



Code of Practice Relating to Freedom of Speech July 2026

Code of Practice Relating to Freedom of Speech

General Statement for all University Policies

The following statement is to be appended to all relevant University policies and is deemed to be part of relevant existing ones with effect from the date of approval of this policy.

Statement on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

The principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and our equality duties) are very much embedded in the University Teaching Intensive, Research Informed Assessment Enabled (TIRIAE) philosophy and our organisational culture. They provide a basis for providing all members of the University community with the opportunity to think critically and engage with diverse perspectives, including views which may be controversial or unpopular and yet within the law whilst at the same time enable the University to drive forward research and innovation – as we advance knowledge, understanding and truth.

The University of Greater Manchester takes seriously its responsibility to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom, in accordance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 which amends the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 These principles are embedded into our key people policies, procedures and practices.

All members of the University community at all levels within the University have an obligation to understand, uphold and promote these principles. The University provides training / support and other resources to employees in support of this agenda. Any colleague who is not clear on these obligations should speak with their respective Head of Service / School.

The University will also take all reasonably practicable steps to protect lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom in accordance with its statutory duties.

The University will investigate and take reasonable and proportionate action in relation to alleged breaches of this Code or other unlawful conduct. Where breaches are established, the University will take action in accordance with the relevant Disciplinary Procedure (or other appropriate procedure), which if allegations are proven could result in a sanction up to and including dismissal or expulsion.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 ("the Act") strengthens the existing statutory framework relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom. The Act expands the statutory duties imposed on universities under Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 to not only secure but also promote the importance of freedom of speech within the law and academic freedom.
- 1.2 The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 requires the University to take all reasonably practicable steps, to secure and promote freedom of speech within the law for staff, members, students and visiting speakers. This includes a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that use of any premises is not denied

to an individual or group on grounds connected with their ideas, opinions, beliefs, views, policies or objectives.

- 1.3 In order to facilitate the discharge of these duties, the Board of Governors of the University is required under the Act to issue and keep up to date a Code of Practice setting out the procedures to be followed by members, students and employees, and their conduct, in connection with the organisation of meetings and other activities to be held on University premises and which fall within the scope of this Code of Practice. The Code of Practice also explains how the University will discharge its duty to promote freedom of speech within the law.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Code of Practice shall apply to:

- (a) the University, including members of the Board of Governors;
- (b) University staff (full-time or part-time) and/or those working on behalf of the University;
- (c) University students (full-time or part-time);
- (d) the Students' Union its associated premises and any societies, clubs or associations; and
- (e) all persons invited to speak or otherwise take part in events to be held on University premises.

- 2.2 Reference to 'University premises' includes premises which are owned and/or controlled by the University and premises occupied or used by the University of Greater Manchester Students' Union.

- 2.3 The Students' Union shall in exercising its functions, have regard to the importance of freedom of speech within the law and academic freedom and shall cooperate and work collaboratively with the University in the implementation of this code of Practice. The University shall however retain the overall responsibility in ensuring compliance with its statutory duties as it relates to the freedom of speech.

- 2.4 Every person to whom this Code of Practice applies is required to assist the University in upholding its provisions.

- 2.5 The University shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable, including where appropriate and proportionate the initiation of disciplinary measures or other applicable procedures, to secure compliance with this policy by groups or individuals.

- 2.6 The Board of Governors authorises the Vice Chancellor to appoint the Registrar who will act on its behalf to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable all members, students and employees of the University comply with the requirements of this Code of Practice. Failure to comply with the Code of Practice may result in action being taken against those concerned under the relevant University procedure, irrespective of any action which may be taken in law.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The University believes that higher education has a role to play in “shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society”¹. The University seeks to establish an inclusive community which recognises that people with different backgrounds, experience, skills, attitudes, beliefs and views bring fresh ideas and new perspectives. The University respects the rights and freedoms of individuals and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. All members of its community share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of reasoned enquiry, mutual tolerance and civility.
- 3.2 The University will adopt a strong presumption in favour of lawful freedom of speech. Lawful speech will not be restricted solely on the basis that it is controversial, offensive, unpopular, provocative or inconsistent with the views of some members of the University Community.
- 3.3 The principle of academic freedom, which encompasses freedom of speech, vigorous and open debate and the freedom to follow lines of enquiry and discussion, no matter how unpopular or controversial they may seem to some, is an essential requirement for the pursuit of higher-level learning and research, which leads to the creation of new knowledge and understandings.
- 3.4 The University affirms its commitment to ensuring that staff, members, students and visiting speakers can exercise their right to freedom of speech as guaranteed in UK law by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, Section 43 Education (No. 2) Act 1986 and by Article 10 Human Rights Act 1998; and the freedom of academic staff within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions as provided for under the Education Reform Act 1988. The University shall not subject academic staff to adverse consequences or detriment for the expression of ideas, opinions or academic viewpoint within the law.
- 3.5 For the purpose of this code of practice, academic freedom in relation to academic staff is defined in accordance with section 202 (2) (a) of the Education Reform Act 1988, as strengthened by the Higher Education (Freedom of speech) Act 2023.
- 3.6 For the avoidance of any doubt, academic freedom is also applicable to individuals who are applying to the university to become a member of the academic staff and who may have exercised their right to freedom of speech.
- 3.7 The University supports the right of individuals to express lawful views, including views that may be controversial, unpopular or provocative.

¹ The National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, (1977) *Higher Education in the learning society*. NCIHE, London, p72

- 3.8 The University may restrict or impose condition on speech, meetings or events only where there is a lawful basis for doing so and where the restriction is necessary and proportionate to a legitimate aim recognised by law, including the Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights before imposing any restriction, the University will consider whether all reasonably practicable steps can be taken to secure freedom of speech within the law.
- 3.9 Concerns regarding adverse publicity, reputational impact or stakeholder disagreement shall not, of themselves, justify restricting lawful freedom of speech.
- 3.10 Nothing in this Code of Practice shall be taken to prohibit the lawful exercise of the right to peacefully protest. However, protests must be conducted without infringing the rights of others, including others' right to freedom of speech.
- 3.11 The law protects the rights of members of the University to engage in debate and argument about social, political, religious, economic and scientific ideas, provided that the views expressed are not contrary to the civil or criminal law. The University will in this context promote freedom of speech. The University is not required to provide a platform for activity, for example, which is defamatory or in contempt of court, or may create real and material risk of violence, or disorder, which cannot reasonably be mitigated. A summary of the relevant legislation is set out in Appendix 1.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 Subject to the Principles set out above, and to the requirement to secure freedom of speech, the University shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that no premises of the University shall be denied to any individual or body of persons wishing to use them for meetings on any grounds connected with:
- (a) the ideas, opinions, beliefs or views of that individual or that body; or
 - (b) the policy or objectives of that body.
- 4.2 The University is under no legal obligation to allow meetings to be held on University premises which are open to members of the public. Any restrictions imposed in relation to public attendance shall be lawful, reasonable and proportionate having regard to the University's obligations concerning freedom of speech within the law.
- 4.3 The University will not unreasonably refuse to allow events to be held on its premises and will consider what reasonably practicable steps can be taken to facilitate the use of those premises before imposing any restriction, and any such restriction will be applied only where lawful and proportionate.

Reasonably practicable steps may include but are not limited to; changing the venue and/or its format (Including online or hybrid delivery), timing, security or stewarding arrangement, ticketing, or implementing other means to manage protest in a manner that does not prevent lawful speech.

4.4 Reasonable grounds for refusal shall include, but are not limited to, those events:

- (a) where following the assessment of the proposed event, real and material risk has been identified, and there is a real likelihood that the speaker may not be able to enter or leave the building safely or to deliver their speech within the law without disruption; and where all reasonably practicable mitigation measures to facilitate the event would not adequately address the risk;
- (b) where there is reasonable and evidenced-belief that the event would be likely unlawful and constitute a breach of the civil or criminal law;
- (c) that are in direct support of an organisation whose aims and objectives are illegal;
- (d) where views to be expressed constitute views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups; or
- (e) which give rise to a breach of the peace.

4.5 The University is required to produce this Code of Practice setting out the procedures to be followed by members, external speakers, students and staff in connection with the organisation of meetings and other activities (including virtual meetings and activities) which fall within any class specified in this Code of Practice, together with the conduct required of members, external speakers, students and staff in connection with such meetings and activities.

4.6 Meetings or activities to which this Code of Practice also applies are those which are likely to take place outside teaching time or relate to non-teaching activity, including online or hybrid events for which a room booking or the University platform or facilities may be required. However, if external guest speakers are invited to timetabled lectures and seminars, the organisers should consider whether 4.4 above applies, and contact the Registrar if there is any possibility of a problem occurring. Guidance on the types of meetings or activities to which the Code of Practice may apply is set out in Appendix 2.

4.7 Meetings or activities (including use of online resources to access an event) shall be held only if it has been booked in accordance with the normal procedures through Event Bookings Enquiries or the Students' Union.

The booking form needs to require the person making the booking to state:

- (i) the name of the organiser, and in the case of an external booking, the affiliation of the organiser;*
- (ii) the name(s) of any external speakers and their affiliation(s);*
- (iii) the purpose of the meeting and/or the subject matter of any speech;*
- (iv) the language in which meetings will be conducted, if not in English.*

On receipt of the booking request, the designated postholder will either:

- (a) accept the booking and grant permission for the meeting or activity to take place;
or
- (b) refer the booking to the Registrar; or
- (c) if suitable premises are not available, decline the booking.

- 4.8 In the case of bookings referred to the Registrar under 4.7, the Registrar shall act reasonably and proportionately having regard to the University's freedom of speech and make such enquiries as is necessary, including but not limited to, consulting the senior staff of the University and the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors, in order to decide whether to grant or withhold permission for use of the University's premises for the proposed purpose. The University has the responsibility to maintain good order on its premises and the grant of permission may be subject to such conditions as the Registrar deems necessary to ensure that the University discharges its statutory responsibilities concerning freedom of speech within the law and consistent with the need to maintain order.
- 4.9 Any conditions imposed or decision made in relation to Clause 4.8 shall be reasonable and proportionate having regard to the University's statutory obligations concerning freedom of speech within the law.
- 4.10 The University through the Registrar shall record the reasons for any decisions to impose conditions or refuse permissions.
- 4.11 The Registrar is entitled to designate a meeting or activity as being subject to this Code of Practice, even if the organisers have not applied to book a room on University premises.
- 4.12 Any meeting or activity must have a named organiser with full authority to act on behalf of the group in all matters concerned.
- 4.13 Where reasonably necessary and proportionate, the Registrar may declare the meeting or activity to be a public event, which would permit the police to be present.
- 4.14 The organiser and every person concerned with the holding of any meeting or activity for which written consent has been granted by the Registrar shall be required to comply with any, lawful, reasonable and proportionate condition specified by the Registrar. Conditions may include the requirement to issue tickets, the availability of stewards and security staff, the admission or exclusion of press, television or broadcasting personnel.
- 4.15 The University will not ordinarily pass security costs associated with the use of its premises to organisers of meetings or activities. Security costs will only be passed on in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances shall arise only where anticipated security costs exceed £1,500 and shall be assessed using clear, objective and neutral criteria which are applied consistently.

Any decision to require an organiser to contribute towards security shall not be based upon;

- (a) the ideas, opinions, or beliefs of any individual;
- (b) the policy, objectives, ideas or opinions of any organisation; or
- (c) the lawful views, opinions or information likely to be expressed at the meetings or activities.

Any requirement for the organiser to contribute towards security cost shall be lawful, and proportionate having regard to the University's duties concerning freedom of speech within the law.

- 4.16 The principal organiser responsible for the meeting or activity has a duty to ensure that nothing in the preparation for, or conduct of, a meeting or activity infringes the law, University regulations and is compliant with this Code of Practice. The Chair of the meeting has a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure that both the speaker and the audience act in accordance with the law and that the principles of freedom of speech are upheld during the meeting. The Chair will be expected to use his or her best endeavours to provide any questions to a speaker, or contributions, are taken from a cross-section of those attending the meeting and are not confined to those of a particular view. In the case of unlawful conduct, the Chair is required to give appropriate warnings and if the conduct continues to require the withdrawal or removal of the persons by stewards or security staff.
- 4.17 University employees and University security staff designated by the Registrar are entitled to enter meetings held on University premises to which this Code of Practice applies.
- 4.18 Premises used for meetings or activities must be left in a clean and tidy condition; organisers may be charged for any additional cleaning and repair costs that may be required. The organisers will be required to indemnify the University in the event of any loss, damage or expense arising at the meeting or activity to University premises.
- 4.19 Stewards and/or security staff shall have the right to prohibit those attending the meeting bringing onto University premises any article or object likely to cause injury or damage.
- 4.20 Appeals against a decision made under this code by the Registrar may be submitted to the Vice Chancellor (or nominee). Appeals shall be considered and determined as promptly as reasonably practicable, having regard to the need for a fair and proportionate process. The Vice Chancellor's decision shall constitute the final stage of the University's internal process.
- 4.21 The Vice Chancellor will report the outcome of any appeals to the next meeting of the Board of Governors.
- 4.22 For the avoidance of any doubt, complaints made under or in connection with this Code shall be subject to an initial assessment to determine whether they disclose a matter requiring investigation. The University may reject complaints that are vexatious, frivolous, abusive, repetitive or manifestly without merit. In carrying out such assessment, the University shall have particular regard to its duties concerning

freedom of speech and academic freedom and shall not investigate or take such action solely because, lawful expression has caused offence, disagreement or controversy.

- 4.23 Where an individual still remains dissatisfied after an appeal has been considered and determined by the University, they may pursue any external remedies available to them, including, the Office for Students Free Speech Complaints Scheme, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator or some other court or tribunal as the case may be.

5. How the University will protect and promote Freedom of Speech

5.1 The University will:

- (a) ensure that this Code of Practice and the principles within it are brought to the attention of staff and students on induction at the University;
- (b) draw this Code of Practice to the attention of students annually;
- (c) ensure that all relevant staff including those responsible for decision-making, complaints, handling, disciplinary process, events approval and promotion process, receive training on the University's obligation in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom;
- (d) review and, if required, update existing policies and procedures and where policies and procedures are introduced, ensure that consideration is given to their impact on freedom of speech and academic freedom;
- (e) ensure adequate and effective mechanisms are in place to raise concerns in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom;
- (f) where concerns are raised regarding freedom of speech and academic freedom, ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, such concerns are addressed and any lessons to be learned are incorporated into a review of relevant policies, procedures and practices; and
- (g) ensure that significant policies, procedures and institutional decisions are developed, implemented and reviewed having due regard to the University's duties concerning freedom of speech and academic freedom and that no policy, procedure or practice shall be interpreted or applied in a manner that unlawfully restricts lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom.

5.2 In order specifically to promote freedom of speech, the University will promote freedom of speech and academic freedom at multiple time points in student and staff engagement and across multiple aspects.

5.2.1 The University will promote freedom of speech and academic freedom at the following time points for **students:**

- Prior to application via the website and promotional materials
- At the initial enrolment period via induction processes

- Prior to the start of each module and programme via Module Guides and Programme Handbooks
- At other relevant times

5.2.2 The University will promote freedom of speech and academic freedom at the following time points for **staff**:

- Prior to recruitment via job descriptions and person specifications
- At initial engagement via new starter induction
- Periodically throughout employment via annual performance review
- Upon completion of employment via exit interviews
- At other relevant times

5.2.3 The University will promote freedom of speech and academic freedom across the following aspects of its work:

- The University culture through workshops and CPD generally
- University practices and operations through freedom of speech and academic freedom being a default component of all academic policies
- University recognition by ensuring freedom of speech and academic freedom is reinforced in its promotions criteria thereby assuring individuals are not disadvantaged for exercising their lawful rights of freedom of speech and academic freedom
- Digital, online and hybrid learning, teaching and engagement environments
- In other relevant activities

5.2.4 The University will seek to ensure that external funding, sponsorship and partnership arrangements do not improperly restrict lawful freedom of speech or academic freedom.

APPENDIX 1

This appendix seeks to provide a summary of relevant legislation and legal principles informing the University's duties in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom. It is intended for guidance only and does not replace or override the provision of this Code of Practice or the applicable law.

The following list is not exhaustive and is intended as a guide only in order to seek further information.

Relevant legislation²

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

HEIs and students' unions must take all reasonably practicable steps that have regard to the importance of academic freedom and lawful freedom of speech.

Section 43, Education Act (No 2) Act 1986

HEIs must take reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students, employees and visiting speakers. This duty includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that the use of the HEI's premises is not denied to an individual or group on the grounds of views or beliefs held by the individual/group, or the policy or objectives of the group.

Section 202, Education Reform Act 1988

HEIs must ensure 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 any privileges they may have at an institution. These rights must be exercised within the law.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. As public institutions HEIs must carry out their functions in accordance with the rights guaranteed by the Convention. Relevant Convention articles include:

Article 9 - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The right to freedom of thought and conscience is absolute and cannot be limited. The right to manifest religion or belief is subject to limitations in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights or freedoms of others.

² Extracted from *UUK: Promoting Good Campus Relations dealing with hate crimes and intolerance* (2005) and *DfES: Promoting Good Campus Relations: Working with Staff and Students to Build Community cohesion and Tackle Violent Extremism in Universities and colleges* (2006)

Article 10 – Freedom of expression. Individuals have the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas. The right is subject to limitations including those set by law and necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, or for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence.

Article 11 – Freedom of assembly and association Individuals have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, subject to limitations in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 14 – European Convention on Human Rights. This Article provides an overarching principle of non-discrimination and can only be used in relation to other Convention rights. It entitles an individual to exercise his or her rights under the Convention without discrimination on any grounds including sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or association with a national minority. This right is unqualified and cannot be limited.

Article 17 – inter-relationship between Convention rights. This Article states that the convention does not grant anyone the right to do anything which is aimed at deriving others of their Convention rights, or at limiting those rights.

Equality Act 2010

Legislation prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability in all HEI functions including terms of employment, the recruitment, retention and progression of staff and the admission, progression and assessment of students including benefits, facilities and services and the imposition of any penalty or detriment.

The Equality Act includes the right to hold and appropriately express or manifest religious or philosophical beliefs, which is relevant to free speech.

In addition, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, HEIs have a positive duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in relation to race, sex and disability.

Public Order Act 1986

This Act outlaws the following:

- acts or threats of violence: riot, violent disorder or affray;
- causing fear or provocation of violence: a person using threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour towards another, or displaying threatening, abusive or insulting material, may be guilty of causing fear or provocation of violence if or she intends

or causes a fear of violence, or intends to provoke or causes a fear that violence will be provoked;

- harassment, alarm or distress: using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, or displaying threatening, abusive or insulting material, within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress.
- Incitement to racial hatred: using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or displaying, publishing or distributing threatening, abusive or insulting material intended or likely to stir-up racial hatred. Racial hatred is defined as hatred against a group or persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic/national origins.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Under this Act harassment is defined as:

- pursuing a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another, which the harasser knows or ought to know amounts to harassment;
- causing fear of violence – pursuing a course of conduct that causes another to fear that violence will be used against him/her

A person convicted of harassment may be made the subject of a restraining order, which can impose exclusion zones.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

This Act increased the penalties applicable to offences if they are racially aggravated or if there is a religious element to the crime. As long as some of the motivation is wholly or partly racial, the offence will count as a racially aggravated offence.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act creates new offences of stirring up hatred against persons on religious grounds. The new offences apply to the use of words or behaviour or display of written material, publishing or distributing written material, the public performance of a play, distributing, showing or playing a recording, broadcasting or including a programme in a programme service and the possession of written materials or recordings with a view to display, publication, distribution or inclusion in a programme service. For each offence the words, behaviour, written material, recordings or programmes must be threatening and intended to stir up religious hatred. Religious hatred is defined as hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief

Terrorism Legislation

The relevant legislation includes the; Terrorism Act 2000 which remains the foundational framework, The Terrorism Act 2006 introduced additional offences and expanded the legal regime particularly around encouragement and glorification of terrorism and the Counter -Terrorism and Security Act 2015 added further powers and duties. These various legislations create offences relating to the encouragement of terrorism whether directly or indirectly, dissemination of terrorist material and the participation in terrorist

activity, HEIs must consider these provisions when assessing risk associated with events or speakers.

APPENDIX 2

This appendix provides further guidance on factors that may indicate an increased risk requiring further assessment under this code. It is not conclusive and the University must endeavour to apply it consistently with its duty to secure and promote freedom of speech. Additionally, anyone involved in organising a meeting or other activity, or processing a room booking should consider whether there is a possibility that the speaker may not be able to enter or leave the building safely and/or have the freedom within the law to deliver their speech without interruption; or that a breach of the civil or criminal law may be committed.

The following is an indicative list of circumstances which might give rise to a reasonable apprehension that disruption or disorder may occur. The inclusion of the following topics does not in itself justify restriction. These factors are relevant only in assessing the likelihood of disruption, risk to safety, or potential unlawful conduct.

(a) where the subject-matter of the meeting or activity includes in whole or in part

- Animal experimentation
- Immigration and nationality policy
- The supposed superiority or otherwise of racial/ethnic/religious groupings
- Blood sports
- Genocide
- A current or recent war (or revolution)
- Sexual abuse of children and paedophilia
- Abortion
- Drugs policy
- Terrorism and/or violent extremism
- Other local or national controversial matters

(b) where the profile of the speaker or their conduct may give rise to reasonable concern regarding disruption or legal compliance. These categories are included but not limited to;

- Any current Member of the House of Commons or Lords
- A present or former representative of any political party which has put forward candidates at a British or Irish Parliament election in the last 20 years
- Any member of the British or an overseas Royal family
- Any diplomat or the representative of a foreign power
- Any person who has previously been prevented from delivering a speech or whose presence has threatened a breach of the peace at the University or any other Higher Education Institution
- Any religious cleric or representative

where the subject matter might be considered unlawful including defamatory content, may constitute harassment and or may incite hatred or violence. This list is provided for guidance and is not intended to be exhaustive. If there is any doubt whether the Code of Practice applies, the guidance of the Registrar should be sought.

Any concerns identified through these factors must be assessed on a case-by-case basis and addressed through proportionate measures. Restrictions should only be applied where necessary to secure compliance with the law and the University's statutory duties and no policy shall be interpreted or applied in a manner that unlawfully restricts the lawful freedom of speech or academic freedom.

APPENDIX 3

Additional Resources

Freedom of Expression: A guide for higher education providers and students' unions in England and Wales (February 2019)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/freedom-of-expressionguide-for-higher-education-providers-and-students-unions-englandand-wales.pdf>

The Education Hub (GOV.UK) Freedom of Speech Act: How it will affect university students (May 2023)

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/freedom-of-speech-act-how-it-will-affect-university-students/>

Office for Students, Freedom to question, challenge and debate, Insight 16 (December 2022)

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/8a032d0f-ed24-4a10-b254c1d9bfcfe8b5/insight-brief-16-freedom-to-question-challenge-and-debate.pdf>

Office for Students, Regulatory Advice 24: Guidance related to freedom of speech (August 2025, as updated in November 2025)

[Regulatory advice 24: Guidance related to freedom of speech - Office for Students](#)

Code of Practice Relating to Freedom of Speech	
Policy Ref: VC: 04/2023	
Version Number:	7.0
Version Date	Revised June 2026
Name of Developer/Reviewer	Registrar
Policy Owner (School/Centre/Unit)	Vice Chancellor's Office
Person responsible for implementation (postholder)	Vice Chancellor and all staff
Approving Committee/Board	Board of Governors on 7 July 2026
Date approved	7 July 2026
Effective from	7 July 2026
Dissemination method (e.g. website)	Website, staff induction, student enrolment, staff and student internal communication.
Review Frequency	Annually
Reviewing Committee	Freedom of Speech Working Group
Document History (e.g. rationale for and dates of previous amendments)	Additional regulatory guidance.