

Briefing for External Speakers at Students' Union UCL Events

Thank you for agreeing to speak to our members at Students' Union UCL event. The Union aims to be the heart of the student community at University College London, ensuring our college 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.'¹ We therefore actively seek to facilitate student lead events where speakers are invited to broaden the scope of discussion and debate 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 allows speakers to attend events on campus rests on the understanding that they act within the law and the regulations set by UCL (our parent institution) and the statutes that those regulations are drawn from. The use of UCL premises for events that involve external speakers is regulated by the 'UCL Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech' and these rules are therefore adopted by Students' Union UCL:

From UCL's 'Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech', relevant clauses include:

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

- » The beliefs or views of that individual or any member of that body; or
- » The policy or objectives of that body.
- » It is essential to the purposes of UCL that opportunities for free and open discussion within the law should be safeguarded. Members of UCL and all other persons attending meetings held on the premises must behave in a lawful manner and avoid taking any action or using language which is offensive or provocative.²

There is also a Students' Union UCL Freedom of Speech Policy which can be found on our website (www.studentsunionucl.ac.uk). 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.

¹ Students' Union UCL Memorandum & Articles of Association and Byelaws – <https://ucl.org/student-union/mem-and-arts.php>

²http://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff/resources/documents/Freedom_of_Speech_Code_of_Practice_Rev_Sep_2010.pdf

- » 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 UCL Code of Practice and the Unions External Speakers Process,³ and conditions may be made before the continuation of the event/event approval. These may include:

- » Limitations on what attendees may bring to the event including food, drink or anything that could be used as a missile.
- » An agreed number of event stewards present for the duration of the event.
- » SIA Security booked for the duration of the event.
- » Presence of Students' Union UCL staff observers
- » Presence of University College London staff observers
- » Limitation of number of attendees
- » Making the event 'private' or restricting attendance to UCL Students only.
- » Postponement of event until satisfactory measures are put in place
- » An advanced Risk Assessment with Students' Union UCL sign off
- » Alteration of the format of the meeting
- » Request a copy of the speakers' speech before approval granted to deliver it
- » Declaration of names of attendance in advance of the meeting
- » Restriction on banners, placards, flags or other items around the venue
- » Movement of venue at the advice of UCL Security.
- » Enactment of Union official chairing guidelines.
- » Union approved and trained Impartial Chair employed to lead event.
- » An official and accurate audio recording of the event taken by Students Union UCL to ensure accurate and transparent reporting of the speaker event. The recording will be used for no other purpose.
- » A specific documented agreement between Students Union UCL and invited speakers outlining the agreed topic, format and any specific conditions on the content of the event.

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. Students' Union UCL 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 UCL 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 measure 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

³ C20: Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech – www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-c/c20

any questions regarding any of the information in this document please contact us by emailing the Society and Media Manager, Carl, on c.salton-cox@ucl.ac.uk.