

# External Speaker Policy

*This process applies to all bookings of events involving the engagement of an external speaker to give a presentation, talk or lecture under the auspices of either the University of Bristol (UoB) or Bristol Students Union (Bristol SU), whether hosted on or off UoB or Bristol SU premises. The process is not normally expected to apply to the engagement of visiting speakers to contribute to the delivery of approved academic programmes or to take part in research seminars at UoB.*

## 1 When to use this procedure

This procedure should be followed whenever an event involving an external speaker is organised and should be commenced at the earliest opportunity. No booking of the speaker or venue should be confirmed until a decision has been made under this procedure that the event can go ahead.

All those involved in this procedure should consult the recent guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on [Freedom of Expression in Universities](#) (February 2019) (the EHRC Code)

## 2 Self-assessment by the Event Organiser

*The Event Organiser* is the person responsible for the event

The *Event Organiser* may be:

- A student
  - Bristol SU affiliated group
  - Independent/informal student group
  - JCRs
  - Academic (school, faculty or programme-based group)
- A staff member
  - UoB
  - Bristol SU
- An external user

### 2.1 Students

If the Event Organiser is a student they must undertake a self-assessment by completing the [Self-Assessment Form](#) to determine whether further scrutiny and support from the University are required. Once the self-assessment form has been submitted it will be reviewed by the Bristol SU Assessor who will decide whether the event can go ahead. It is expected that the vast majority of events organised will be permitted to go ahead.

If the Bristol SU Assessor is not able to approve the event they will pass the request to the relevant Decision -Maker

### 2.2 Staff or External Users

If the Event Organiser is a member of staff or an external user they must complete the [Event Organiser \(Staff or External User\) Self-Assessment Form](#) to determine whether there are any matters which may require further scrutiny under this procedure. If they decide that there are no issues the event can go ahead. External Users must also complete the self-assessment form with a member of staff. **It is anticipated that the vast majority of events organised will fall into this category.**

Whether or not further scrutiny is required under section 3 of this procedure, the *Event Organiser* must log the completed self-assessment form with one of the following, as appropriate, to ensure that there is a formal written record of this stage of the self-assessment process:

- If the *Event Organiser* is a member of academic staff, with the School Manager in their School
- If the *Event Organiser* is a member of professional services staff or an external user, with the PA to the Registrar and Deputy Registrar

### **3. If further scrutiny is required**

If an *Event Organiser* identifies that further scrutiny is required, the venue can be provisionally booked and the *Event Organiser* must give three weeks' notice to allow the *Assessor* and/or *Decision Maker* sufficient time to consider how to mitigate any concerns. If less than three weeks' notice is given, a response cannot be guaranteed and the event may not be permitted to go ahead.

If the self-assessment form raises potential issues then the *Event Organiser* must refer them to an appropriate *Assessor*, to be chosen from the following by reference to the location or organisational responsibility for the event:

- The Bristol SU Student Opportunities Manager (or Deputy)- This will happen automatically when a student submits a self-assessment form Heads of School
- Divisional Heads

The *Assessor* will consider the self-assessments passed to them in line with the [Assessors Risk Assessment Guidance](#). They may approve the event if the case is straightforward and they assess the risks to be low. If they assess the risk to be higher but feel able to reduce risk by applying appropriate mitigation they may do so and approve the event subject to those mitigations. In carrying out this assessment, the *Assessor* may seek advice from the Secretary's Office, the Student Services Divisional Office and Security Services, as appropriate. When this assessment is complete the *Assessor* must complete the [Assessors Summary Assessment Form](#) and either:

- (i) If they agree the event can go ahead inform the *Event Organiser* of any mitigations that are required and ensure that they are put in place; or
- (ii) If they decide that the matter should be referred to the Decision-maker send the Decision maker their assessment of the risk including suggested mitigations.

### **4. In cases of significant concern**

If the *Assessor* is concerned that the issues raised present significant risks in relation to the hosting of the event, the assessment findings will be referred to the *Decision Maker*. The *Decision Maker* will consider what mitigation could be arranged in accordance with the EHRC Code in order to make it possible for the event to take place. Their decision is final. They may give conditional approval, subject to the *Event Organiser* putting mitigating measures in place.

**The University Decision Maker's overarching aim will be to allow events to go ahead in line with the University's firm commitment to Freedom of Speech and** In line with the EHRC Code's core ideas, in particular that the University "should always work to widen debate and challenge, never to narrow it".

**The *Bristol SU Decision Maker's* aim will be to allow events to go ahead in line with the EHRC Code and any prevailing Bristol SU policy at the time.**

The *Decision Maker* is either the

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost (or nominee)
  - For events in a UoB venue other than Bristol SU
  - For events in external venues being organised by a UoB member of staff or individual students
- Bristol SU Chief Executive (or nominee)
  - For events in Bristol SU venues
  - For events in external venues being organised by a Bristol SU affiliated student group or Bristol SU member of staff

The Chief Executive will make their decision after consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).

It may be necessary to consult and/or inform other parties of the planned speaker. These may include:

- Police
- Security Services
- South West Prevent Regional HE/FE Lead<sup>1</sup>
- UoB Public Relations
- Liberty

## **5 Self-assessment questions**

The *Event Organiser* must make themselves sufficiently aware of the subject matter of the event together with the speaker's background and reputation to be able to take a considered view as to whether it is appropriate to host the proposed event within UoB or Bristol SU and to complete the self-assessment form.

The following questions may assist the *Event Organiser* to complete the self-assessment form which refers to these matters and points them to sources of advice

### **a) Are there any concerns about unlawful content? This may include:**

- Speech causing fear or provocation of violence
- Acts intended or likely to stir up hatred on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation
- Speech amounting to a terrorism related offence
- Causing a person harassment, alarm, or distress

→ If so, or you are unsure, please contact the Secretary's Office for advice: [secretarys-office@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:secretarys-office@bristol.ac.uk) 0117 394 1830 or in respect of PREVENT the Deputy Director of Student Services (Health and Inclusion) [alison.golden@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alison.golden@bristol.ac.uk)

### **b) Is the event likely to lead to any Health and Safety issues for members of the University Community?**

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Bristol SU is not subject to the Prevent duty and is not therefore required to consult with the South West Prevent Regional HE/FE Lead.

Concern about matters relating to health and safety, including public order does not automatically block such an event taking place, but it is important to seek advice.

For example:

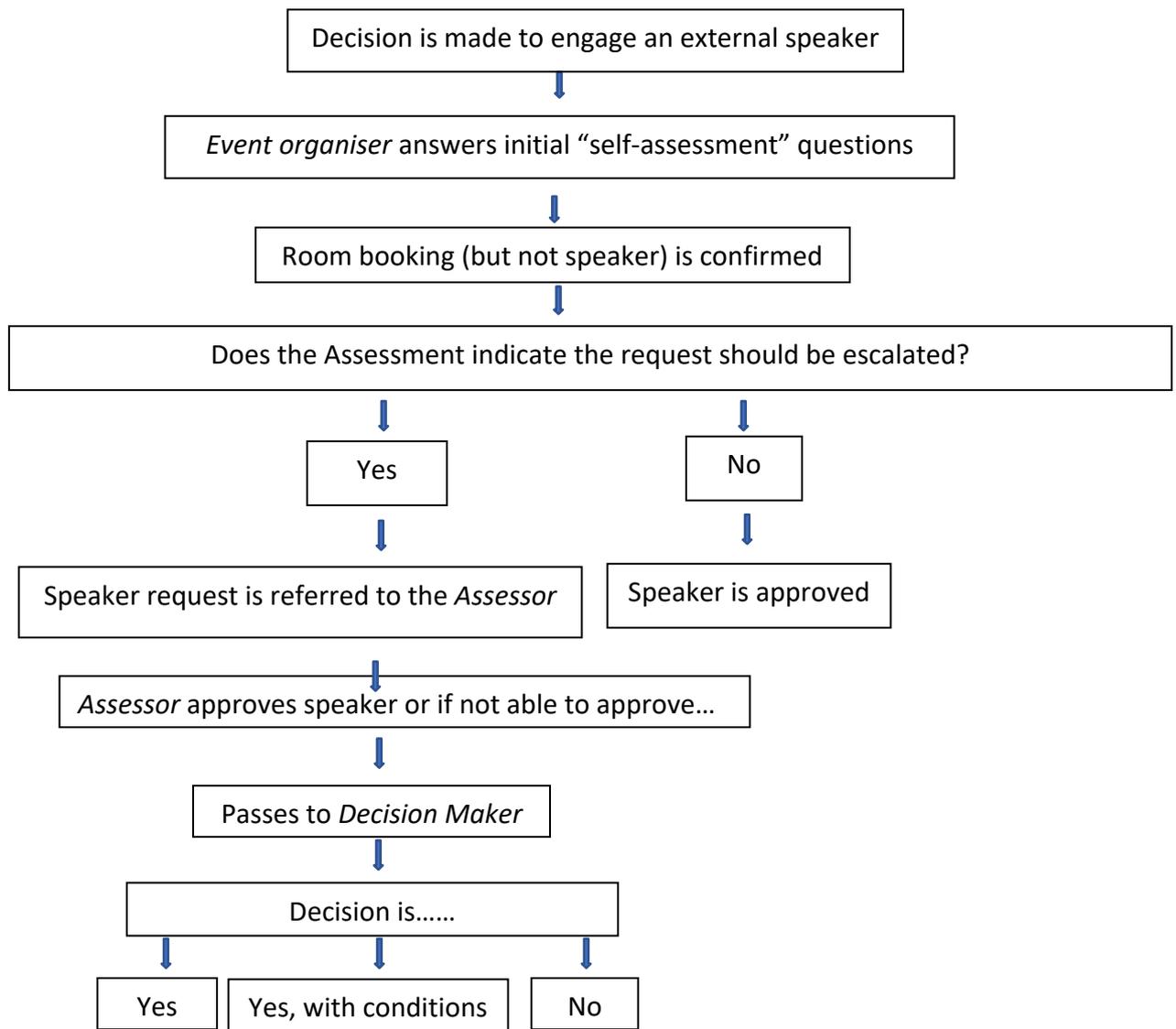
- Is the subject of their talk or the organisation they represent likely to mobilise significant opposition such that there might be a risk to safety of the public or members of the University community?
- Is there any evidence that this has been the case on other occasions?
- Does the speaker, or the organisation they represent have a controversial profile in the media?
- Is the event likely to attract a heightened media interest?
- Is the event likely to attract unusual interest or unusually large numbers?

→ If so, or you are unsure, please contact Security Services for advice on how to ensure the safety of speakers and attendees: [security-office@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:security-office@bristol.ac.uk) / 0117 928 7848

→ If so, or you are unsure, please contact the Public Relations Department for advice: [public-relations@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:public-relations@bristol.ac.uk) / 0117 928 8895

**If, having taken advice *the Event Organiser* remains unsure about the answer to any of the questions in the self-assessment form then the matter can be referred to an Assessor.**

**Process for informing, checking and approving external speakers**



**Risk Mitigation:**

The Decision Maker will consider the request in line with the [Assessors Risk Assessment Guidance](#) and the [Assessors Summary Assessment Form](#).