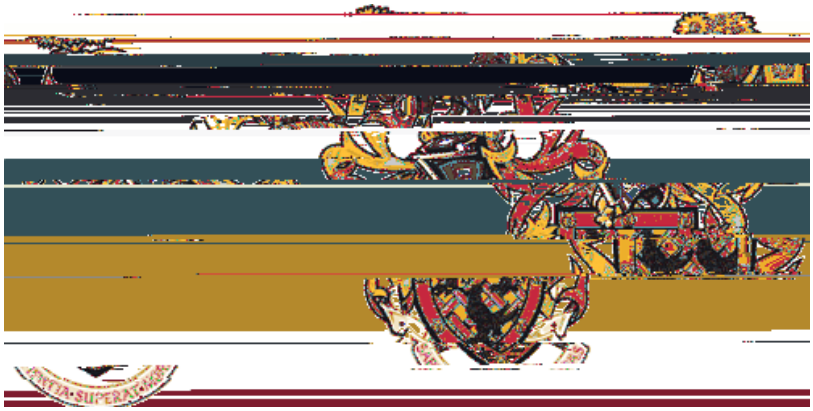

Code of Practice Relating to Freedom of Speech

February 2024

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. Further, the Code of Practice indicates how the University will satisfy 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 toc 0 Thi(e(i)6 (m)-nassoc t 0 Tw ( )Tjoc9 (i)6 (s)Tc 0 Tw 5p(-)Tj-010

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 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.

3.3 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)p1 (0.278 Tw n ()7 (F
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example, which is defamatory or in contempt of court, or may lead to violence, disorder or a breach of the peace, or incites racial or religious hatred, or encourages terrorism. A summary of the relevant legislation is set out in Appendix 1.

4. Procedures

4.1 Subject to the Principles set out above, so far as is reasonably practicable, 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 or 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. Meetings held on University premises shall not be open to those who are not members or employees of the University except by named invitations proposed by the organiser and approved in writing by the Registrar before such invitations or materials advertising the meeting are sent out.

4.3 The University will not unreasonably refuse to allow events to be held on its premises. Reasonable grounds for refusal shall include, but are not limited to, those events:

(a) where there is a real likelihood 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 disruption;
(b) where there is reasonable belief that a breach of the civil or criminal law may be committed;
(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.

4.4 The University is required to produce this Code of Practice setting out the procedures to be followed by 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 staff and students in connection with such meetings and activities.

4.5 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, and for which a room booking may be required. However, if external guest speakers are invited to timetabled lectures and seminars, the organisers should consider whether 4.3 above applies, and contact the Registrar if there is any possibility of a problem occurring. Guidance on the

4.12 The organiser of the meeting or activity will be required to meet the full cost of providing stewards and security staff as reasonably determined by the Registrar necessary for the meeting and for control and access to it. Payment will be in accordance with Room Booking terms and conditions.

4.13 The principal organiser responsible for the meeting or activity has a duty to ensure that nothing in the preparation for, or conduct of, The pranihince

(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; and

(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.

6. In order specifically to promote freedom of speech, the University will promote Freedom of Speech (FOS) and Academic Freedom (AF) at multiple time points in student and staff engagement and across multiple aspects.

6.1.1 The University will promote FOS and AF 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

6.2 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

6.3 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 via FOS and AF being a default component of all academic policies
- University recognition via embedding FOS and AF in promotions criteria
- In other relevant activities