



QAHE Limited Free Speech Code of Practice

Prepared by: Assistant Director of Safeguarding, Student Life & Wellbeing

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1. Introduction and Purpose

- I. The purpose of this document is to reaffirm QAHE Limited's ("QA Higher Education") unwavering commitment to safeguarding freedom of speech as a cornerstone of academic inquiry and vibrant discourse. This document underpins QA Higher Education's approach to securing an environment in which diverse voices can be heard, ideas may be tested and challenged, and constructive dialogue can take place, all within the framework of the law and with due regard to mutual respect and understanding.
- II. This document shall be deemed to be the code of practice as required by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 (the "Code"). This Code has been introduced to comply with QA Higher Education's specific statutory duties to take all reasonable steps to secure free speech and academic freedom within the law and put in place a free speech code of practice under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- III. Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 states that: "*Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.*"
- IV. Under this Code, freedom of speech means the freedom of individuals within the law to impart ideas, opinions or information, by means of speech, writing or images, including in electronic form without interference.
- V. Academic freedom is the right of academic staff to have freedom within the law to question, and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing them in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.
- VI. Once QA Higher Education is a registered higher education provider, QA Higher Education will have specific statutory duties under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and is committed to taking all reasonable and practicable steps now to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. This duty applies particularly to academic freedom in its teaching and research. It also has particular regard to the need to ensure that free and open discussion can take place and that a diversity of views can be tolerated, including views that may be regarded as controversial or provocative or unpopular. In discharging these duties, QA Higher Education seeks to ensure an environment in which academic freedom and freedom of speech are secured within the law, and in which academic staff are free, within the law, to question and test received wisdom without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or any privileges they may have at QA Higher Education.
- VII. Every person employed at QA Higher Education and every student enrolling on a QA Higher Education delivered course should be aware that joining the QA Higher



Education community involves obligations and responsibilities which are consistent with the above principles and the law and that these are included in QA Higher Education's codes of practice, policies, and procedures including this Code. This does not mean that the right to freedom of speech or academic freedom is unfettered, as it may be limited by law to protect the reputation or rights of others, protect national security and public safety and for the prevention of disorder or crime and to prevent disclosure of information received in confidence.

- VIII. The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 places a legal duty on Higher Education providers to take all steps which are reasonable and practicable to secure freedom of speech. It states that the only constraints on the duty to secure freedom of speech are those imposed by law and, therefore, in operating this Code, QA Higher Education seeks to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law whilst balancing its legal obligations to protect the welfare of both staff and students. It is not for higher education providers to set limitations on those obligations.
- IX. This Code ensures that, as far as reasonably practicable, academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law is secured for staff, students and visiting speakers to QA Higher Education and that no one is denied the use of QA Higher Education's premises, platforms and/or online environments on the grounds of their ideas or opinions or, in the case of organisations, the opinions and beliefs of its members.
- X. The Board shall appoint the Chief Academic Officer, or such other individual who is the most senior academic lead within QA Higher Education from time to time, to act on its behalf for the purposes of overseeing compliance with this Code, including responsibility for its implementation and annual review (the Responsible Officer).

2. Principles

- I. QA Higher Education is committed to upholding the principle of free expression within the law. We support the right of individuals to express their ideas and opinions freely, within the boundaries of the law. We encourage open, respectful, and dignified debate on a wide range of topics, including those that may be controversial or unpopular, without fear of disciplinary action or reprisal.
- II. QA Higher Education does not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation and expects all members of the QA Higher Education community and its visitors to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration. QA Higher Education is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the community are respected. However, the expression of views which are unpopular, controversial or provocative or which cause offense, can still be lawful and will not constitute grounds for curtailing an individual's rights under this Code.
- III. This Code is grounded in the external legal context outlined in **Appendix 1** and is underpinned by the statutory requirements of the Higher Education (Freedom of



Speech) Act 2023, as well as the core principles set out in the Office for Students' (the "OfS") Regulatory Advice 24: Guidance Related to Freedom of Speech.

3. Scope

- I. This Code applies to all members of the QA Higher Education community, including staff (whether academic staff or otherwise), registered students (whether full or part-time learners) and visitors (including visiting speakers). The Code applies to all forms of communication, whether verbal or written, and applies across all settings, including in-person/physical, remote, digitally live streamed or recorded and any other activities (referred to in this Code as "events") proposed, planned or due to take place in person at QA Higher Education premises or other teaching, learning or research environments, on or using QA Higher Education's physical facilities or online platforms, or otherwise organised, supported or endorsed by QA Higher Education.
- II. QA Higher Education acts, through its respective subsidiary companies, in partnership with UK universities. QA Higher Education recruits to and delivers various academic programmes through those partnership arrangements with each of its university partners. In these arrangements, QA Higher Education acts as a delivery partner, and both QA Higher Education and the respective higher education provider partner are separately regulated and subject to their own statutory and regulatory obligations. This Code applies to QA Higher Education and to activities that are organised, approved and governed by QA Higher Education. Partner higher education providers may also maintain their own Freedom of Speech Code or equivalent policy to meet their own regulatory duties.
- III. This Code does not apply to activities organised, approved, or governed by another higher education provider under these arrangements. Where an activity falls within the governance or approval processes of the university partner, that partner's Freedom of Speech Code or equivalent policy will apply. Where appropriate, QA Higher Education may refer such matters to the relevant partner for consideration under its own code or procedures.
- IV. Nothing in this Code shall be interpreted as limiting the rights of individuals to engage in lawful industrial action or protest.
- V. The duties and obligations arising from this Code will be considered in the context of other activities and relevant policies and procedures, including but not limited to HR policies for academic staff and the [Prevention of harassment, sexual misconduct and relationship abuse policy](#).

4. Duties & Responsibilities



- I. QA Higher Education is bound by statutory duty to take all reasonable and practicable steps to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. QA Higher Education operates with a presumption in favour of freedom of speech. It shall be the duty of all those subject to this Code to assist QA Higher Education in upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law.
- II. Staff (and students where relevant) of QA Higher Education should bring this Code to the attention of any outside organisations who are providing speakers or who are responsible for organising events. Such organisations and/or speakers are expected to uphold the principles of this Code, respect QA Higher Education's values and be sensitive to the diversity of the QA Higher Education community.
- III. It shall be the duty of any person engaged in the organisation of any guest lecture or other similar event under this Code to ensure the proper security and organisation (including stewarding and chairing of that event) for the purpose of upholding the duty to take all reasonable and practicable steps to secure freedom of speech within the law and complying with the provisions of this Code.

5. Freedom of Expression & Assembly

- I. Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are fundamental rights protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 by Article 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. They are also fundamental rights under common law. Protection under Article 10 extends to the expression of views that may shock, disturb, or offend the deeply held beliefs of others.
- II. The right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are qualified (rather than absolute) rights, which means that the rights of the individual must be balanced against the interests of society. These rights operate in the context of the law and the values of a democratic society. They are qualified, for example, by laws to protect others from violence, hatred, and discrimination, to protect national security and public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, to protect health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, and to prevent the disclosure of information received in confidence. In particular, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly do not protect statements that constitute unlawful harassment or incite violence or hatred against other persons and groups, particularly by reference to race (including language, national origin or immigration status), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, age, disability or gender reassignment ('hate speech') or seek to commit offences against public order.
- III. QA Higher Education has an explicit duty in law to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for students, staff and visiting speakers. This includes a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the use of any premises or online environment or platform of QA Higher Education is not 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 by the code or objectives of that body.

- IV. It shall be contrary to this Code to seek to restrict freedom of speech or academic freedom within the law other than where that restriction is proportionate and prescribed by law or in furtherance of a legitimate aim as set out in this Code.
- V. It shall be contrary to this Code for any person or body to whom it applies to take any action other than by reasonable and peaceful persuasion or peaceful protest to prevent any student or group of students from attending any lecture, tutorial or other academic activity required by, or properly associated with, the course on which they are enrolled because of the lawful views held or expressed or which are reasonably likely to be expressed as part of that academic activity, whether or not it takes place within QA Higher Education.
- VI. It shall be contrary to this Code for any person or body to which it applies to take any action other than by reasonable and peaceful persuasion or peaceful protest to prevent the holding of or continuance of any lecture, tutorial or other academic activity because of the lawful views held or expressed or which are reasonably likely to be expressed, whether or not within QA Higher Education, by the academic concerned.

6. Academic Freedom

- I. The principle of the right to academic freedom within the law set out in this Code shall extend to academic staff, including visiting and guest speakers in accordance with the Event Booking Procedure for External Speakers set out at **Appendix 2**.
- II. Academic staff are protected in their teaching, research and speech by the provision on academic freedom expressed within QA Higher Education's policies, procedures, regulations and contracts of employment. In summary, staff have freedom within the law to question, and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.
- III. QA Higher Education has a particular regard to securing academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, but this must be set within the context of QA Higher Education's values and those of a civilised, democratic, inclusive society. QA Higher Education expects its members and speakers and those taking part in activities to respect those values and to be sensitive to the diversity of its diverse community. While these precepts are not within themselves grounds to restrict lawful free speech or academic freedom they apply even in relation to the way views are expressed and any form of protest activity.
- IV. QA Higher Education also acknowledges the rebuttable presumption in relation to free speech which applies to its regulatory duties to protect students from harassment under the Office for Students Condition E6.



7. Academic Programmes, Policies and Procedures

- I. As set out in 3 above, QA Higher Education acts in partnership with UK universities through a sub-contractual relationship. The nature of the sub-contractual relationship means that QA Higher Education delivers courses that have been quality assured by the respective university partner. QA Higher Education will ensure, to the extent that it is legally able to, that its academic programmes, teaching, research activity, policies and internal procedures are developed and operated in a manner that reflects its duty to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. In particular:
 - processes for programme development and approval, quality assurance, learning and assessment will be structured so as to respect and safeguard lawful freedom of expression and academic inquiry;
 - mechanisms supporting research activity will be designed and applied in a way that upholds academic freedom and the lawful exchange of ideas; and
 - disciplinary and related decision-making processes will be applied fairly and proportionately and will not be used to undermine or penalise the lawful expression of views or the exercise of academic freedom.
- II. Where an activity in this clause 7 falls within the governance or approval processes of the university partner, that partner's Freedom of Speech Code or equivalent policy will apply. Where appropriate, QA Higher Education may refer such matters to the relevant partner for consideration under its own code or procedures.

8. Approval of Events

- I. The primary purpose of this Code is to ensure that QA Higher Education can fulfil its legal obligations in taking all reasonable and practicable steps to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, whilst at the same time fulfilling other legal obligations and statutory duties and ensuring the safety and smooth running of the organisation. QA Higher Education must have particular regard to its free speech duties and where any person subject to this Code wishes to hold a meeting or other event for the expression of views as set out in this Code on premises, platforms or online environments which QA Higher Education controls, the presumption will be in favour of free speech and QA Higher Education shall not unreasonably refuse consent.
- II. QA Higher Education reserves the right to refuse consent to any meeting or event that involves, or is reasonably expected to involve, the expression of views that are unlawful or in circumstances where it would be prescribed by law to apply proportionate restrictions under this Code. All such requests should be made and will be considered in accordance with QA Higher Education's Event Booking Procedure for External Speakers set out at **Appendix 2**.
- III. The withholding or withdrawal of permission will only occur in exceptional circumstances where reasonable and practicable steps cannot be taken to secure



freedom of speech within the law and, wherever possible, after consultation with the main contact for the event and appropriate internal and external parties as are deemed necessary by the Assistant Director of Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing, who may take external specialist advice when required. The Assistant Director of Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing will present the assessment to the Student Welfare Risk Panel who is the decision-making authority.

- IV. It is important to note, however, that although QA Higher Education operates with a presumption in favour of freedom of speech within the law and will take all steps reasonably practicable to secure free speech and academic freedom, there may be exceptional circumstances where it may be necessary to limit or curtail free speech or academic freedoms as long as any interference with those rights is for legitimate reasons and proportionate i.e. they must impose the least possible restriction on freedom of speech necessary to secure such legitimate aims. When considering imposing limits on freedom of speech, such as when developing policies around staff or student conduct, QA Higher Education will always first undertake a risk assessment and a proportionality test to ensure this is the case. Similarly, when making any decision under such policies, QA Higher Education will again undertake a proportionality test or risk assessment to ensure any action taken is legitimate and goes no further than is necessary.
- V. Appeals against any decision made under this Code may be made in writing to the Responsible Officer whose decision shall be final. Any appeal must be made within ten (10) working days of any decision.

9. Reporting and Complaints

- I. QA Higher Education is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all members of the QA Higher Education community. All individuals within the QA Higher Education community are expected to exercise their right to free speech in a considered and responsible manner, taking into account the potential impact of their words on others and the broader community.
- II. QA Higher Education will ensure that clear and accessible procedures are in place for reporting any alleged incidents of hate crime, harassment, threats, or intimidation. All reports will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, with appropriate action taken, which may include referral to the Police or other external authorities where necessary. If an offence is alleged to have occurred in connection with an event or activity governed by this Code, QA Higher Education may cooperate with law enforcement authorities to identify individuals involved. Internal disciplinary proceedings may be suspended pending the outcome of any external investigation.
- III. In the event that a registered student or member of staff has a complaint relating to freedom of speech at QA Higher Education or believes that their rights to lawful free speech have been compromised, including where they have experienced intimidation



or harassment linked to the expression of their views, they are encouraged to report the matter promptly.

- IV. Registered students may raise such concerns through QA Higher Education's designated student complaints routes, including the ([QAHE Complaints Procedure](#)) and [Your Safe Space: Report + Support](#). Complaints or concerns raised by members of staff may be referred through the relevant Staff Complaints Procedure and/or, as appropriate. Visitors may also raise concerns through [Your Safe Space: Report + Support](#), where applicable.
- V. QA Higher Education will investigate all such matters promptly and fairly in accordance with the QAHE Respect for All - incorporating the Student Disciplinary Procedure and Student Code of Conduct ([Respect for All Policy](#)) and, where applicable, the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

10. Social and Electronic Media

- I. The principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law apply to the use of electronic and social media and QA Higher Education requires responsible and legal use of the technologies and facilities available to its staff and students including the use of the internet, e-mail and social media. Please refer to QA Higher Education's social media Policy for further information.

11. Monitoring and Review of this Code

- I. All decisions with regards to guest/external speaker events will be recorded, and this will include the risk assessment and outcome.
- II. This Code will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in addressing the needs of the QA Higher Education community and complies with applicable laws and regulations by the Assistant Director Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing.
- III. The Assistant Director Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing will ensure that this Code and its terms is brought to the attention of QA Higher Education's students at least once a year. The Code is also published on the QAHE Policy Page [Policies & Procedures](#).



Appendix 1: Legal Context

[Human Rights Act 1998](#): Incorporates Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, protecting the right to freedom of expression.

[Equality Act 2010](#): Prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, ensuring that freedom of speech does not infringe upon the rights of others.

[Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 \(Prevent Duty\)](#): Obligates institutions to have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism, while also having regard to the importance of freedom of speech.

[Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#): Strengthens the legal duties on institutions in relation to free speech and academic freedom, introducing mechanisms for promoting, scrutinising, and enforcing compliance with those requirements.

[Higher Education & Research Act 2017](#) (HERA) makes it clear that all universities and colleges which register with the Office for Students (OfS) must uphold the existing laws around freedom of speech and follow the OfS' regulatory framework.

[The Education Reform Act 1988](#) (section 202) (reinforced by HERA) makes clear that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions.

[The Public Order Act 1986](#) creates criminal offences relating to public order; to control public processions and assemblies; to control the inciting of racial hatred or on the grounds of religion or of sexual orientation.

[The Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) creates both civil and criminal offences for harassment and makes provision for protecting persons from harassment and similar conduct.

[The Terrorism Act 2006](#) creates offences relating to the encouragement of terrorism and dissemination of terrorist publications, including publishing, or causing another to publish, a statement likely to be understood as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism with the intent that members of the public will be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism, or being reckless as to whether that effect will be caused.



Appendix 2: Event Booking Procedure for External Speakers

12. External Speakers

- I. Anyone organising an event that involves a speaker or speakers to be hosted by QA Higher Education must ensure that the Free Speech Code of Practice (the “Code”) and this associated procedure is followed. This includes external speaker events on external premises but associated with QA Higher Education.
- II. All external or guest speakers must agree to adhere to QA Higher Education’s policies and the legal framework governing freedom of speech.

13. Notice

- I. All events involving external speakers must be booked at least ten working days in advance using the External Speaker Booking Form (at **Appendix 3**) and submitted for approval before an event can take place. Completed forms should be submitted to qahe.welfare@qa.com, copying in the Head of your department.
- II. Prior to any speakers attending QA Higher Education events, the Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing Team will risk assess the event based on the guidelines within this procedure.
- III. Event Organisers (as defined below) shall not advertise a speaker event until they have received confirmation that the speaker has been approved; this includes advertising via social media.

14. Event Organiser

- I. A designated individual must act as Event Organiser and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Code and this Event Booking Procedure, completing the External Speaker Booking Form and Risk Assessment with full event details and initial risk assessment for consideration by QA Higher Education and briefing the appointed Event Chair (if required). For the purpose of this Appendix 2 an “Event Organiser” is the member of staff, student or student society formally responsible for submitting the Booking Form and ensuring full compliance with the Code.
- II. Students or societies may organise events only under the authority and guidance of an Event Organiser.
- III. The Event Organiser must ensure that all external speakers are provided with a copy of the QA Higher Education Code and this accompanying procedure, and that their attention is drawn to its contents. External speakers must also be briefed on QA Higher



Education's expectations regarding lawful free speech, respectful conduct, and compliance with relevant policies.

15. Risk Assessment

- I. The Event Organiser must assess the nature of the event, expected attendance, and external speaker background (including online presence). The Event Organiser should identify any risks relating to security, safety, equality, diversity, or Prevent Duty.
- II. Once the External Speaker Booking Form and Risk Assessment is complete, this should be submitted to the Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing Team for review and approval.
- III. A risk assessment will be carried out to evaluate the suitability and nature of the proposed topic and speaker, the potential for public disorder or legal breaches, the need for security measures, and compliance with relevant duties and regulations - including the Prevent Duty, the Equality Act 2010, and other applicable legal frameworks.
- IV. The review process will consider compliance with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty), and the Public Order Act 1986. Events may be refused or conditions imposed where there are reasonable grounds to believe that unlawful activity may occur.

16. Review and Approval of Events

- I. All events are approved on a presumption of free speech within the law. Approval of the speaker will not be withheld based on controversial views.
- II. In assessing whether to allow approval to proceed with an event QA Higher Education will apply the three-step framework set out in Section 2 of the Office for Students' Regulatory Advice 24: Freedom of Speech Guidance¹:
 - **Step 1:** Is the speech within the law? If not, the duty to secure speech does not apply.
 - **Step 2:** Are there any reasonably practicable steps to secure the speech? If so, QA Higher Education will take those steps and will not restrict the speech.
 - **Step 3:** If no such steps are available, QA Higher Education will ensure that any restriction is prescribed by law and proportionate under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

¹ [Regulatory advice 24: Guidance related to freedom of speech](#)



- III. A decision on whether an event can go ahead, can go ahead with modifications, or is rejected will be made after a full risk assessment has been made, and relevant stakeholders have been consulted (as necessary). Where risks are identified following the risk assessment, the request will be referred to QA Higher Education's Assistant Director Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing. The Assistant Director Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing will seek advice and guidance from relevant internal and external stakeholders. Once a decision is reached this will be confirmed to the Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing Team so that they can inform the Event Organiser.
- IV. Conditions may be imposed to allow events to go ahead, for example, implementing security measures, appointing an independent Event Chair (see below) or limits on the number of attendees.
- V. Costs for additional security (if required) may be charged to the Event Organiser in exceptional cases. Event Organisers would be consulted on conditions or modifications in advance of the event taking place and they would then be responsible for informing the external speaker of the outcome.
- VI. All speakers will be made aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, and QA Higher Education's various policies, including that they:
 - must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law;
 - are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts;
 - must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony; and
 - are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission QA Higher Education.
- VII. QA Higher Education reserves the right to perform spot checks on events being hosted on QA Higher Education premises or other external hosting venues. If there are breaches of policies at any event the matter may be referred for disciplinary or legal action.

17. Event Chair

- I. An Event Chair may be appointed to uphold lawful free speech and maintain good order during the event.
- II. An Event Chair must act impartially and allow lawful challenge and debate.
- III. QA Higher Education reserves the right to intervene or terminate an event in progress if there is evidence or reasonable suspicion that the bounds of lawful free speech are being exceeded, or if there is a risk to safety, public order, or property.



18. Cancellation

- I. Events will only be cancelled in exceptional circumstances. These include situations where there is a clear and substantiated inability to mitigate serious risks to safety, public order, or lawful free speech. Events may also be cancelled where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the event is likely to involve unlawful speech or conduct, incitement to violence or hatred, or a breach of the peace.
- II. QA Higher Education also reserves the right to intervene in or terminate an event in progress if such risks materialise during the event and cannot be adequately managed.
- III. Any recommendation to cancel or amend the arrangements for a proposed speaker or event must be approved by the Student Welfare Panel.

19. Appeals

- I. Appeals against event refusals or cancellations must be submitted in writing to the Chief Governance & Transformation Officer.
- II. The decision of the Chief Governance & Transformation Officer shall be final and must be reported to the Academic Board.

20. Event Review

- I. After the event, the Event Organiser must complete the event review, to ensure that any issues or concerns during the event are logged and acted upon. The link to the review form can be found [here](#).

21. Data Sharing

- I. Where QA Higher Education deems there is a legitimate reason to do so, QA Higher Education reserves the right to share information on the external speakers it has hosted, and/or those it deemed to be a risk, with other relevant agencies, including the OFS and relevant University partners.



Appendix 3: External Speakers Booking Form and Risk Assessment

22. This risk assessment is used solely to identify and mitigate lawful risks associated with the organisation of events. Information provided will not be used to restrict lawful freedom of speech on the basis of viewpoint, belief, affiliation, controversy, or media interest.

- This form MUST be filled in for **all** External Speakers/Organisations
- This form must be submitted a **minimum of 14 working days in advance** of the date of the event. Forms arriving after this time will not be approved
- QA Higher Education staff are not permitted to advertise a speaker event until they have received confirmation from the Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing Team that the speaker has been approved, this also includes on social media
- Before completing this form, you should read QAHE Free Speech Code of Practice.

Completed forms should be sent to qahe.welfare@qa.com and your Head of Department

Event Organisers Name	
Contact Email	
Job Title	

Date of Event		Start Time	
Location of Event		End Time	
Name of Event			

Name of Speaker	
Organisation	
Address of organisation	
Position Held	
Contact Email	



Contact Number	
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Please provide some background information about the speaker and their organisation.

Please answer all questions	Provide as much detail as possible
Target audience (please include university partner, and if any under 18s will be invited)	
What topic(s) will be covered by this speaker?	
Will the speaker be presenting a particular perspective or viewpoint, and what is the format of the event (e.g. lecture, panel discussion, debate, Q&A)?	
Does the speaker have any affiliations relevant to the subject matter of the event (e.g. organisational representation, advocacy role), that should be considered as part of the risk assessment?	
Please include links to the speaker's website and social media links	
Is there any fee associated with booking this speaker? (How much? Please mention if this is for travel)	
Please declare any known past controversy relating to the speaker or topic that may be relevant to event planning, safety, or legal compliance.	



<p>Is the organiser aware of any previous refusal of permission for the speaker to speak at other venues, and (where known) the reasons given?</p> <p>This information will be considered only for risk-assessment purposes and will not be treated as determinative.</p>	
<p>Are there any reasonably foreseeable risks that the event may raise issues under the QAHE Free Speech Code of Practice or Event Booking Procedure for External Speakers, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, or the Equality Act 2010, and if so, what mitigation measures are proposed?</p>	
<p>Is this event/speaker likely to attract media interest – if so, why?</p>	
<p>How/where is this event being advertised?</p>	
<p>Are there any identified security threats to the speaker(s)?</p>	
<p>Does/do the speaker(s) come with his / her / their own protective security detail? (not required for online delivery)</p>	
<p>Any other information you think we need to be aware of?</p>	



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Declaration

By signing and submitting this form, you are confirming all information is correct and that the speaker has been sent a copy of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and they are aware of their responsibilities.

Event organisers signature:

Date of signature:

Completed forms should be sent to qahe.welfare@qa.com, copying in the Head of Department.

Event risk assessment – to be completed by Welfare

Review by the Assistant Director of Safeguarding, Student Life and Wellbeing

Is there any information on open-source research (e.g. google search) to the detriment of the speaker(s)?

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Are there any identified security threats/considerations in relation to this event e.g. would you reasonably expect the content or the topic of discussion to attract any protests/disruption?

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Is there a risk of the attendance of the speaker(s) or subject of discussion raising an issue under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 or the Equality Act 2010?

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