

External Event Guidelines

Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for managing events with external speakers, to ensure that discussion and challenge are permitted, within the parameters of the law, while also ensuring appropriate and respectful behaviour by staff and those external to the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS), who are involved in the events programme. The Academy of Social Sciences includes the Campaign for Social Science.
- This policy applies to all events organised in the name of AcSS either singly or in partnership; both physical or virtual; and to all those involved in the participation and delivery of activities, including chairs, speakers, attendees and organisers. These activities include meetings, events or related activities.
- This policy statement applies to all staff, trustees, Fellows, volunteers, delegates, and other adults associated with the events being held by or on behalf of AcSS; and will be regularly reviewed.

Policy

- As the national academy of academics, practitioners and learned societies in social science, the Academy of Social Sciences is committed to safeguarding freedom of speech and to upholding academic freedom of enquiry and debate.
- External speakers and events play an important role in enabling the academy to be the sector's leading independent voice in the UK, by championing the vital role social sciences play in education, government and business.
- It is always the intention that events encourage free and open debate in an atmosphere of tolerance and politeness. We kindly request that all speakers, delegates and others involved in the Academy events respect and abide by this approach.
- The Academy of Social Sciences is committed to upholding academic freedom, while ensuring that any external speaker or delegate does not break the law or breach the lawful rights of others. While the law promotes and protects freedoms of speech and debate, the law also places reasonable limits on those freedoms. The law also obliges the Academy to provide, in so far as reasonably possible, a safe environment for staff, contributors and delegates, in person and online. These legal frameworks are further set out in the appendix to this document.
- In the planning of any AcSS event, the legal and reputational risks, including those associated with intellectual property, should be carefully taken into consideration by the organisers. Speakers will be asked to ensure that they have all the required permissions for any imagery or recordings used.
- All event speakers in 2024 will be asked to comply with Charity Commission guidelines for campaigning during an election period; namely to ensure an objective, evidence-based approach in presenting arguments and to balance any analysis of the main political parties positions on specific areas of policy. No views should be presented that either intend to, or could be construed by a member of the public as intending to, influence voting choice.
- The Academy is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion across its programme of events.

- For all Academy (and Campaign for Social Science) events, all proposed speakers will be confirmed in advance by a member of the Academy's Senior Leadership Team. Likewise, for co-badged and events held in association with other organisations, all proposed speakers will be confirmed in advance by at least one member of the Academy's Senior Leadership Team.
- The Academy of Social Sciences reserves the right to not permit an external speaker to speak at or attend an event, to refuse to permit an event, or to end/ pause an event at any time if it is reasonably considered there may be a breach of this policy, or any breach of the law. In extremis, the Academy reserves the right to remove a delegate who expresses views that are prohibited by law.

Guidance for External Speakers

This guidance has been created to ensure that all speakers taking part in Academy of Social Sciences events are aware of their responsibilities; and it will be made available to external speakers.

The AcSS is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for its staff, members, delegates and speakers. All those involved with the Academy are expected to tolerate and protect the expression of opinions within the law, whether or not these opinions are disagreeable to them.

The Academy of Social Sciences has an obligation to provide a safe environment for all staff, speakers and event delegates, in person and online. We are therefore committed to protecting them from hate crimes, harassment, defamation, breach of human rights, unfair treatment, breach of the peace and behaviour likely to incite hatred or draw others into terrorism.

These provisions do not establish a right not to be offended. However, this policy has been created to ensure respectful behaviour towards our event speakers, delegates and staff, and to ensure that events balance this need with an obligation to secure freedom of speech and academic freedom.

In order to comply with this policy, during the event, all speakers will be asked to:

- Present ideas and opinions, in particular those that may be contentious or potentially offensive, within appropriate context, and in the spirit of academic discussion, being open to challenge and question.
- Bear in mind the need for political balance, and for analysis of political / policy issues to be supported by academic rigour.
- Not to engage in party political advocacy or discourse (a requirement of the Charity Commission).
- Not raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause.
- Not incite hatred or violence or any other breach of the criminal law.
- Not encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism within the UK or abroad.
- Not spread hatred and intolerance on the basis of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).
- Not discriminate against or harass any person on the basis of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- Not defame any person or organisation.

This list is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable conduct.

Complaints

If an individual feels that there has been a breach of this policy, they may put their complaint in writing to the AcSS Chief Executive via ceo@acss.org.uk. The complainant should include any relevant evidence in their submission. Evidence or testimony may be sought from others during the consideration of the complaint. The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing as soon as possible.

Appendix

While the law promotes and protects freedom of speech, it also places limits on those freedoms in order to maintain public order and safety, and to ensure that there is no breach of the law. Examples of some of the relevant areas of law, and the Academy's response, are:

- People are entitled to protection from harassment, defamation and unlawful breach of their human rights, as well as from unfair treatment under equality law.
- Hate crimes, harassment, breach of the peace and terrorism all come under criminal law.
- Should legitimate concerns arise about any speakers who express views that are prohibited by law, the speakers may be removed from, or not permitted to be included in the event programme. It is the responsibility of those proposing the speakers to ensure there are no concerns regarding the speaker's suitability because of extremist views which conflict with Prevent duty, or concerns arising in relation to any other legal risks in this policy.
- In the unlikely event of concerns regarding a potential breach of the law and/ or concern regarding hate speech or extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism, AcSS will follow Prevent and any legal guidance and share these concerns with the relevant organisations and authorities.