



External Speaker Briefing

We ask all External Speakers at our events understand and agree in writing to the following.

Thank you for agreeing to speak to our members at a Surrey Students' Union event. The Union aims to be the heart of our students' life at the University of Surrey, ensuring our campus is a place in which a diversity of people and opinions are not only accepted but celebrated. We exist to 'provide for the intellectual, cultural, social and physical recreation of our members' as well as to 'foster and encourage the freedom of speech, expression, assembly and association.' We therefore actively seek to facilitate student-led events where speakers are invited to broaden the scope of discussion and debate and we are grateful to those who volunteer their time to contribute to the academic and non-academic development of our members.

Our agreement allows speakers to attend events on campus rests on the understanding that they act within the law and the regulations set by the University of Surrey (our parent institution) and the statutes that those regulations are drawn from. The use of University of Surrey premises for events that involve external speakers is regulated by the 'University of Surrey Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech' which is adopted by Surrey Students' Union and can be found [here](https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech.pdf).

In addition we have a Surrey Students' Union Freedom of Speech Policy which can be found on [our website](https://www.surreyunion.org/your-union/policies). [surreyunion.org/your-union/policies](https://www.surreyunion.org/your-union/policies) It highlights our commitment to Freedom of Speech and the non-academic development of our members through dialogue and debate, to which external speakers make significant contributions.

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 staff, students 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 skin colour, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender (sexual or defined), age, disability, marriage and civil partnership.
- We also reaffirm that it is a criminal offence to incite or encourage others to commit a crime, including acts of terrorism.

We ask that all speakers and event attendees are respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others.

If there are concerns raised at any point in the lead up to the event regarding the safety of attendees or potential legal issues the union will liaise with relevant stakeholders. In line with the University of Surrey Code of Practice and the Unions External Speakers Approval Process, conditions may be made before the continuation of the event/event approval.

Organisers are consulted on these conditions in advance of the event and all speakers notified of the outcome. An event may also be cancelled if there are safety concerns that the event would risk member safety, violation of health and safety requirements or if the event risked violating the aforementioned laws regarding hatred, discrimination or incitement. Surrey Students' Union reserves the right to put additional conditions on an event after initial approval as the 'risk' of an event is continually assessed and can cancel or postpone any event should they have concerns that cannot be addressed adequately. The Union may also require for additional clauses to be added to the speaker agreement where concerns are highlighted. We also reserve the right to perform spot checks on events being hosted by our members. If there are breaches of the Union or University Policies at our events, the matter will be referred for disciplinary or legal action.

This briefing document has been provided to ensure all speakers are aware of the framework we operate within when facilitating external speakers and the measures that may be required to support Freedom of Speech at our events. Thank you for agreeing to speak at one of our events and if you have any questions regarding any of the information in this document please contact us by emailing the Chief Executive Officer, Alex McKee a.mckee@surrey.ac.uk.