

Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) arising from the joint statement by King's and KCLSU on Freedom of Expression

1. What is Freedom of Expression?

Freedom of expression is a broad concept that includes free speech, the freedom to protest and academic freedom. These 'freedoms' are often restricted through various laws adding another freedom – that from hate. In a time of polarised politics, and given the unique role of universities to foster and debate the free exchange of ideas – deciding what conversations can happen and how they should happen is a more urgent question than ever.

2. How is King's approaching the challenge of Freedom of Expression?

The university and KCLSU care deeply about how we manage Freedom of Expression at King's. We are proud of our diverse community and have a strong commitment to the values of freedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and religion and freedom of assembly and we want to offer the widest possible opportunity for the free expression of knowledge and ideas, as well as the freedom to peaceful protest against them. But we must do this within the boundaries of the law and our duty of care to others within our community and premises. Over the past 200 years King's has welcomed students and staff from a vast number of different backgrounds and wants to remain one of the most diverse universities in the country.

As a partnership, the university and KCLSU have agreed a joint statement on Freedom of Expression, that is inspired by the Chicago Principles, and can be found [here](#).

3. What are the Chicago Principles?

The Chicago Principles are a set of guiding principles intended to demonstrate a commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of expression on college and university campuses in the US. Initially developed by the University of Chicago in 2014, they came to be known as the "Chicago principles" after other universities across the US committed to their principles. The King's Statement on Freedom of Expression is inspired by the Chicago Principles and has similar goals, but is different, reflecting the different jurisdictions and laws of the US and the UK. The Chicago Principles can be found [here](#).

4. Are there restrictions on events and speakers at King's, and if so, what are these and why?

Our overriding approach is to encourage a wide range of events, and internal and external speakers at King's, these are an important way in which ideas are freely exchanged and we host thousands of events each academic year. Restrictions and constraints on events and speakers are implemented if the level of risk is assessed as being high. Events are assessed against a range of criteria, including legality, health and safety, risk to staff and students, and risk of violent protest. We have robust procedures in place to assess events and speakers hosted on campus and the safety and security of staff, students, speakers and attendees is absolute priority.

5. What conduct is expected at a protest?

The freedom to protest is a legitimate part of King's Statement on the Freedom of Expression and is viewed as an equally valid form of expression as any event. As we develop and operationalise our principles we will continue to make sure that protests and events have broadly equivalent freedoms.

6. Who determines the location of protests and the rules that apply?

Location of protests is a matter relating to Freedom of Expression but also Health & Safety and campus operations. Operational decision making therefore lies with Estates & Facilities but they will take advice on these issues through the joint Freedom of Expression Standing Advisory Group (FESAG).

7. Are the King's rules on events and protest consistent with the Human Rights Act of 1998?

Yes. Articles 10 and 11 of the Human Rights Act protects the rights of EU citizens to freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly, but as with all law relating to freedom of expression, these rights are not without some constraints, including the right to freedom from hate.

8. What is the University's position on Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination?

In addition to accepting the IHRA proposed definition for antisemitism, the Principal & President of King's College London and King's Senior Management Team agreed unanimously to accept the definition for Islamophobia proposed by Dr Chris Allen from the University of Birmingham, presented to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in 2016 which states 'Islamophobia is a certain perception of Muslims, which may be expressed as hatred toward Muslims. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of Islamophobia are directed toward Muslim or non-Muslim individual and/or their property, toward Muslim community institutions and religious facilities'. Together with guidance from the Muslim Council of Britain and Runnymede Trust reports, this definition will inform university practices and procedures and improve event management in the future.

For avoidance of doubt, whilst explicit statements on antisemitism and Islamophobia have been formally accepted by King's, it is worth stressing that the university does not tolerate any religious or other forms of discrimination.

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