SPEAKERS AND EVENTS OVERSIGHT GROUP

Terms of reference

1. Purpose

The Speakers and Events Oversight Group's (The "Group") purpose is to have operational oversight of events which have been deemed high risk as part of the University's room booking process and/or escalated directly under the Policy on Speakers and Events. This will include, but not be limited to, events that may be related to the scope of the University's Prevent Duty (See Section 3: Governance)

2. Remit

- Deciding whether to allow a speaker to visit the campus, who may be deemed controversial (whether related to counterterrorism and security or not) or an event to take place on campus, that may be deemed controversial where such an event has been escalated in accordance with the University's Policy on Speakers and Events (or otherwise been escalated to the Group), and on what conditions may be appropriate to apply to such an event in order to ensure it can be conducted safely and lawfully.
- Where the Group determines that an event and/or speaker may need to be considered under the University Prevent duty, the Group will continue to follow the process above, but such events will also be reported by the University's Prevent Lead to the University's CONTEST Delivery Board, once established.

3. Governance

- The University has a number of statutory responsibilities in respect of events held under the auspices of the University, including (but not limited to) duties under the Equality Act 2010, health and safety legislation, obligations in respect of academic freedom, and under the Human Rights Act 1998 (including the need to have regard to the need to ensure freedom of expression).
- The University also has obligations under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism - "the Prevent duty".
    - The Group is chaired by the University Secretary and has a membership consisting of a range of relevant colleagues set out in Section 5 below.

- The Group reports on its work to the University Executive on an annual basis. Any events considered by the Group under the Prevent duty will be reported by the University's Prevent lead in their annual report to the University Court. Should an event require to be managed under the University's overall Prevent duty, the Prevent lead will report this in line with standard processes.

4. Operation

- The Group meets to consider
  - requests received from a member of the University community to hold an event or invite a speaker when that request has been escalated to the Group in accordance with the Policy on Speakers and Events (or otherwise referred to the Group);
- Where several such requests are received over a short timeframe, the Group may consider several requests at the same meeting.
- The Group is quorate when at least five members are present including the Convenor or their deputy.
- The Group may meet electronically if needed.
- The University Secretary will normally take a final decision on the request at the meeting of the Group but may defer a decision where it is deemed necessary to do so.

5. Composition

The Group comprises:

- The University Secretary (Convenor)
- The Assistant Principal (Community Relations)
- The University lead for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- The Deputy Secretary, Students (sitting both in that capacity and as the University's representative to the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group);
- The University's representative to the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group (where this is not the Deputy Secretary, Students)
- The Head of Security (or their nominee)
- The Director of Legal Services (or a solicitor from Legal Services)
- The University Chaplain (or their nominee)
- A representative (at Head of School level or above) from each of the three Colleges:
  - College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
  - College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
  - College of Science and Engineering

Non-members of the Group (including (but not limited to) the staff member(s) or student(s) responsible for organising the relevant event) may be invited to attend meetings to provide advice or background about proposed events.

6. Assessing the risk of events / speakers

a. **Responsibilities and Expectations of Committee Members**

All members are expected to recognise the University's profound and long-standing commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression, and relevant policies such as the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy and the Student Dignity and Respect Policy.

When assessing the risk of events / speakers:

there should be a presumption in favour of allowing events / speakers, with conditions if necessary, unless there is an overwhelming case that the speaker or event will contravene thelaw / the University's policies or statutory duties and no necessary and proportionate mitigating actions can be imposed.

- all members must help assess the risks of allowing the event to proceed by working to established criteria, which are aligned with the guidance issued by the UK Government at Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in Scotland (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- all members must be familiar with the provisions of the University's Policy on Speakers and Events and other relevant policies such as the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy and the Student Dignity and Respect Policy and statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression;
- where necessary, the Group may seek further information and/or advice from the individual organising the event, relevant professional bodies, from public sector agencies and organisations, from other Universities or from the University's solicitors, before making a recommendation. This should not involve asking a speaker for an advanced copy of their talk for vetting purposes, other than where an event is being considered under the Prevent duty; and.
- the Group should seek to assess and return a decision to the event organiser within five working days of referral of the event to the Group, but it is not bound by these timeframes

b. **Consultation and imposing conditions on events**

When an Event Organiser of a potentially controversial event is seeking approval for their event to proceed, the Group should seek to liaise with staff and student groups who might wish to organise protests or counter-activities (where such groups are reasonably identifiable) and seek to ensure that assistance is provided to organise these appropriately, safely and peacefully. This consultation should form the basis for guidance on protesting which should be published in good time in advance of the event in a clear and accessible manner and via staff and student groups. Any such protests should adhere to the University's Staff and Student Protest Guidelines.

The Group, having assessed an event / speaker against the established criteria, may recommend that the event may proceed but that certain conditions must be met / restrictions imposed, in order to ensure compliance with the University's statutory obligations.

Where conditions / restrictions are imposed, these will be communicated in writing to the Event Organiser on behalf of the University Secretary. The Event Organiser must ensure that the conditions / restrictions are complied with in full, with support from University professional services groups such as Security where needed, and comply with any reporting requirements that may be imposed in respect of such conditions /

restrictions. Where such conditions are (or in the reasonable opinion of the University are likely to be) breached, this may result in cancellation of the Event and/or disciplinary action taken against the Event Organiser (where appropriate). The Group may carry out a debrief or evaluation after an event it has approved, to ensure that the conditions of, or restrictions on, the event were complied with. Where this has not happened, the Group reserves the right to take this into account when considering future events organised by the relevant Event Organiser.

Examples of conditions / restrictions that may be imposed on Events include, but are not limited to:

1. Where the Group is of the view that the views to be expressed, or likely to be expressed, constitute extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups, then the Group may require that speakers are challenged with opposing views as part of that same event
2. Only University of Edinburgh members of staff and/or registered students may attend.
3. Members of the public may, or may not, be invited or admitted.
4. If guests are to be allowed to attend, only those whose identity is known to the organisers shall be admitted.
5. Admission shall be restricted and controlled by ticket, identity card or both.
6. A specified number of stewards shall be provided by the organisers and required to be present throughout the meeting and also whilst the audience is assembling or dispersing.
7. The names and addresses of stewards (including a chief steward) shall be supplied in advance by the organisers for approval by the University Secretary or other designated officer of UoE
8. The cost of these stewards or other services shall be met by the Event Organisers' budget for the relevant event.
9. Certain members of UoE shall be present in order to assist in the maintenance of good order.
10. Any speaker shall enter and leave by specified routes and shall be escorted under specified arrangements.
11. No food or drink, alcoholic or otherwise, or any other items which could be used as/or contain missiles shall be taken into a meeting and UoE security staff and/or stewards will be instructed to remove any such items prior to entry to the meeting or function.
12. No banners, flags, placards or similar items shall be brought into the building or used anywhere on the premises in circumstances likely to lead to injury or damage or cause a breach of the peace. Organisers of protests will be expected to refer to the University's then-current protest guidelines.
13. The admission of representatives of the press, radio or television shall be subject to prior approval by the University Secretary or be subject to any restrictions which may be specified.
14. The chair and/or Event Organiser shall have an obligation to ensure that no speaker or other person present at a meeting or function should infringe the law and, if in the opinion of the chair, such conduct continues after a warning, the chair has a duty to close the event.
15. The Chair shall be instructed in advance by the Event Organisers about their duty to decide whether an event should be terminated, and about procedures for requesting the police to be summoned in case of breach of the peace or a criminal act, or threat of either occurrence.

16. Stewards provided by the Event Organisers shall be briefed about their duties and responsibilities including being made familiar with local fire and emergency procedures.

17. Event Organisers should highlight the Staff Dignity and Respect Policy and the Student Dignity and Respect Policy policy, and chairs should seek to ensure that this is not breached during the event.
18. Such other instructions as may be given about the conduct of an event or the conditions in which it may be held.

Where any such conditions or restrictions are imposed, it is the duty of the Event Organiser to ensure they are complied with, and the Group may adopt any such monitoring provisions of conditions or restrictions as they deem appropriate.

c. **Right of appeal**

Where the Group determines that an event may not proceed, the relevant Event Organisers may appeal to the Principal against such a decision within ten working days of such decision being intimated to the Event Organiser (but may not appeal the imposition of any conditions or restrictions). In such cases, the Principal's decision will be final.

7. Records in relation to the Prevent duty

All recommendations made by the Group in relation to its Prevent duty will be recorded, together with a summary of the reasons given, by the Prevent Lead or their representative at any meeting of the Group.