

# Guest Speaker Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	Date:	19 January 2021
Implementation date:	January 2021		
Review date:	January 2023		
Staff member responsible:	Director of Membership Services		

## Introduction

Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union (The Students' Union) has a long and rich history as an organisation that explores culture, debate and therefore has regularly welcomed visiting speakers from around the world to its campuses. Such speakers have brought and continue to bring great diversity of experience, insight and opinion, enriching our events and activities and sparking discussion and debate among our students.

The Students' Union is committed to facilitating debate and discussion to further the extra-curricular development of our students and to support student groups in inviting guest speakers to their events to contribute to the dialogue.

## Definition

'Guest speaker' is used throughout this document to describe any individual or organisation who is not a student or staff member at Falmouth University, The University of Exeter or The Students' Union.

This policy covers guest speakers at:

- Students' Union events
- Events organised by affiliated groups (e.g. societies and sports clubs) in any venue

## Aims

The purpose of this policy is to set in place a governing framework for guest speakers to ensure that this proud heritage, where debate, challenge and dissent are not only permitted but expected, can continue.

It is Students' Union Policy:

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected and balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for students.
- To provide a clearly defined and effective procedure to ensure that the law is upheld.
- To collaborate with necessary agencies and advisors to reach sound, evidenced based judgements about proposed external speakers ensuring that The Students' Union, the Universities and FX Plus can meet their legal, social and moral obligations.
- To encourage and provide a balance of opinion at any academic discussion or debate.

- To communicate to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors, that it is our mutual responsibility to comply with anti-discrimination, anti-bullying or anti-harassment legislation and that both The Students' Union and the individual can be held liable if they contravene the law.
- To challenge behaviour and change practice that directly or indirectly results in discrimination.
- To ensure that external speakers cannot insist on gender segregation as a condition of participation at the event because gender segregation is unlawful, unless to observe religious worship.

## Freedom of Speech

The Students' Union has policy and procedures regarding guest speakers 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 students. Constitutionally, The Students' Union is committed to Freedom of Speech and to support student societies in inviting guest speakers to their events to contribute to dialogue.

Sometimes a guest speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to contravene our conditions for a safe event. We're committed to working together with event organisers to make sure that we reach a decision regarding the proposed event that is reasonable, informed and within the law.

## Students' Union Event Considerations

When approving guest speaker requests, it is important that The Students' Union takes into consideration any risks associated with the speakers attending the event so that we can work to mitigate them. This may require additional support and resources so the more time we have to prepare the event, the better.

The Students' Union need to take into consideration the following points when approving a speaker:

- risk to student wellbeing, health and safety.
- history of the speaker and any media or police attention they have received previously.
- laws 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 providing a platform for illegal activity or potentially illegal activity.
- particular student groups that may take offence at the invitation of the speaker to an event.

The Students' Union will work with the Universities and FX Plus to ensure that risks identified around particular speakers or events being held on campus will be properly managed.