

# Event and External Speaker Protocol

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# Summary

## What is this document about?

This document is the University of Portsmouth's Event, Venue Hire and External Speaker Protocol. It sets out the procedures and requirements for managing external speakers and venue hire while balancing freedom of speech and academic freedom with the University's duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The protocol provides a comprehensive framework for assessing, approving, and managing events and speakers on campus, including risk assessment procedures and safeguarding measures.

## Who is this for?

The protocol applies to:

- All University staff and students organising events.
- External organisations seeking to use University facilities.
- Event organisers and venue managers
- Security staff and relevant administrative personnel
- External speakers and visitors
- Anyone involved in organising or running events on University premises or using University platforms (including online events)

## How does the University check this is followed?

The University ensures compliance through multiple mechanisms:

1. A mandatory application process requiring 20 working days' notice for external speaker events
2. A tiered risk assessment and approval system:
  - Low risk events approved by Commercial Manager
  - Medium and high-risk events requiring additional review.
  - Full risk assessments for high-risk events
3. Regular monitoring and review through:
  - The Provost's Event Review Panel oversight
  - Annual review by the University Safeguarding Board
  - Reports to the University Executive Board
4. Training provided to relevant staff and event organisers.
5. Clear documentation requirements and approval timelines
6. An established appeals process for decisions

The protocol is also subject to annual review and updates to ensure it remains effective and compliant with legislation.

## Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Further information, guidance and interpretation of this Policy should be sought from the Director Student Support Services by contacting 07792502696 or [kevin.child@port.ac.uk](mailto:kevin.child@port.ac.uk)

# Event, Venue Hire and External Speaker Protocol

## 1. Introduction

The University of Portsmouth is committed to ensuring freedom of speech and academic freedom while fulfilling its duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and other relevant legislation. This protocol sets out the procedures for venue hire and external speakers, ensuring compliance with:

- The University's Prevent Policy (currently in Draft)
- [The University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression](#)
- [The Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board's No Platform for Extremism Policy](#)
- [University Safeguarding Policy](#)
- All relevant statutory obligations

## 2. Purpose & Scope

2.1 This protocol aims to ensure that:

- University facilities are not used to express or promote extremist views.
- Freedom of speech and academic freedom are protected within the law.
- The University fulfils its Prevent Duty obligations.
- Clear procedures exist for assessing and managing risks.
- Appropriate safeguards are in place for staff, students and visitors.

2.2 This protocol applies to:

- All University premises and facilities
- External speaker events
- Room and venue bookings
- Events organised by staff or students
- Events organised by external parties which utilise UoP premises
- Online and hybrid events using University platforms

## 3. Definitions

**3.1 External Speaker:** Any individual who is not a current University staff member or student invited to speak or perform at an event.

**3.2 Event:** Any gathering, meeting, conference, or activity taking place on University premises or using University facilities, including online platforms.

**3.3 Extremism:** As defined in the Prevent duty guidance - vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

**3.4 Hate Speech:** speech that targets a person or group based on their identity and incites hatred or violence. It can be expressed through words, pictures, videos, music, or online content.

**3.5 Free Expression within the Law:** Any expression of an opinion, however controversial, which does not

break any laws in the United Kingdom.

**3.6 Period of Booking:** The contractual period during which an event organiser is hiring or renting (whether for a fee or not) any area of University property.

## 4. Legal Context

This protocol operates within the framework of:

- [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [The Prevent Duty \(2023\)](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Education \(No. 2\) Act 1986](#)
- [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#)

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

**5.1** Event Organiser must:

- Submit [event/speaker/venue](#) requests within required timeframes
- Provide complete and accurate information
- Ensure compliance with any conditions set
- Supervise events appropriately

**5.2** The Commercial (operational) Team in Estates will review the event.

- The review will include an assessment of the event, including whether:
  - The speakers or performers have a profile which might make the event controversial
  - There might be any controversial views expressed by participants
  - There is a likelihood of violent protest which might endanger the safety of others attending the event or those in the vicinity of the event
  - Whether mitigations might need to be put in place to ensure the event is safe and all views expressed in any way or through any medium are within the law
- Any events which cause concern and cannot be adequately mitigated through negotiation between the Estates Commercial Team and the event organiser will be escalated to the Provost's Events Review Panel for a decision.

**5.3** The Provost's Event Review Panel will:

- Oversee the protocol implementation
- Consider any mitigations for events not previously contemplated by the operational team
- Maintain the balance between the support of free speech, the safety of stakeholders and the prevention of radicalisation, ensuring that behaviour on campus always remains lawful.

- Make final decisions on high-risk events
- Liaise with external partners when necessary

The panel will comprise of at least three of the following officers:

- Provost
- Exec Director Corporate Governance
- DVC Global Engagement and Student Life (UoP Prevent Lead)
- Director Student Support Services (UoP Prevent Coordinator) or designate
- Head of Security or designate
- Where the event is student-led, the panel will also include an UPSU representative.

**5.4** The event organiser and relevant Estates and Campus Services' lead will:

- Conduct initial risk assessments
- Provide advice and guidance
- Monitor events in their areas

## 6. Assessment Process

**6.1** Initial Screening All external speaker/venue hire requests must be submitted at least 20 working days before the event using the [University's online form](#).

**6.2** The screening will assess:

- Speaker/organisation background
- Event purpose and content
- Expected audience
- Potential risks
- Security requirements
- Timing and location

**6.3** Assessment Criteria (aligned with Hampshire PPB Policy):

- Previous known concerns
- Risk of extremist views being expressed
- Risk to community cohesion
- Likelihood of breach of law
- Reputational risks
- Public order considerations

## 7. Approval Process

**7.1** Low Risk Events

- Can be approved by the Commercial Manager (Estates & Campus Services)
- Standard conditions apply
- Minimum 20 working days' notice required

## 7.2 Medium Risk Events

- Require review by any two members of the Provost's Event Review Panel or their designates
- May have additional conditions imposed
- Minimum 20 working days' notice required

## 7.3 High Risk Events

- Require full risk assessment
- Consultation with relevant partners
- Decision by The Provost's Event Review Panel
- Minimum 20 working days' notice required

# 8. Risk Assessment

Detailed risk assessments will consider:

- Content of the event
- Speaker background and history
- Likelihood of protest/disruption
- Security requirements
- Impact on community cohesion
- Prevent duty implications
- Equality duty considerations
- Health and safety requirements

# 9. Conditions and Restrictions

The University may impose conditions including:

- Independent chair requirement
- Security arrangements
- Ticketing/registration requirements
- Recording restrictions
- Additional costs
- Changed timing/venue
- Q&A format restrictions
- Restriction of alcohol
- Social media/publicity controls

# 10. Appeals Process

The Provost's Event Review Panel will be convened for all high-risk events and any medium-risk events escalated by the operational team that cannot be adequately mitigated through negotiation; the Panel's decision will be final and there will be no appeals process following their determination.

# 11. Oversight

**11.1** This protocol (via the University Safeguarding Board) will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in line with legislative changes
- Monitored for effectiveness
- Reported on to University Executive Board

**11.2** Training will be provided to:

- Event organisers
- Security staff
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Other relevant staff

*This protocol should be read in conjunction with:*

- University Prevent Policy (In Draft)
- [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression](#)
- [Hampshire Prevent Partnership Board No Platform for Extremism Policy](#)
- [University Health & Safety Policy](#)
- [Events Management Procedures](#)

## 12. Breaches of this protocol

Any breaches of this protocol, including, but not limited to:

- Failing to follow the protocol when arranging an event on University property
- Knowingly falsifying the application forms or risk assessments for access to or rental of University property
- Failing to accurately disclose any information required by a University officer in coming to a decision following a risk assessment
- Actual breaches of any agreement reached with the University at an event which has been risk assessed during the event
- Failure to maintain the requirements of the law or any obligations imposed of the University at any time during the period of booking

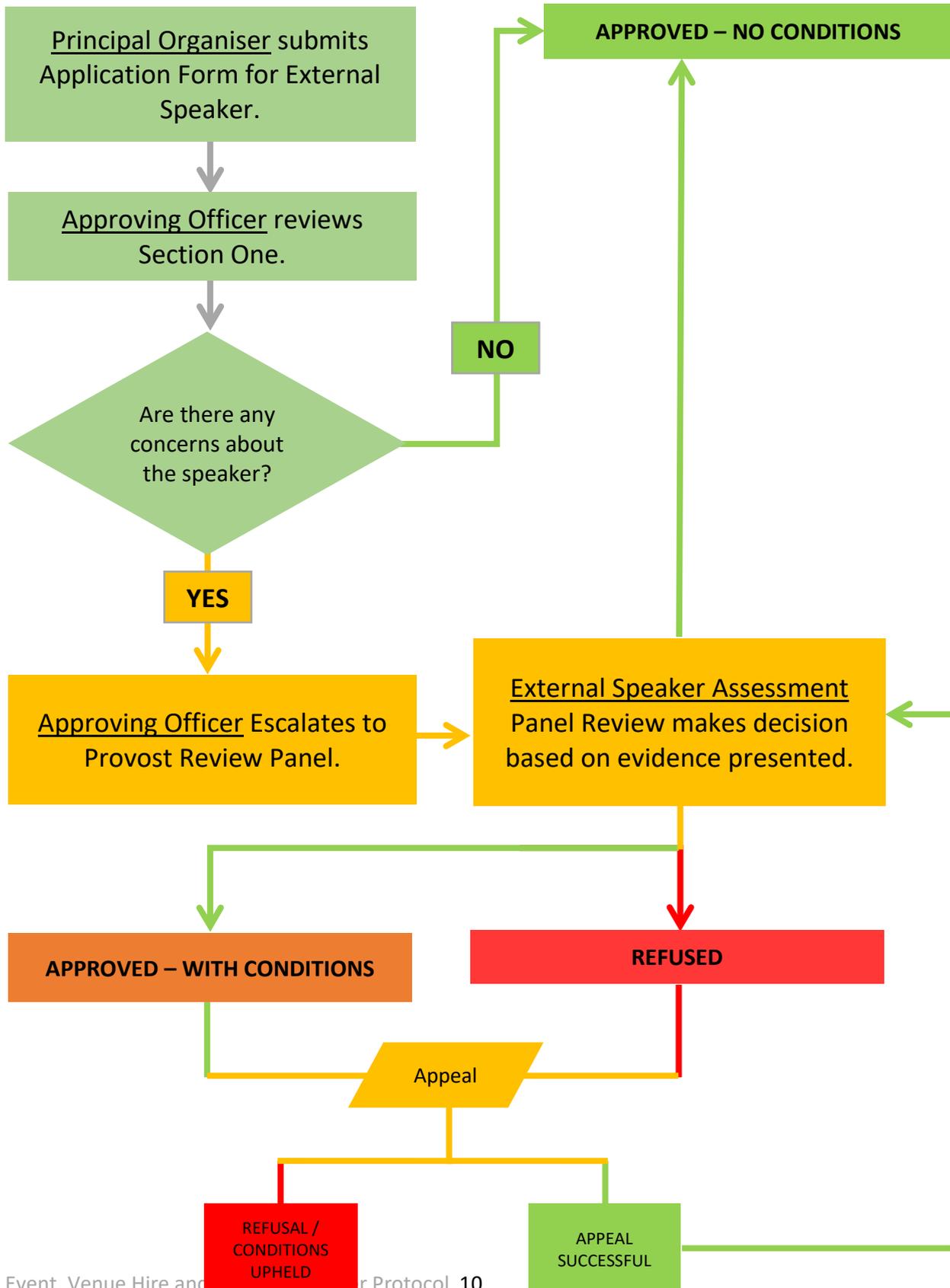
will be considered under the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression (ID Code 032) and any other relevant University disciplinary policies and procedures.

Where the event organiser is not a member of the University community and is hiring University property as a commercial transaction or on a no-fee basis, any breaches of this Protocol or the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression (ID Code 032) may result in the following sanctions:

- Further mitigations or restrictions on the event
- Cancellation of the event without any refund of deposit or other monies already paid
- The withholding of any monies owed to the renter or hirer following the event
- Referral of the matter to the police or other civil authorities

- Refusal in the future to hire University premises to an individual who has been found to have breached this Protocol or the Code of Practice.

### External Speaker Application Process



# Definitions: Event Risk Categories

## Low Risk Events

According to Section 7.1 of the Event Protocol:

- Can be approved by the Commercial Manager (Estates & Campus Services)
- Subject to standard conditions
- Require minimum 20 working days' notice
- Typically involve speakers/content with no controversial history
- No foreseeable risk to community cohesion
- No anticipated protests or disruption
- Would not involve topics that could be seen as challenging fundamental British values
- Speakers without a history of expressing extremist views
- Normal campus security arrangements are sufficient
- Limited or no media interest expected

Low risk events might include:

- Academic lectures on non-controversial subjects
- Cultural performances without political content
- Standard student society meetings
- Regular university functions with familiar speakers

## Medium Risk Events

According to Section 7.2 of the Event Protocol:

- Require review by any two members of the Provost's Event Review Panel or their designates
- May have additional conditions imposed
- Require minimum 20 working days' notice
- Events where there might be some controversy but manageable with appropriate measures
- Speakers who have expressed controversial (but not extremist) views in the past
- Topics that are politically or religiously sensitive but not extreme
- Some potential for disruption requiring additional security planning
- Possible media attention
- Moderate risk to community cohesion but can be mitigated

Medium risk events might include:

- Debates on contentious but legitimate political topics
- Speakers who have generated moderate controversy in past events

- Events addressing sensitive religious or cultural issues
- Events where small-scale protests might be anticipated

## High Risk Events

### According to Section 7.3 of the Event Protocol:

- Require full risk assessment
- Consultation with relevant partners (potentially including police)
- Decision required by The Provost's Event Review Panel
- Minimum 20 working days' notice required
- Events featuring topics or speakers with significant potential to:
  - Express views that might draw people into terrorism
  - Challenge fundamental British values
  - Cause significant disruption to community cohesion
  - Attract large-scale protests
  - Generate significant safety concerns
- Speakers with history of extremist statements or connections to extremist organisations
- Events likely to attract individuals or groups with extremist views
- High probability of significant media coverage
- Potential risk to the University's reputation
- Substantial security concerns

### High risk events might include:

- Events featuring highly controversial political figures
- Speakers with known connections to extremist organisations
- Topics directly related to terrorism, radicalisation, or extreme political/religious ideologies
- Events where intelligence suggests potential for violent protest
- Events where speakers have previously incited hatred or violence
- Events likely to generate significant national media coverage on controversial matters

### The determination of risk level is based on multiple factors including:

- Speaker/organisation background
- Event purpose and content
- Expected audience
- Previous known concerns
- Risk of extremist views being expressed
- Risk to community cohesion
- Likelihood of breach of law
- Potential security requirements
- Reputational risks

Each risk level corresponds to different approval processes and potentially different mitigating measures as outlined in Section 9 of the Event Protocol, which may include requirements such as



independent chairs, enhanced security, ticketing/registration requirements, recording restrictions, and content monitoring.

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