**Oxford SU External Speakers Procedure**

**1 Background and scope**

1.1 This procedure is made in line with Oxford SU’s Policy on Freedom of Speech.

1.2 An external speaker is any individual who is not a student or staff member of Oxford SU, Oxford University or its Colleges.

1.3 This procedure is intended for use when external speakers are invited to an Oxford SU affiliated event, or an event on Oxford SU premises, to express their opinion, knowledge, or experience on a topic.

1.4 This procedure is not intended for external professionals invited to carry out a service which does not involve expressing their opinion, knowledge, or experience.

1.5 No bookings for an external speaker may be made until written approval from Oxford SU has been given via email from an authorised person.

**2 Application**

2.1 Applications for approval of an external speaker must be submitted to Oxford SU two working weeks in advance of requiring approval.

2.2 In order for an application to be considered an External Speaker Form[[1]](#footnote-2) must be fully completed and submitted.

**3 Late Application**

3.1 Late applications may be considered, at the discretion of Oxford SU, if;

(a) the speaker is a high profile guest and availability is an issue, or

(b) a speaker drops out of an event and a previously approved speaker is suggested to take their place.

**4 Assessment**

4.1 A staff member will conduct research on the external speaker, by, reviewing any published works, previous employment, and any other information gathering they deem necessary including but not limited to a review of the first 4 pages of an internet search.

4.2 A staff member may request further information from the applicant and will pause the review until such information is received.

**5 Risk Level**

5.1 Following research a staff member will rate the risk of the external speaker as either low, medium, or high.

5.2 The criteria for risk is the extent to which the below are applicable;

(a) the meeting or event may give rise to an environment in which people will experience, or could reasonably fear, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse or violence, particularly (but not exclusively) on account of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation,

(b) a proposed external speaker is a member of, or is likely to use the event to encourage support for, a proscribed organisation[[2]](#footnote-3), or

(c) the meeting or event is likely to pose a risk to health and safety of those lawfully on University premises; or that it may prompt a risk to public safety.

5.3 Low risk applications require approval by a staff member which may be conditional on mitigations being made.

5.4 Medium risk applications require approval by a Sabbatical Trustee, with advice from a senior staff member, which may;

(a) be conditional on mitigations being made, or

(b) be rejected.

5.5 High risk applications require approval by a Sabbatical Trustee, with advice from a senior staff member, and, in accordance with Oxford University’s Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech[[3]](#footnote-4), the Proctors which may;

(a) be conditional on mitigations being made, or

(b) be rejected.

5.6 Oxford SU has the right to reject an application for an external speaker or event based on the appropriateness of the speaker, the level of risk associated with the speaker or event, resource capability to impose mitigations, or procedural reasons.

5.7 Oxford SU has the right to reject an application for an external speaker or event based on health and safety concerns.

5.8 Oxford SU will reject applications that have not followed the procedure and in particular have not given the required 2 weeks' notice.

**6 Appeals**

6.1 Appeals against decisions made under 5.3 or 5.4 can be made by submitting a complaint in accordance with Oxford SU’s Complaint Procedure[[4]](#footnote-5).

6.2 Appeals against decisions made under 5.5 can be made;

(a) regarding the Sabbatical Officer’s decision, by submitting a complaint in accordance with Oxford SU’s Complaint Procedure.

(b) regarding the Proctors decision, by submitting an appeal under 14 of Oxford University’s Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.

**7 Monitoring**

7.1 Finance and Risk Committee will annually review the number of applications, late applications, rejections, and high risk events.

1. <https://www.forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=G96VzPWXk0-0uv5ouFLPkWpQM2yyrY5Kvi-GCqyzQfpURTQxRkw1TUJPRFhQVlgxMjBCME9KN1RHQyQlQCN0PWcu> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Under the Terrorism Act 2000, the Home Secretary may proscribe an organisation if they believe it is concerned in terrorism. For the purposes of the Act, this means that the organisation:

(a) commits or participates in acts of terrorism,

(b) prepares for terrorism,

(c) promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism), or

(d) is otherwise concerned in terrorism. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://gazette.web.ox.ac.uk/files/codeofpracticeonfreedomofspeech-1tono5092pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.oxfordsu.org/pageassets/your-union/governing-documents/Complaints-Procedure.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)