

External Speakers Policy

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Events involving external speakers
Approving Authority:	University Executive
Responsible Officer:	Senior Vice-President (Operations)
Responsible Office:	SED
Related Procedures:	Procedures for Events Involving External Speakers
Related College Policies:	It's My Campus Policy KCL/KCLSU Statement on Freedom of Expression
Effective Date:	1 May 2023
Supersedes:	1 August 2022
Next Review:	Spring 2025

I. Purpose & Scope

1. King's College London (King's) facilitates a large and diverse range of topical speaker events taking place each year across our campuses, in line with our values of encouraging knowledge sharing, vibrant debate and our clear commitment to securing freedom of speech and expression within the law. We also have a duty of care to our staff, students and external visitors to ensure that events take place safely. This policy sets out King's policy on bookings for events that include an external speaker(s)¹ but that are not events that are part of the curriculum of a course or academic programme or the research event series of a faculty, school, department, institute or centre.
2. For events involving external speakers, the policy applies to anyone internal to King's who wishes to book a room or other space on King's campuses, or hold an event as a King's/KCLSU related entity either online or on premises not owned by King's, including:
 - 2.1 *King's College London Students' Union (KCLSU)*

Any event organised by a ratified student group, society or council, KCLSU Student Officer or KCLSU member of staff that will take place in a King's space or under the auspices of King's.
 - 2.2 *Departmental/Staff Bookings*
 - 2.2.1 Any event involving an external speaker that
 - (a) does not form part of the curriculum of an academic course or programme or form part of an academically-led research seminar or workshop intended primarily for an internal academic staff audience.
 - (b) is organised by staff or students of an academic unit (variably known as department, centre, institute, school or faculty – hereinafter referred to as 'Department') or professional services Directorate.

¹ Students wishing to book a room without an external speaker should follow the It's My Campus policy <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policyhub/room-bookings-policy>.

- 2.2.2 It is the responsibility of both the event organiser and the senior leader of the Department or Directorate to ensure they are confident that the content of a proposed speaker event is likely to be lawful and to disclose any factors that could impact on event safety.
- 2.2.3 The event organiser must seek approval from King's Venues even if the room is a Department-owned room, unless it is as part of an academic course or programme or part of a research event series for a primarily academic audience. They must comply with this policy and its related procedures and with any special conditions attached by King's to event booking approval.
- 3 *Unratified or Unrecognised Student Groups or Societies*
- 3.1 Student groups or societies that are not ratified by the KCLSU or recognised by their Department and who intend to hold an event involving an external speaker* must proceed in accordance with this policy and its procedures.
- 3.2. Individual students are not permitted to invite an external speaker to speak in King's rooms and other spaces on our premises without booking through KCLSU or through a Department or Directorate.
- 3.3. Any event held online or held at premises not owned or managed by King's/KCLSU but run as a King's/KCLSU event will be subject to this policy and approval must be given before the event can be advertised.
- 3.4. Approved events may use King's branding in advertising the event. Any event found to be using King's branding without approval of the university will be treated as a breach of copyright and subject to legal challenge if not removed. Promotion of an approved event and any ticketing required must be run by the approved event organiser.

II. Definitions

1. External speakers – speakers invited to attend an event who are not current members of either the staff or student body of King's. This includes events where external speakers are streamed live or pre-recorded into an event.
2. Ratified student groups, societies or councils – groups recognised by and through the processes of the KCLSU.
3. Duty Dean – a university officer designated to assist with high risk/high profile events, whether sponsored by a student society or organised by King's.
4. Event organiser – the person or persons primarily responsible for organising the event and liaising with external speakers and the university. They must have due regard to this policy. Where a booking is made on behalf of an event organiser by a more junior member of staff, it should be made clear during the booking process who will be organising the event.

III. Policy – Our Code of Practice for events involving external speakers

1. King's and KCLSU are committed to upholding freedom of speech and expression within the law and to ensuring our campuses remain vibrant, intellectually diverse, inclusive places for

the expression of beliefs, exchange of knowledge, and debate of ideas, issues and viewpoints by people from different backgrounds with events taking place safely. As set out in the King's Community Charter, we are committed to demonstrating open-mindedness, and expect to challenge and be challenged in protecting inclusion, non-discrimination and freedom of expression within the parameters of the law. As an institution we also seek to encourage our students, staff and visitors to aim to engage civilly in debate.

2. Therefore, our policy affirms that every member of staff and student at King's, and our external visitors, are entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to hold opinions without interference or disadvantage, and to freedom of speech and expression within the constraints of the law. Our commitment to this principle is enshrined in the [King's & KCLSU Joint Statement on Freedom of Expression](#).
 3. In the case of student events, these principles are also protected by the KCLSU [Safe Space Policy](#) which is applicable to all KCLSU events and KCLSU space.
 4. King's has a vital duty to ensure the safety of our staff, students and external visitors from violence, intimidation, discrimination, harassment, and incitement to hatred, violence and promotion or glorification of terrorism. Therefore, the right to freedom of speech and expression must be balanced with the need to protect people from such forms of harm and abuse.
 5. Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 requires King's to issue and regularly update a Code of Practice governing the procedures to be followed and the conduct required at meetings to ensure freedom of speech within the law is secured for students, staff - including honorary and visiting staff - and for all persons authorised to be on the institution's premises, including visiting speakers. This policy serves at King's Code of Practice in line with our statutory obligations.
 6. King's expects KCLSU to monitor and, where appropriate, update their own policies and procedures in relation to room bookings and external speakers, and to ensure they are aware of the obligations placed upon King's under the Education (No.2) Act 1986 and other relevant legislation affecting freedom of speech and safety on campuses.
 7. All bookings are covered by King's Venues terms and conditions: <https://www.kingsvenues.com/terms.aspx>.
 8. Events that are to be held in space not within King's Venues' authority but are held under the auspices of King's or KCLSU are still required to adhere to this policy with respect to identifying and mitigating risk.
- 9. Authorisation of & Responsibility for Events**
- 9.1 King's is ultimately responsible and accountable for all events held on King's campuses, and therefore no event subject to this policy will be confirmed until King's have authorised the event, whether that authorisation is through King's Venues or a Department/Directorate authority.

9.2 The Senior Vice President (Operations) is responsible for decisions regarding the approval of events subject to this policy but may delegate authority with respect to various aspects of event approval.

9.3 For all events subject to this policy, consideration will be given by the Senior Vice President (Operations) or designate as to:

- i. The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech as per King's code of practice in pursuance of the 1986 Education Act
- ii. The potential for the event going ahead to cause King's to be in breach of our equal opportunities policy.
- iii. The potential for the event going ahead to cause King's to fail in our wider legal duties (for example, legislation relevant to safety in the workplace).
- iv. The potential for the speaker's presence on campus to give rise to breach of the peace.

9.4 *Security*

9.4.1 The university's Head of Security is responsible for overall security of events held on our campuses.

9.4.2 The management and planning of any individual event that may pose a security and/or safety risk to any person, building or facility at King's is the responsibility of the organiser in consultation with the university's building and event managers and the Head of Security or designate.

9.4.3 With high-risk events where a Duty Dean has been appointed, on the day of the event the Duty Dean will be the ultimate decision maker in the event of a breach of this policy or concerns arising with respect to safety or freedom of expression.

9.4.4 The Head of Security will act as the main point of contact for the police if necessary.

9.5 Any meeting held on King's premises or online under King's/ KCLSU auspices must have a designated event organiser who is responsible for the arrangements and the conduct of the meeting.

9.6 The organiser of the event and the chair/ lead facilitator of a speaker event have a duty as far as is possible to ensure that the speaker(s) and the audience at a meeting comply with the law; for example, it is unlawful to incite racial hatred or to cause a breach of the peace.

9.7 *Duty Deans*

9.7.1 The Duty Dean at high-risk or high-profile student society events has authority to:

- (i) endorse the decision making of E&F senior staff or refer elsewhere for decision/urgent action;
- (ii) intervene to discourage inappropriate student behaviour and to ensure that all parties' Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Speech is maintained;
- (iii) witness any inappropriate student behaviour; to make decisions in relation to student behaviour and lead on reporting to Student Conduct and Appeals under 8.26 of King's academic regulations and the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#);

- (iv) be student liaison during the event in relation to any protest element and liaise with KCLSU SMT representative in relation to student behaviour in the event venue;
- (v) be the final decision maker, possibly supported by a Deputy Duty Dean.

9.7.2 The Duty Dean at high-risk or high-profile King's organised events has authority to:

- (i) endorse the decision making of E&F senior staff or refer elsewhere for decision/urgent action;
- (ii) intervene to discourage inappropriate student or staff behaviour and to ensure that all parties Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Speech is maintained;
- (iii) witness any inappropriate staff or student behaviour; to make decisions in relation to student behaviour and lead on reporting to Student Conduct and Appeals under 8.26 of King's academic regulations and the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#);
- (iv) be student liaison during the event;
- (v) be the final decision maker, possibly supported by a Deputy Duty Dean.

9.7.3 The Duty Dean has a duty to be present at the venue before the meeting begins to ensure they are satisfied with the arrangements but would not normally attend the event. They should remain in the building in the event that their guidance is required.

9.7.4 A Deputy Duty Dean may also be in attendance for support or training purposes. They can be designated by the Duty Dean to have the power to intervene in the event in their absence or incapacitation.

10. Segregation, including gender segregation, at events

10.1 Compulsory segregation, including on the grounds of gender, at events under the jurisdiction of this policy is explicitly prohibited.

10.2 King's will not interfere with the freedom of attendees to sit in the location of their choosing at events, but organisers must not enforce any segregated seating. King's will follow guidance set out by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

11. Reporting

An annual report on decisions taken under this policy will be provided by the Safeguarding Steering Group and FESAG to the Principal and to the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee of College Council.

12. Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action under the relevant discipline policy and procedures for the individual(s) concerned. For students this includes taking action under misconduct under 8.26 of the academic regulations and the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#). For staff this includes taking action under the relevant disciplinary procedure.