External Speaker Information and Procedures

Updated February 2014

This document contains the following:

1. Freedom of Speech on our Campus 2
2. Briefing for UCLU Officers & UCLU Club & Societies 3
3. Procedures and instructions 4
4. Freedom of Speech Rider 6
5. Briefing for External Speakers at UCLU Events 7
1. Freedom of Speech on our Campus

Freedom of Speech is enshrined in both the UCLU Memorandum & Articles of Association, Byelaws and in the UCL Code of Practice, so we do all we can to support our clubs and societies in organizing events with speakers that stimulate debate and further the non-academic development of our students.

UCLU has not adopted the NUS No Platform Policy; however we do have a policy that seeks to "Fight Racism Fight Fascism" \(^1\) which has implications for which organisations and individuals we can host.

There are, however, limitations on this commitment as set by UK law that protects individuals and groups from intimidation, discrimination and the incitement of a crime. As the organisation that facilitates your events we are bound by law and must always act within the law to ensure we provide a safe environment for our members. This includes:

- Forbidding of communication which is threatening, abusive or insulting, or intended to harass, alarm or distress.
- Forbidding of communication which targets a person or group of people based on their skin colour, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexuality gender, gender reassignment, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership.
- Reaffirming 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.

\(^1\) UCLU Policy 1238 Fight Racism Fight Fascism
2. Briefing for UCLU Officers (Including Clubs and Societies)

External Speakers and Freedom of Speech on Campus

UCLU has policy and procedures regarding external speakers (these are defined as non-UCL staff or students) in order to enshrine our commitment to Freedom of Speech while ensuring we act in the best interests of our students and in a socially responsible manner. We are committed to facilitating debate and discussion to further the extra-curricular development of our members. Constitutionally, UCLU is committed to Freedom of Speech and to support clubs and societies in inviting external speakers to their events to contribute to the dialogue and debate.

When approving external speaker requests, it is important that we take into consideration any risks associated with the speaker attending the event, so that we can work with you to mitigate them. This can take some time and may require additional support and resources, so we therefore ask you to allow us up to ten working days to do this. Risks we have to take into consideration when approving a speaker include student wellbeing, health and safety and reputational risk (for you, UCL, UCLU and our club and societies). We also consider the history of the speaker and any media attention they have received previously. UK law regarding discrimination, incitement and intimidation are taken into account when reviewing the history of the speaker to ensure that we are not perceived to be or are actually providing a platform for illegal activity. We will also consider any particular student groups on and off campus that may take offence at the invitation of the speaker to an event and will encourage you to contact them in advance to discuss their concerns.
3. Procedures and instructions

The form you need to complete to request permission for an external speaker can be found in the Clubs and Societies section of our website here:

https://uclu.org/sites/uclu.org/files/u3876/documents/outside_speaker_av_film_request_13-14_0.xls

If the form is submitted incomplete or we feel that you have not been thorough enough, we will send the form back to you to be updated. You need to leave us ten working days to carry out our approval procedure from the date of submission of a complete and appropriately detailed form via email. **NB This excludes requests submitted via the Extraordinary External Speaker Approval Procedure (see below).** Submitting an inadequately completed form will cause the postponement of your event until it can be processed and approved.

In most cases we aim to process these forms in five working days, but it can take longer in certain circumstances including exceptionally busy periods, university holidays and if the speaker requires further scrutiny by UCLU and/or UCL.

**Extraordinary External Speaker Approval Procedure**

UCLU wants its members to be able to hear about and debate relevant and topical major national and international events. We are aware that the 10 day processing time for this procedure does not easily allow clubs and societies and UCLU Officers to set up and respond with events in a timely fashion. Therefore if your event requires an external speaker to attend to highlight a significant local, national or international event then UCLU will where possible assist.

If your event is responding to a proven local, national or international event or crisis then please send in the same speaker form and mark it as Priority and email direct to the CSC Admin team uclu-csactivity@ucl.ac.uk cc’ing aeo@uclu.org. Providing relevant staff are on site and available to assist then we will do all we can to help facilitate your event. Please note you should not advertise your event until we have approved the external speaker.

Please also note clubs and societies and UCLU Officers seeking to circumvent the standard external speaker procedure using this method without due reason will be assessed for disciplinary action.

**UCLU retains the right of VETO as does UCL on all club and society and UCLU Officer external speaker events on campus.**

The ‘Briefing for External Speakers’ text provided within this document and online must be circulated to all speakers in advance of submission of the form.

Briefing located here:

https://uclu.org/sites/uclu.org/files/u3876/documents/updated_briefing_for_external_speakers_at_ucl_union_events_0.doc


You then need to confirm with them in writing that they agree to comply with UCLU policy while being hosted at one of our events, and note this on the external speaker approval form.

The Freedom of Speech Rider we have included here and online is aimed at increasing awareness of our policy amongst all attendees at your event, including those not classified as speakers.

Rider located here:


With that in mind, you must copy and paste this rider on to the bottom of emails/messages you send out inviting people to your event, for example on your club or society mailing list, as well as the event pages you set up on the internet, for example on Facebook. It is essential that this be circulated as due to the nature of some events, even those that are not classified as speakers will be voicing their opinions and contributing to discussions.

We hope you understand that the information you provide is important for us to be able to fairly assess each speaker and make a decision that is in the best interests of UCLU members and UCL. Overall responsibility for all UCLU activity, including Club and Society events, lies with the UCLU Sabbatical Officer Team and Trustee Board.

If any questions remain, please contact the CSC Team uclu-csactivity@ucl.ac.uk
4. Freedom of Speech Rider

UCLU is committed to providing a forum that facilitates Freedom of Speech while providing a safe space for our members and the public. We support events that contribute to the non-academic development of students while requesting that all speakers and attendees are respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others as well as the laws that protect individuals and groups from intimidation, discrimination and harassment. By attending a UCLU event you are agreeing to uphold our policies regarding Freedom of Speech. Any breach of the UCLU policies and procedures may result in your event and speech being curtailed and referral as appropriate for further action to be taken.
5. Briefing for External Speakers at UCLU Events

Welcome, and thank you for agreeing to speak to our members at a UCLU event. UCLU exists 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 amongst members.’ A number of our event organisers choose to fulfil these objectives by inviting speakers to broaden the scope of discussion and debate at events and we are grateful to those who volunteer their time to contribute to the non-academic development of our members.

In allowing speakers to attend UCLU events we approve them based 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 UCLU in line with our use of their premises for our events.

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

- So far as is reasonably practical, the use of the premises (UCL) will not be denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with:
  - The beliefs or views of that individual or of 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 any language which is offensive or provocative.

While it is the duty to uphold the aforementioned regulations, it is also our duty to act within the law and protect the safety of our students and staff. Our objective to promote Freedom of Speech is limited only by statute laws that protect individuals and groups of individuals from hate speech. These statutes forbid communication which is hateful, threatening, abusive or insulting and is intended to harass, alarm or distress. Communication which targets a person based on their skin colour, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexuality is forbidden. It is also a criminal offence to incite or encourage others to break the law. All speakers, as well as event attendees, must be respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others.

There is also a UCLU Freedom of Speech Policy which can be found on our website – www.uclu.org. It highlights our commitment to Freedom of Speech and the non-academic development of our members.

---

development of our members through dialogue and debate, to which external speakers make significant contributions.

If there are concerns raised at any point in the lead up to the event regarding the safety of attendees such as a breach of the peace or a criminal offence the Union will inform the UCL Head of Security, in line with the UCL Code of Practice, and conditions may be made before the continuation of the event/event approval. These may include:

- Requesting submission of the speeches in advance of the meeting
- Limitation on attendees
- Declaration of attendees in advance of the meeting
- Stewards to be provided by the organisers
- Presence of officers of UCLU to ensure good order
- Limitation on what attendees may bring to the event, which may include banning food or drink or anything that could be used as a missile
- No banners, flags, placards or similar items being allowed into the building
- Alteration of the conduct of the meeting or its facilitation.

Organisers would be 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 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. UCL Union reserves the right to cancel or postpone any event should they have any concerns. We also reserve the right to perform spot checks on events being hosted by UCLU members. If there are breeches of the UCLU or UCL policies at our event, 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. Again, we 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. Email our Activities and Events Officer at aeo@uclu.org, or phone on 020 7679 7392.