



Freedom of Speech Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The AECC University College is committed to the principles of freedom of speech and expression, as well as academic freedom. In accordance with the Education Act 1986, the University College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of speech and expression within the law is both preserved and exercisable at the University College.
- 1.2. The University College is committed both to protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom and to protecting and safeguarding its students and staff from the risk of being drawn into controversial and extreme views and terrorism. The University College discharges its Prevent duty in partnership with other agencies, including the Police, Local Authorities and the network of regional Prevent Co-ordinators.
- 1.3. The University College expects students, staff, governors, the Students' Union and visitors to ensure freedom of speech within the law is assured. The University College has regard to the need to ensure that students and staff have freedom to question, test and put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves at risk.
- 1.4. The University College believes that discussion that is open and honest can take place only if offensive or provocative action and language is avoided. Students, staff, governors, the Students' Union and visiting speakers are therefore required to demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of the University College community. They are required to show respect and tolerance towards expression of views, opinions and beliefs of others even though those views, opinions or beliefs may run contrary to their own personal views, opinions or beliefs.
- 1.5. An event may be considered controversial if any part of the University College or wider community could take issue with and potentially protest or that extremist views are likely to be expressed which are in opposition to fundamental British values including mutual respect and tolerance.

2. Key Responsibilities

- 2.1. Students Union Executive will have responsibility for approving student led events.
- 2.2. Vice-Principal (Postgraduate and Research) will have responsibility for approving CPD events.
- 2.3. The Director of Administration will have responsibility for approving all other events.
- 2.4. The Academic Registrar who is the University College's Prevent lead, will advise colleagues on Prevent duty and this policy.
- 2.5. All staff and students have a responsibility to assist the University College in upholding the rights of freedom of speech as set out in this Policy.

3. Links to other relevant policies

- 3.1. Student Events Policy

4. No Platform Policy

- 4.1. The University College will offer no platform to those who are intolerant of the free speech of others; who advocate or engage in violence in the furtherance of their political, religious, philosophical or other beliefs; who hold and disseminate views which are opposed to the maintenance of liberty under the rule of law in the UK.

5. General

- 5.1. It is the responsibility of students, staff, governors and the Students' Union to assist the University College in upholding the rights of freedom of speech as set out in this Policy. Where a breach of this policy occurs, the University College will take all reasonable steps to identify the person(s) involved in that breach; such breaches may be considered under the Disciplinary Procedures of the University College where applicable and may include referral to the Police or Channel Program if appropriate.

6. Events

- 6.1. Where a student, member of staff, governor or the Students' Union wishes to hold an event within the University College, the organiser will be required to complete and submit an event application form, which includes all the questions in Enc. A, to the appropriate approver (see section 2 above) as soon as possible and no fewer than 15 working days before the date scheduled for the Event. The organiser must ensure that nothing is done to advertise, publicise or promote the event until permission is granted.
- 6.2. The approver will notify the proposer when a decision is made.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure the signature of the main speaker is captured on the form in enclosure B (electronic signature are acceptable).
- 6.4. Students must refer to the Student Event Policy.

7. Concerns

- 7.1. If any member of the college has a concern regarding any aspect of this policy, including an approved event, they should in the first instance contact the Academic Registrar. Failure to follow this procedure, may result in disciplinary action.

Version:	1.1
Approved by:	SMG
Originator / Author	Executive Director of Administration
Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference source	HEI Exemplars
Date approved	Update approved 8/2/2018 Updated to bring in line with the Prevent Agenda January 2018 – Definition of 'controversial' in line with Prevent Update to institution name
Effective from	February 2018
Review date	Spring 2020
Target	Staff and Students
Policy location	SIP and Moodle
Equality analysis	This Policy has been developed with due regard to the University College's general equality duty.

Enclosure A – Questions that must be answered for an event to be approved

All event organisers must ensure that the following questions are used in their approval forms.

- 1 Event title:
- 2 Date:
- 3 Time:
- 4 Venue:
- 5 Principal Organiser's full name:
- 6 Principal Organiser's contact details:
(organisation/address/email/tel.no.)
- 7 Speaker's full name:
If there is more than one speaker, please complete a form for each speaker
- 8 Speaker's organisation:
(Title of organisation and website url)
- 9 Speaker's contact details:
(address/email/tel. no.)
- 10 Speaker's time of arrival:
- 11 Speaker's time of departure:
- 12 Name of appointed Chair (if a debate is being organised):
- 13 Subject matter of event in detail:
- 14 Are there any potential controversial subjects at this event? Please give details.
- 15 How will the event be advertised and in what language?
- 16 Is the event being sponsored and, if so, who by:
- 17 Who is expected to attend the event (e.g. staff, students, named guests, general public):
- 18 What conditions will apply to entry to the event (e.g. ticketed, open to the general public):
- 19 Number of individuals expected to attend the event:
- 20 Is there an intention to segregate the event:
If yes, please provide further details:
- 21 What publications or materials will be available to attendees:

- 22 Has the speaker spoken at the University College before?
If so, please provide date(s):
- 23 Has the speaker been refused to speak publicly or at any other educational establishment before?
If yes, please provide details:
- 24 If the event is approved, is there a likelihood of media interest?
- 25 Please provide any other details about the event that should be noted:
- 26 (a) Have you made the speaker and Chair aware of the University College's:
- Freedom of Speech Policy
 - Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy
- (b) Have the speaker and Chair agreed in writing to comply with the above Codes and Policies? (see Appendix 1 for agreement to be signed)

Once completed please email this form to the relevant approver for consideration

OFFICE USE:

Event approved or not approved? **Approved** **Not Approved**
Please give reasons as to why the event was or was not approved:

Enclosure B – Declaration for external speakers

Name of Event: _____

Date of Event: _____

I (Full Name) _____ have read and understand the AECC University
College Freedom of Speech Policy and Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy. I agree to abide by these
codes and Policies at all times whilst at the AECC.

Signed _____ Date _____