



External Speakers Policy

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This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant College Policies and Procedures, particularly BCA Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (November 2019), BCA Safeguarding Annual Audit December (2015) and the Single Equality Scheme (November 2019).

This document can be made available in other formats, on request

Purpose

Providing high quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.

BCA Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability, Socio-economic Disadvantage

Introduction

Through this external speaker policy Berkshire College of Agriculture will demonstrate how it manages risks around external speakers within the college. It will demonstrate how it seeks to maintain a safe environment where freedom of speech, expression and academic debate can exist.

The college is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued.

Policy Statement

Berkshire College of Agriculture is committed to providing students with an environment where freedom of expression and speech (within the law) are protected, but balanced with the need to ensure that the college is free from harm and hatred. It provides access to a range of visiting speakers from within various industries. Such guests bring great diversity of experience and opinion, enriching our activities and sparking academic discussion and debate among staff and students.

BCA is aware of its responsibilities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, placing a proportionate amount of consideration on its policies and procedures.

BCA seeks to ensure that the policy is embedded within day to day practices, policies and procedures throughout the college.

Legal Requirements

BCA maintains its responsibility to comply with the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Education (No.2) Act (1986) allowing staff and students their freedom of speech and expression, particularly in the context of academic freedom to question and put forward new ideas including controversial or unpopular opinions, Education Reform Act (1988). This must co-exist with the due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015).

BCA has a duty to safeguard information that it holds on individuals, so as not put them at risk through disclosure and therefore complies with the Data Protection Act (1998).

BCA seeks to comply with all relevant legislation and is also informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Terrorism Act (2000, 2006, 2008)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- The Crime and Disorder Act (1998)
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006)

Implementation

A. BOOKING AN EXTERNAL SPEAKER

BCA is committed to providing students with opportunities to meet and share the views of a range of subject specialists. In doing so, BCA is committed to providing sufficient checks on each individual, before they are booked, to ensure they are suitable for Further Education and pose no threat to the students. External speakers must act in accordance with the law and not breach the lawful rights of others.

The majority of external speakers' requests will be straightforward and can be authorised by the Head of Department. However where any concerns are raised the referral will be further considered by the SLT link for that department.

Prior to the confirmation of an external speaker, the event organiser will be responsible for gathering the following information on the External Speaker Authorisation Form:

- Name and contact details of speaker
- Whether they are representing a company/organisation
- Information about the speakers reputation

The form will ensure staff assess the speaker against the following questions:

1. Has the speaker been prevented from speaking at BCA or a similar establishment or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the external speaker code of conduct?
2. Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by the speaker(s) may be in breach of the external speaker code of conduct?

If the answer to both questions is NO:

The event organiser can book the external speaker for the event or lecture (a copy of the external speaker's code of conduct should be sent at this stage).

If the answer to either of the questions is UNCLEAR:

The event organiser must seek guidance from their Head of Department whose responsibility it will be to further review the speaker(s) against the questions above.

Ultimately, if the answer to any of the questions is YES:

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to report concerns to the Head of Department and SLT link before continuing with the event arrangements.

B. BOOKING AN EVENT

BCA is committed to providing students with opportunities to meet and share the views of a range of subject specialists. In doing so, BCA is committed to providing sufficient checks on events, before they are booked, to ensure they are suitable and pose no threat the students. Those responsible for the event must act in accordance with the law and not breach the lawful rights of others.

Anyone interested in booking an event will need to complete the External Speaker Authorisation Form, disclosing the following information:

- Name and contact details of organiser
- Name and contact details of speaker/performer
- Target audience - who will be able to attend
- Organiser/event reputation

C. CODE OF CONDUCT

All external speakers will be obliged to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others.

They should abide by the colleges expectations, including but not limited to:

- Compliance with the colleges External Speaker Policy
- Compliance with legislation regarding freedom of speech
- The presentation of ideas and opinions, in particular those that may be conscientious or potentially offensive, in the spirit of academic debate, being open to challenge and question
- Compliance with all college policies and procedures, including health and safety

External speakers should not, including but not limited to:

- Act in breach of the criminal law
- Incite hatred or violence or any breach of the criminal law
- Encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism
- Spread hatred and intolerance
- Discriminate against or harass any person or group on the grounds of their sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religious or other similar belief, sexual orientation or age
- Defame any person or organisation
- Raise or gather funds for any external organisation to cause without express permission of the college

Responsibilities

Final responsibility for the maintenance of this policy rests with the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead/DSL

Review

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it is in line with any changes made to legislation.

BCA