

## **Regent College London**

### **External Speakers Policy**

#### **1. Purpose**

The policy applies to the whole Regent College London (the College) community which includes staff, students, and external visitors. It is intended to act as a guide to regulate the booking and on site activities of any external speaker, visiting group, or visiting academic with a remit to address staff and/or students.

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the College's determination to ensure that all students can enjoy a student life free from bullying of any kind physical or emotional harm, via direct or indirect interfaces. It is in line with the requirements of the Prevent Strategy introduced into law for all Higher Education institutions in 2015.

#### **2. QAA UK Quality Code**

2.1 This Policy aligns with the UK Quality Code core and common practices in

Expectations for Standards:

The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

Expectations for Quality:

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed. The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
- The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

This Policy also incorporates the following Guiding Principles set out in the Advice and Guidance for External Expertise:

- 4. Providers ensure that the roles of those providing external expertise are clear to students staff and other stakeholders.
- 5. Providers ensure that external experts are given sufficient and timely evidence and training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

### **3. Commentary:**

- 3.1. Regent College London is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events involving the use of external speakers regardless of who is organising them, why they are being organised, or what the expected outcomes may be.
- 3.2. It also details our approach to ensuring that we are protecting both staff and students, and the reputation of the College, whilst following the legislation that we are responsible for upholding. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act which came into law in 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Higher Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

### **4. The objectives of this policy are to:**

- 4.1. 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; that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- 4.2. provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students
- 4.3. provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld
- 4.4. collaborate with others to reach sound, evidenced judgments about proposed external speakers, ensuring that the College can meet their legal obligations
- 4.5. encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or within any debate
- 4.6. communicate to all members of the College community, volunteers, staff, students, and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with equality and safeguarding, and that both Regent College and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- 4.7. provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution e.g. as a speaker, representatives, screenings, etc., and guidance for carrying out research on an external speaker.

### **5. Policy Document**

#### **5.1. Freedom of Expression**

- 5.1.1. 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.

5.1.2. 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 of our events, activities and initiatives to be safe; without risk to the reputation of the College; and within the law.

5.1.3. It is possible that an external speaker, or their topic of discussion, will have 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.

## **6. External Speakers and their Responsibilities**

6.1. An 'external speaker' or 'visitor' is used to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member of Regent College London, or one of its contracted partners, and who has been invited to speak to students and/or staff. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another institution. It also includes the main contact from any external venue hire client who is paying to use College facilities.

6.2. 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 or where the College is being represented by a stand on non-College premises e.g. at an exhibition, school event or fair. 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 College premises but organized by external venue hire clients.

6.3. All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the College's policies including that they:

6.3.1. Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law

6.3.2. Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts

6.3.3. Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony

6.3.4. Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to, or seek to avoid insulting, other belief systems, or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge

6.3.5. Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the College (with Approval from the Principal, or Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement)

## **7. Guidance for Venue Hire Clients organising an event or booking:**

7.1. Any member of staff aiding to organise an external event will make external venue hire clients aware of this policy and request details of any external speakers, presentations or any other material that they are bringing in; they will also ensure that the Principal, Head

of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement (or nominee) has given formal approval or the event to go ahead. This information should be provided no later than 10 working days before the booking.

- 7.2. Regent College reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any venue hire booking with external speakers if the policy is not followed, requested information not produced, or if health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.
- 7.3. To avoid any doubt as to the suitability of speakers, the following list of proscriptions (which are not exhaustive) shall be applied:
  - a. Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations, as described at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2>
  - b. Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist
  - c. Any speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of students or staff
  - d. Any speaker accepted in mainstream reporting lines as being highly controversial
  - e. Any 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
  - f. Speakers from a political party during an election purdah.
8. In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made, with the approval of the Principal, Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement (or nominee):
  - a. To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
  - b. To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
  - c. To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event)
  - d. 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
  - e. To make direct referral via the Channel Initiative to the local constabulary.

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