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<b>Responsible for interpretation:</b>	Board of Trustees

# External Speakers Policy

## 1 Scope and Background

- 1.1 As City St George's Students' Union (the Union) our Officers and Student Groups host hundreds of events with external speakers every year and they make an important contribution to the liveliness of student life at City St George's, University of London (City St George's). Our External Speakers policy makes sure that we empower our students to make the most of their education experiences at City St George's whilst following charity law and other legislation that we are responsible for upholding.
- 1.2 The legal framework we work within means that all external speakers at Union events on or off campus must be approved by the Union before they can take place or be advertised.
- 1.3 An external speaker is anyone who is not a current student or staff member or alumni of City St George's or the Union.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all events that are organised on behalf of the Union or a Union student group, network or society whether on campus, online or in an external venue or university.
- 1.5 The Union will operate two policies for external speakers in different campuses;
  - 1.5.1 External Speaker Process (Clerkenwell and Moorgate)
  - 1.5.2 External Speakers Process (Tooting)

## 2 Freedom of Speech

- 2.1 Student leadership is fundamental to our Union. As a Union we are committed to empowering event organisers to make the most of their educational opportunities and skills to explore, debate and challenge issues, including those that may be considered controversial, whilst supporting them in fulfilling their legal responsibilities.
- 2.2 Freedom of expression and freedom of speech are basic human rights to be protected and are protected by law.
- 2.3 Open debates are central to the culture of academic freedom, the development of students' ideas and understanding, and are protected by an Act of Parliament.
- 2.4 Student safety and welfare is at the heart of the Union's values, policies and practices.

- 2.5 The Union will work with event organisers to ensure they meet their responsibilities in upholding the freedom to express views with the need to ensure compliance with other legal duties such as Charity Law and Prevent Duty.
- 2.6 Where there is potential for these rights to come into conflict, the Union is committed to working in collaboration with the event organiser(s) that will allow the Union to reach a sound, evidence-based judgement about the speaker in question and their associated organisation and the likely impact of them taking part in the event.
- 2.7 If a judgement on a speaker's participation is required, then the Union will at times require additional measures, known as regulatory steps, to be put in place to allow the event to take place legally and safely.
- 2.8 On rare occasions when a speaker is refused permissions to take part in an event, the Union will explain its reasoning in full in writing.
- 2.9 Any complaints about decision made in relation to external speakers should be made under [Bye-Law 9: Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

### 3 External Speaker Process (Clerkenwell and Moorgate)

- 3.1 Any room booking with an external speaker involved must be made no later than 15 working days before the event.
- 3.2 During the 15 working days the Union will work with the event organisers and City St George's to make the right decision on whether a speaker can be approved and whether any regulatory steps are required as a condition of the event approval.
- 3.3 The 15 working days starts when the Union has all the information requested on the events form from the event organisers. This includes information about the event, the room requirements, and the external speaker.
- 3.4 The event organisers are responsible for the activities that take place within their event and ensuring the external speaker agrees to the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and the External Speakers Briefing (Appendix C) and are aware of their responsibilities to abide by The Law and the Union and City St George's policies, including that they:
  - a. Must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of The Law.
  - b. Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism, including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.

- c. Must not provide a platform for the expression or promotion of extremism or use of radicalising materials as defined in the [Charity Commission Guidance](#).
  - d. Must ensure positive debate and challenge and not allow intimidation or harassment, resulting from prejudice or discrimination on the groups of age, disability, marital or maternity/paternity status, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, trans status, socio-economic status, or ideology or culture or any other form of distinction, to avoid insulting other faiths, or groups.
- 3.5 If the event organisers do not follow this policy and procedure in full, then the Union reserves the right to cancel any event with an external speaker and may refer the event organisers for disciplinary investigation.
- 3.6 All Union events, including events with external speakers must be risk assessed to ensure they can take place safely. When discussing event risks with the Union / University, the risk rating is not placed on the individual person invited but the conditions of the event that require mitigations to ensure attendees are free from harm.

## 4 External Speaker Procedure (Clerkenwell and Moorgate)

- 4.1 Event organisers ask for approval for an external speaker to take part in an event by completing the Union events form in full. All requests for an external speaker are logged by a nominee of the Chief Executive.
- 4.2 A copy of the events form can be found on the Union's website.

### Self-Referral

- 4.3.1 Event organisers are asked to assess their proposed speaker's suitability and refer them for a further evaluation, if appropriate.
- 4.3.2 Self-referring a Speaker for further evaluation should not prevent or hinder the speaker's attendance but is an important measure in underlining the event organisers' responsibility for inviting the external speaker and participating in assessing any risk in the event taking place.
- 4.3.3 An event organiser must self-refer the external speaker if they answer yes to one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. The speaker or topic has attracted controversy in the past.
  - b. The event or speaker is likely to attract media attention / interest.
  - c. The external speaker is on a speaker tour across several institutions or organisations.

4.3.4 If an event organiser does not self-refer the external speaker when one or more of these criteria, the Union reserves the right to postpone or cancel the event.

### **Assessment Process**

- 4.4.1 All external speaker requests will be checked and logged on the Union's External Speaker Log in detail by a nominee of the Chief Executive.
- 4.4.2 The Union will monitor an External Speaker Log and support staff in the implementation of this policy. Spot checks of the External Speaker Log may be requested by the Union's Chief Executive or City St George's and will determine if this procedure is working correctly.
- 4.4.3 Once an external speaker has been reviewed, they will be kept on the External Speakers Log until 31 July of that academic year.
- 4.4.4 The Union will complete an initial check of the speaker request by reviewing the information on the completed events form and by undertaking an internet search of the speaker and the organisation(s) that they are associated with; the first six pages of the search results will be used to determine:
- a. That the speaker is approved pending a completed event risk assessment being provided, and that the event presents no or low risk to Union policy, Health & Safety responsibilities, or it's wider legal obligations.
  - Or
  - b. That one or more of the referral criteria have been met, and the speaker requires a more detailed evaluation.
- 4.4.5 The referral criteria that will trigger a speaker being referred for evaluation in the initial checks are:
- a. An internet search that returns reports of mainstream media coverage (National, Regional or London), or
  - b. An internet search that reports that the speaker is on a tour across several universities or organisations, or
  - c. Social media accounts with 10,000+ followers.
- 4.4.6 If the staff member researching a speaker needs guidance on whether to refer based on the internet search results they will liaise with the Union Chief Executive or their nominee.

### **Referred Speakers**

- 4.5.1 Following a referral, the Union will complete an evaluation of the risk relating to the speaker. The evaluation will be recorded in writing by the Union. Where relevant, representations will be taken from the event organisers; concerned student groups; City St George's officials; and external bodies.

Risk will be identified as low or high in relation to the following categories:

- a. The speaker is linked to a proscribed organisation as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000.
- b. The likelihood of the speaker's presence at the event resulting in a platform for the expression of promotion of extremism or radicalisation as defined in the Charity Commissions Guidance.
- c. The potential for the speaker's presence to cause breach of the peace and / or fear or alarm to students, staff or other members of the public.
- d. The potential for the speaker's presence at the event to cause the Union to be in breach of its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- e. The potential for the speaker's presence to give concern for the health and safety of students, staff or members of the public.
- f. The Union's requirement to uphold the freedom of speech as per the University's Code of Practice in relation to the Education Act, as set out in our Code of Practice with the University.
- g. The opportunities and risks to the Union's reputation of the speaker's presence at a Union event.
- h. The need for the Union to be seen to be and to be independent from party politics as defined in the guidance on Campaigning and Political Activity By Charities (CC9).
- i. Any other risk to the wider legal framework in which the Union operates.

4.5.2 After a referred speaker is evaluated the Union Chief Executive or nominee may make one or the following recommendations to the Union President or nominee:

- a. To permit the external speaker to speak at the event with no further regulatory steps.
- b. To permit the external speaker to speak at the event subject to the implementation of regulatory steps designed to reduce the event risk.
- c. To not permit the external speaker to speak at the event.

4.5.3 Regulatory steps for referred events include, but are not limited to:

- a. The event is ticketed via the Union's website.
- b. Attendees to be restricted to City St George's only.
- c. That City St George's security be notified of the event taking place.
- d. The event be recorded by an independent body or by lecture capture.
- e. The event is observed by the Union, City St George's, or third-party officials. The Union, City St George's or third-party officials reserve the right to stop the event if any of the Unions policies or legal duties are contravened before or during the event.
- f. Any high-risk events promoting a particular view includes an opportunity to debate or challenge that view.
- g. The chair to be agreed by the Union in advance and any changes to the chair will not be permitted later than 5 working days prior to the event.
- h. A copy of all, or part of a speech to be delivered to be submitted to the Union in advance.

- i. Where there is significant tension around a speaker or topic, to place limitations on promotional and or supporting materials to reduce risk of intimidation
- 4.5.4 When considering regulatory steps to reduce the risk of an event the Union must consider whether steps may cause more risk. For example, the sense of oppression felt by mandating having security staff on the door for some groups of students.
- 4.5.5 A summary providing information on all external speakers will be reported to the Union Board of Trustees by the Union Chief Executive on a termly basis.
- 4.5.6 If a speaker is not permitted to speak at a Union event, then it will be reported to the Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees within one working day of such a decision being taken. Where the Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees disagrees with the decision, they should consider whether to meet as a full Board of Trustees to use their powers to review the decision.

### **University Approval**

- 4.6.1 External speakers who are not referred for further evaluation by the event organisers or a Union staff member are approved by the Union.
- 4.6.2 External speakers who are referred for evaluation will be passed onto City St George's for approval once the Union has completed its review.
- 4.6.3 City St George's will undertake their own review process.
- 4.6.4 City St George's will inform the Union of their decision, which will be communicated to the event organisers.
- 4.6.5 If City St George's regulatory steps for the event are different to the Union, a meeting will be held to discuss any discrepancies.

## **5. Appeals**

- 5.1 Event organisers who are unhappy with the outcome of their event speaker evaluation, regulatory steps placed on an event, or a rejection of a speaker can appeal the decision by following the appeals process outlined in the City St George's Freedom of Speech Code (detailed in points 46 – 55).
- 5.2 Regulatory steps relating to a non-referred event speaker, i.e. those put in place by the Union, cannot be appealed.

## **6 External Speakers Process (Tooting)**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Event Organiser

All event organisers assume responsibility for any event organised by them as an individual or on the behalf of the society or group they represent. Event organisers should be aware that the Union holds them personally responsible for ensuring that their organised event abides by this Policy and does not risk infringement of or non-compliance with the law and/ or Union values. Guidance on facilitating question and answer sessions at events is given in Appendix A. If an event organiser has concerns over their ability to uphold this responsibility, they should contact either the Campus Good Relations Group or the Union for advice.

#### Joint Events

If an event is being organised in conjunction with another body, it is the Union member or staff event organiser's responsibility to ensure that the event complies with this Policy.

#### Permission

- 6.1 Permission to hold the event must be sought by an individual student on behalf of a student group.
- 6.2 Permission must be obtained before booking any resources such as the venue, or disseminating any publicity material.
- 6.3 Permission should be sought by completion and submission of the event and External Speaker Request Form.
- 6.4 The completed form must be submitted at least 10 working days before the proposed event to the Deputy President (Tooting). Any requests submitted less than 10 working days before the proposed event may be refused on that basis.

#### The Good Campus Relations Group (GCRG)

The GCRG may be called upon to help the institution make fine judgements about individual proposals for events and external speakers or visitors, namely where a potentially controversial topic or theme is proposed. The GCRG can help event organisers to: -talk constructively about their proposed event, external speaker or visitor -consider any possible consequences should a particular event go ahead -explore different options to avoid any one-sided views The GCRG may conduct its business by phone or email if it is impractical for it to meet in person and if necessary the GCRG may make its recommendations by majority. If there is no majority, the Chair of the GCRG shall make its final recommendations.

#### The Chief Operating Officer - Tooting

The Chief Operating Officer - Tooting is not involved in the day-to-day approval of events and external speakers and visitors. However, where there is contest and the approval is referred to the Chief Operating Officer - Tooting, the Chief Operating Officer - Tooting's decision is final.



The Union reserves the right to decline any event, external speaker or visitor.

### **Consideration of an event**

6.5 Event proposals will be considered by the defined Deputy President (Tooting) in the first instance. It will be considered whether the proposed event is likely to:

- 6.5.1 interfere with the rights and freedoms of others
  - affect public safety
- pose a specific risk to children and young person's safety
- lead to disorder or crime
- incite racial or religious hatred
- cause others to fear that violence will be used against them
- 

In measuring this risk the Union may consider:

the speaker's history and the organisation they represent - the impact such a visit will have on campus

the impact such a visit will have on community relations and the wider community  
internal policy documents, such as the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and other relevant equalities schemes.

The Union may make any background checks it deems appropriate, namely an internet-based search and liaison with the City St George's Security Association to review the speaker's history. If any concerns arise as a result of the review, the request may be discussed with the GCRG and in extreme cases, with counter-terrorism.

A proposed visiting speaker may be excluded on the grounds that their presence another of the Union's legal duties.

### **Decision**

The decision on whether to permit a proposed event will be conveyed to the proposer of the event by the Deputy President (Tooting) within five days of receipt of the proposal form.

A log will be kept by Deputy President (Tooting) of all event proposals received and their outcomes. This is to include reasons behind the decisions in order to demonstrate the concepts of reasonableness and proportionality have been taken in to account.

## **Appeals**

If permission is not given for an event to go ahead, the proposer of the event may submit an appeal to the Chief Operating Officer - Tooting (or their nominee, in their absence). The appeal must be made in writing at least five working days prior to the start of the proposed event, and submitted to the

The Chief Operating Officer - Tooting will consider the appeal and provide a decision and reasoning in writing to the appellant, within three working days of receipt.

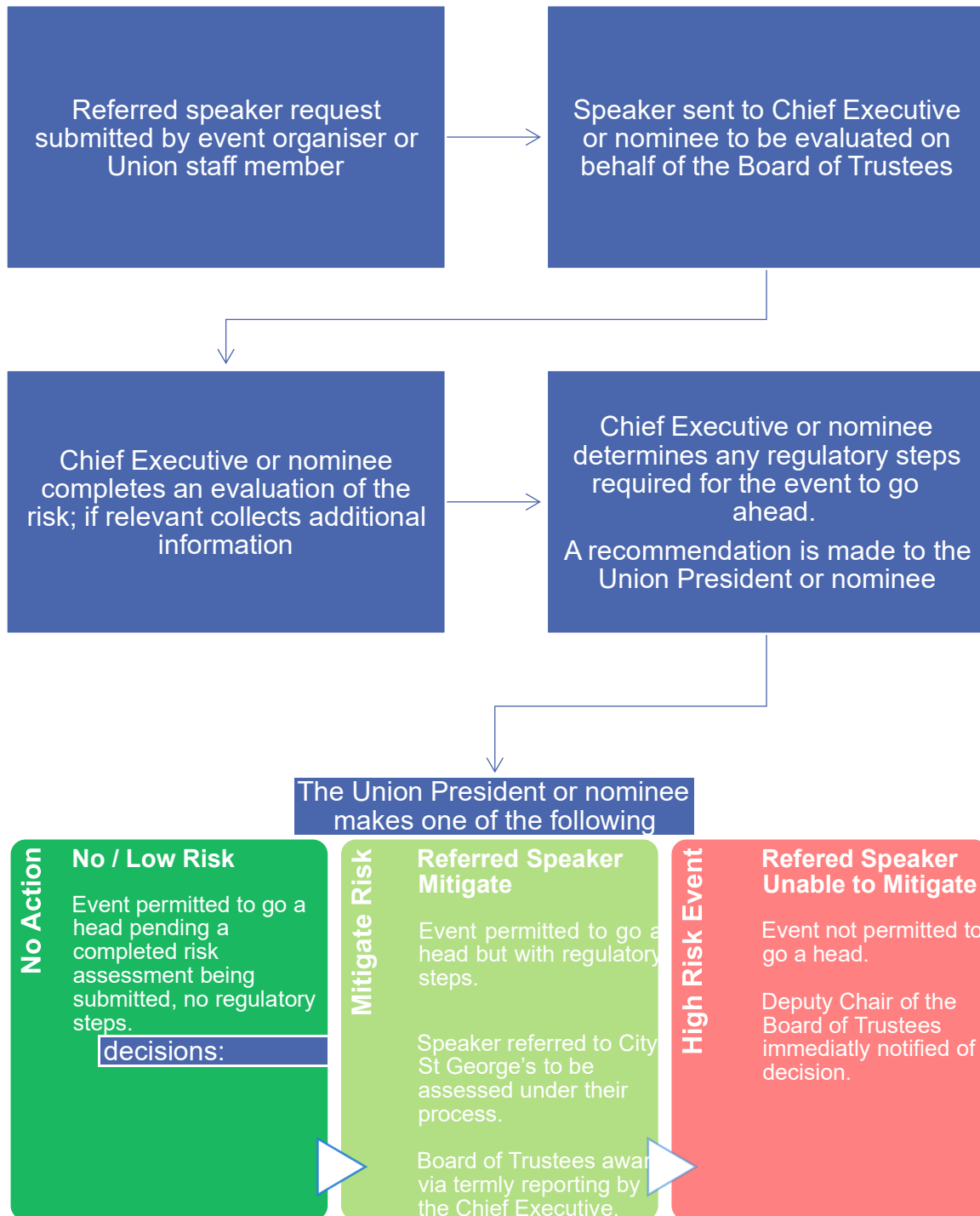
## **Formally inviting speakers**

Once the event organiser has received permission to host the external speaker, they must

formally invite the external speaker or visitor in writing, enclosing a copy of both this Policy

and of the completed and authorised External Speaker request form.

## Appendix A: Referred Speakers Flow Chart



## Nominees of the Chief Executive (Updated Jul 2024)

	Role	Staff Member
No / Low Risk	Student Communities Administrator / Reception Supervisor Student Communities Coordinator	Virginia Brown/ Staff member/ Dami Dare
Referred Speaker	Student Communities Coordinator / Communities & Events Manager	Katie Angell / Ryan Ginger
Union President / Nominee	SU President / Deputy President (responsible for Student Communities)	Ayla Hamzayeva/ Nasir Mohammed

### Guidance for facilitating question and answer opportunities at events

The below tips are provided as examples of how event organisers can promote and maintain a safe and inclusive environment at their event, balancing freedom of speech with the need to protect people from abuse.

Use methods to be inclusive for those who are unable to attend, or may feel inhibited to ask questions during the event. For example, invite questions from staff or students to be submitted prior to or during the event via email or social media such as twitter.

Plan time effectively – indicate in promotional material or agendas the time allocation for speakers’ presentations and allocate a specific time for a question and answer session

Identify an impartial chair for the event – someone to introduce the speaker, keep the session to time and invite questions from the audience, from a range of participants.

Plan a debate

- the following principles might assist
- Invite a speaker(s) to present the case FOR the topic /argument and a speaker(s) to present the case AGAINST the topic/argument
- Indicate a set time for each speaker to present
- Invite rebuttal from each side of equal time
- Use a chair as above to facilitate debate and to help summarise the key points
- Provide an opportunity for the audience to respond and possibly act as a jury, and use methods of voting that are not public (i.e. avoid hand raising).

If you feel you require further assistance and support to ensure your event runs in a safe and inclusive manner, you can seek this from the Union (for student events) or from the Good Campus Relations Group (for student or staff events)

## Appendix B: Glossary of Regulatory Steps / Risk Assessment Terms

Regulatory Steps	Definition
Only City St George's members, including staff members and/or registered students, may attend / the public are not permitted to attend.	Those attending will have to show some form of ID to enter the event. In this case only a valid City, University of London ID.
Only City St George's members, including staff members and/or registered students and other members of UK Universities (upon proof of identity), may be allowed to attend.	Those attending will have to show some form of ID to enter the event. In this case only a valid University ID Card.
The public (upon proof of identity) may be permitted to attend.	The event is ticketed via the Union's website, and a Photo ID will be asked for on entry. The event organiser must ensure stewards are in place to support this.
Admission may be restricted and controlled by ticket, identity card or both.	Alongside a restricted audience (as described above) a ticket system (usually free) should be implemented. All tickets must be organised via the Union's website.
Larger venue required to accommodate more attendees.	If your crowd estimation goes above room capacity, or the event is attracting a high number of people then the event may have to move to another room. The Union will help with any change.
Security is notified of the event. Arrangements for the checking of admission may be put in place.	The University security team are normally notified of events taking place on campus after teaching hours.  If you are required to ticket your event, you will need to put arrangements in place to admit people in.

<p>A specified number of stewards may be required to host the event.</p>	<p>Event stewards are put in place by the event organisers to ensure the event runs safely and smoothly for all involved. They will check the list of names at the door and make sure that any person attending the event has a corresponding photo ID.</p> <p>A thorough briefing should be provided for the stewards by the event organisers.</p>
<p>The style of the event may be changed to include an opportunity to debate or challenge the views of the speaker.</p>	<p>Where a topic is controversial it may be suggested that your event is changed to a debate to allow for different views to be heard by those attending.</p>
<p>Union to monitor social media to gauge if external groups are planning to attend or if threats of violence.</p>	<p>There may be occasions where there are undesirable messages exchanged or threats from external parties against our students. The Union and City St George's may take further regulatory steps to protect the safety of students.</p>
<p>Event organisers to ensure that the event is Chaired and kept on topic.</p>	<p>We will ask you to make sure that the event has an experienced person chairing the event, who can move conversation on, stop the topic descending into something it shouldn't be and cultivate debate.</p> <p>We will ask you for the name of this person and also how they are connected to you and your groups and if relevant if you have worked with them before.</p>
<p>Proactive and reactive communications prepared by the Union and University.</p>	<p>The Union and University may want to release statements before or after an event and we may prepare these beforehand so we can get them out as quickly as possible.</p> <p>We may ask you for information to help us with this.</p>
<p>Union staff may be present to assist the event.</p>	<p>To ensure the Union can prepare communications after an event we may send a Union staff member to your event to make notes. They won't intervene with the event, just sit and listen.</p>
<p>Speakers(s) and or attendees may be required to enter and leave by specified routes and/or be escorted under specified arrangements.</p>	<p>If you invite a high-profile speaker, for example a politician or public figure we may organise specific routes to help the event run smoothly and safely.</p>

Representatives of the press, radio or television will be subject to prior approval of the University and Union.	If your event attracts press attention, we may ask for you to notify us of any representatives planning to attend. This is to ensure any articles or published media is a fair reflection, and to assist you should you need to respond to anything published because of your event.
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**Other terms you may find in our evaluation and risk assessment when organising a speaker event:**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Public Order Act 1996	An Act to abolish the common law offences of riot, rout, unlawful assembly and affray and certain statutory offences relating to public order; to create new offences relating to public order; to control public processions and assemblies; to control the stirring up of racial hatred; to provide for the exclusion of certain offenders from sporting events; to create a new offence relating to the contamination of or interference with goods; to confer power to direct certain trespassers to leave land; to amend section 7 of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875, section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, Part V of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 and the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985; to repeal certain obsolete or unnecessary enactments; and for connected purposes.
Breach of the Peace	Disturbing the peace, also known as breach of the peace, is a criminal offense that occurs when a person engages in some form of disorderly conduct, such as fighting or threatening to fight in public, causing excessively loud noise, by shouting, playing loud music, or even allowing a dog to bark for prolonged periods.
Affray	A person is guilty of affray if he uses or threatens unlawful violence towards another and his conduct is such as would cause a person of reasonable firmness present at the scene to fear for his personal safety.



Article 11 – Right to Protest

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. This is a right closely linked to the right to freedom of expression. It provides a means for public expression and is one of the foundations of a democratic society. The right applies to protest marches and demonstrations, press conferences, public and private meetings, counterdemonstrations, 'sit-ins', motionless protests etc. The right only applies to peaceful gatherings and does not protect intentionally violent protest. There may be interference with the right to protest if the authorities prevent a demonstration from going ahead; if they halt a demonstration; take steps in advance of a demonstration in order to disrupt it; and store personal information on people because of their involvement in a demonstration.

The right to peaceful assembly cannot be interfered with merely because there is disagreement with the views of the protesters or because it is likely to be inconvenient and cause a nuisance or there might be tension and heated exchange between opposing groups. There is a positive obligation on the State to take reasonable steps to facilitate the right to freedom of assembly, and to protect participants in peaceful demonstrations from disruption by others.

## Appendix C: External Speakers Briefing

Thank you for agreeing to speak at a City St George's Students' Union event.

The Union aims to be at the heart of the student community at City St George's, University of London, ensuring our university is a place in which a diversity of people and opinions are not only accepted but celebrated. We exist to 'provide social, cultural and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of students'<sup>1</sup>. We actively seek to facilitate student led events where speakers are invited to broaden the scope of discussion at events and we are grateful to those who volunteer their time to contribute to the academic and non-academic development of our members.

Our agreement to allow external speakers to attend events on campus rests on the understanding that they act with The Law and the regulations set out by the University. The use of the University premises for events that involve external speakers is regulated by [the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#) and these rules are adopted by City St George's Students' Union.

From the University's 'Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech':

So far as is reasonably practicable, the use of the premises will not be denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with:

- a) The beliefs or views of that individual or any member of that body; or
- b) The policy or objectives of that body.

It is essential to the purposes of the University that opportunities for free and open discussion with The Law should be safeguarded. Members of the University and all other persons attending meetings held on the premises must behave in a lawful manner.

It is also our responsibility to act within the legal framework set out in various pieces of UK Legislation to ensure protection of Freedom of Speech within The Law. In order to maintain our duty of care for the health and safety of all students, staff and visitors in particular we will not allow:

- Unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Communication which is threatening, abusive or insulting, or intended to harass, alarm or distress.
- Communication which targets a person or group of people based on their protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> City, University of London Students' Union Articles of Association - [https://www.citystudents.co.uk/pageassets/about-us/govdocs/City\\_University\\_of\\_London\\_Students\\_Union\\_Articles\\_of\\_Association\\_Approved\\_170117.pdf](https://www.citystudents.co.uk/pageassets/about-us/govdocs/City_University_of_London_Students_Union_Articles_of_Association_Approved_170117.pdf)

- We also reaffirm that it is a criminal offence to incite or encourage others to commit a crime, including acts of terrorism.

Full details of our External Speakers Policy can be found here: X

This briefing document has been provided to ensure all speakers are aware of the framework the Union operates within when facilitating external speakers and measures that may be required to support Freedom of Speech at our events.

If you have any questions regarding speaking at the University, please contact us by emailing [studentsunion@city.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@city.ac.uk)

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