

## EXTERNAL SPEAKER POLICY

This document contains the procedures of The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (hereinafter Central, or the School) for booking an external speaker, along with the *External Speaker Code of Conduct* and the *External Speaker Referral Form*.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Central has a rich history as an academic and artistic institution that has regularly welcomed external speakers from around the world to its campus. Such speakers have brought and continue to bring great diversity of experience, insight and opinion, enriching our events and activities and sparking discussion and debate among our students, staff and visitors alike.

In addition, the School has a legal duty, as a higher education provider, to protect the right to freedom of expression within the law.

The purpose of this policy is to set in place a governing framework for external speakers to ensure that this proud heritage, where debate, challenge and dissent are not only permitted but expected, can continue for current and future generations.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all events that take place on Central's premises (and offsite events that are Central-branded) which are not organised as part of the curriculum. Such events might include:

- extra-curricular talks or presentations organised by academic staff for students on a programme of study;
- a key note presentation to staff/students/invited guests, or a public lecture series;
- events organised by clubs or societies affiliated to the Students' Union;
- an external or jointly organised conference taking place on Central's premises or with Central's branding.

External speakers are speakers who are not registered students or paid employees at Central. The approval of Visiting Lecturers can be managed outside of this policy, unless it is thought that their identity and/or the content of their teaching session(s) raises the sorts of issues outlined in Section 4, below.

### 3. BOOKING AN EXTERNAL SPEAKER

Anyone organizing an event that includes one or more external speakers must follow the process described in this Policy before booking the speaker(s).

The majority of external speaker requests will be straightforward and can be handled entirely at a local level by the staff or students concerned. In these cases, following the steps outlined in Section 4 below will suffice.

However, some requests may be complex and may require referral for further consideration. The referral process will only apply in a minority of circumstances where events or speakers are deemed to be higher-risk.

#### 4. LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED EXTERNAL SPEAKER(S)

At least 3 weeks prior to the confirmation of any external speaker, the event organizer will be responsible for assessing the speaker against the following set of questions:

**Question 1:** Has the speaker previously been prevented from speaking at Central, or another university or similar establishment, or previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the *External Speaker Code of Conduct* (see Appendix A)?

**Question 2:** Does the proposed title or theme of the event present a potential risk that views/opinions expressed by the speaker(s) may be in breach of the *External Speaker Code of Conduct*?

**Question 3:** Is the proposed speaker/theme likely to attract attendance from individuals/groups that have previously been known to express views that may be in breach of the *External Speaker Code of Conduct*?

If the answer to all three questions is **NO**:

The event organizer can confirm the external speaker and 'book' them to speak at their event or activity in the normal way. It is required that the external speaker be sent a copy of the *External Speaker Code of Conduct*.

If the answer to any of the questions is **UNCLEAR**:

The event organizer must seek guidance from their line manager or the Academic Registrar and Director of Academic Services, whose responsibility it will be to further review the speaker(s) against the questions above.

Ultimately, if the answer to any of the questions is **YES**:

It is the responsibility of the event organizer to submit a referral to the EMG External Speaker Panel **at least 3 weeks prior to the event** (submission is via the Academic Registrar and Director of Academic Services). NO speaker(s) can be confirmed (booked) prior to the event organizer receiving authorization from the Academic Registrar on behalf of the EMG External Speaker Panel.

Please note that events should not be advertised until the assessment has been undertaken and any subsequent referral has been green-lighted.

#### 5. THE REFERRAL PROCESS

To make a speaker referral submission:

- (i) Access the *External Speaker Referral Submission Form* (see Appendix B);
- (ii) Complete all sections of the form with as much detail as possible;
- (iii) Send the form as an attachment to the Academic Registrar:  
[academic.registrar@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:academic.registrar@cssd.ac.uk)

The completed form will be considered by the EMG External Speaker Panel, comprising the Academic Registrar and Director of Academic Services (Chair), the Director of Operations, the Director of Learning and Teaching, and the Director of Research.

Following review, the Panel may decide that the event can go ahead as planned, or it may require particular conditions to be applied. For example:

- requiring the event to be chaired, with the chairing undertaken by somebody approved by the Panel;
- requiring enhanced or additional security measures to be put in place;
- requiring a copy of the guest list for approval in advance of the event taking place;
- requiring the event to be ticketed and/or for identity checks to be put in place for attendees;
- placing a restriction on the number of guests attending the event, or restricting attendance to current staff and students;
- requiring the event to be made open to the public;
- requiring the event to be filmed;
- imposing conditions on how the event is advertised.

## **6. EXTERNAL SPEAKER MONITORING**

The School values, embraces and is totally committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. This commitment is defined, formally, in Central's Single Equality Scheme and its Statements on Equality, which are available on the School's website (<https://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/equality-and-diversity>).

The EMG External Speaker Panel will monitor the outcomes of its decisions to ensure that its responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion is being appropriately enacted.

## **7. STUDENTS' UNION**

Central's Students' Union will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the External Speaker Policy for all events managed by them.

Central's Students' Union will be responsible for implementing a system to support all student events with proposed external speakers. They will undertake the local assessment with/on behalf of individual students, clubs or societies. In the event that a referral is required, the Students' Union President and Students' Union Support Officer will be responsible for making the submission with/on behalf of the student coordinator.

## **8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

If an individual (a member of staff, a student, or an external visitor) feels that there has been a breach of this Policy, they may put their case in writing to the Principal. Possible breaches might include being prevented from arranging, attending, or speaking at an event that has been reviewed or referred under this Policy; or that an external speaker has contravened, or is likely to contravene, the External Speaker Code of Conduct.

The complainant should include any relevant evidence in their submission (for example, documentation sent to, or correspondence with, the EMG External Speaker Panel). The Principal may seek evidence or testimony from others before making their decision. S/he will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing as soon as possible.

## **9. POLICY REVIEW**

The External Speaker Policy and approval process will be reviewed annually and updated in response to legislative changes and other factors. It is the responsibility of those organizing events to ensure that they are acting in accordance with the most recent version of this Policy, which will be published on Central's website.