The individual/group organising an external speaker should complete the External Speaker and Events' risk assessment [form](#). If this is part of an event, then the organiser should complete an event risk assessment which can be found on the on the Health and Safety pages on the staff intranet.

If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the Deputy Director of Student Life. Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following:

- Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>
- Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist; a speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff; a speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial; a link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.
- A speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event).
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead based on regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

In making recommendations the Director of Student Life may consult on a wider basis with appropriate staff and risk will be assessed on the following basis:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputational risk to the College.
- The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to students or members of staff AND/OR to give rise to breach of peace.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff team and students are aware of and implement the procedure.

6. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE LETTING OF COLLEGE PREMISES

Luminate Education Group does not generally let space to external organisations. However, on occasion we do get adhoc requests from partners whom we work with e.g., Local Authority or employer networks to host events.

The member of staff supporting organising the room/event will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and the need to follow our speaker protocols in Appendix 2.

Luminate Education Group reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue booking with external speakers if there is no agreement that the protocol is followed, requested information not produced or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.

If in doubt as to the suitability of speakers, this should be referred to the Director of Student Life. Reasons for doubt may be as outlined in section 6.

In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event.
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

N.B. A lettings Policy is currently in development and should be finalised by the start of academic year 2025/26

APPENDIX 1 - SPEAKER PROTOCOLS

College is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This commitment includes doing everything we can to ensure students and staff are kept safe and protected from harm. As a college we promote the British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of difference faiths and beliefs.

We are committed to relational practice which means all content must be inclusive and promote a culture of belonging, trust and respect. Our commitment to promoting a proactive culture of safeguarding and student and staff wellbeing means we are vigilant to risks which may cause harm, including online bullying, abuse and harassment student and staff wellbeing.

Speakers and visitors are provided with information about our safeguarding protocols and how to report a concern.

All speakers have a responsibility to abide by the law and the colleges policies. In order to do this, we respectfully ask all speakers follow the protocol below:

Please do:

- Provide ID upon arrival.
- Wear your visitor badge at all times and do not move around buildings unless agreed by your nominated contact.
- Read the safeguarding and health and safety information provided to you.
- Have a nominated point of contact at the college.
- Remain on the topic scheduled for the event.
- Abide by College values.
- Ensure that messages communicated to students do not demonstrate active or vocal opposition to British values or our equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- Be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge.

Please do not:

- Swear or use any offensive language.
- Exchange, give or accept personal contact details from/with students.
- Instigate verbal or physical contact with a student, unless it part of the agreed reason for your visit.
- Advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law.
- Encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.
- Spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony.
- Raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College.

APPENDIX 2 - GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE RISK ASSESSMENT

[Risk Assessment Form](#)

When filling in the Risk Assessment, please follow the guidelines below:

Who wants to use the venue?

- Basic details should be recorded to include speakers address, mobile number and organisation details.
- Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed and is their organisation bona fide? Are they known to you?
- Is the speaker from the area? Are they UK citizens or from overseas and are they travelling specifically for this event?
- Check on internet to confirm status of speaker: include – website, YouTube, social media sites.
- How many people are likely to attend (check previous events locally / online).

What are the reasons for this event/speaker?

- What is the topic for the event and how will it be marketed? Will it be advertised locally or at a regional / national level?
- Has the topic met regionally or nationally with any criticism or hostility when it has been hosted before?
- Why has Luminate Education Group been chosen for this event? Is it capacity, local interest or some other reason?
- Are the event organisers requesting special conditions such as a closed meeting, tickets or segregation?
- Has any pressure (either directly or indirectly) been undertaken by any person to run or not run this event? Is there community pressure to run the event? Or have there been objections by some people to running it?

Wider Considerations:

- Does the speaker or members from the organisation they represent have a reputation for causing disruption at venues?
- Are there likely to be any health and safety or public order issues that may occur as a result of the event?
- Have we alerted local police and partner contact details if we have concerns regarding the above?
- Are there any risks to the college's reputation by hosting this event?
- How will the event/speaker be supervised by college staff?