

2023  
V3

# External Speaker Policy

## **Purpose & Scope**

Debut facilitates a diverse range of topical speaker events/presentations each year across our Centres, in line with our values of encouraging knowledge sharing. These speakers or industry professionals are usually engaged during Wider Curriculum weeks, at Employer Forum meetings or at our Awards Evenings.

We also have a duty of care to our staff, learners and external visitors to ensure that events take place safely. The policy also details our approach to ensuring the safety and protection of staff, learners and visitors. Careful consideration has been given to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which states that we must have, “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This policy and related procedures sets out Debut’s policy on bookings for events that include an external speaker(s) but that are brought in to enhance a learner's programme. For events involving external speakers, the policy applies to anyone who is invited by Debut to impart knowledge and information.

## **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Teaching, Learning & Assessment to ensure they are confident that the content of a proposed speaker event is likely to be lawful and the security and well-being of its students is not compromised and that speakers comply with these guidelines.

## **Objectives**

- To have in place clear protocols relating to external speakers which are understood by all staff, governors, visitors and parents and conforms to safeguarding children guidelines as set out in statutory guidance for both Keeping Children Safe in Education & the Prevent Duty.
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe space for learners where freedom of expression and speech are protected and are balanced with the need to ensure that staff and learners are free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable.
- To provide clear instructions and guidance for those organising an event with external contributors or other external representatives in order to ensure safety.

As such, the following staff members have responsibility for overseeing all aspects of external speakers:

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## Freedom of Speech and Expression

Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights that are protected by law, however, they are not absolute freedoms but freedoms within the law. 'Academic freedom' is a term used to describe the law that allows for open and honest debate in an academic context. Debut has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of staff, learners and the local community. We are committed to working together with event organisers and external speakers to make sure that we allow external speakers to contribute to college activity in a way that is that is reasonable, informed and within the law, especially with regard to the Prevent Duty and Statutory Safeguarding Guidance.

## Where and to whom the policy applies

The college has responsibility for its learners on the college site, during normal college hours, during after college activities and on college organised (and supervised) off-site activities.

## The policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the college.
- All external visitors to college site during the college day or for after college activities.

## Visitor Check-In

- The Head of T, L &A should notify any other Centre Managers or Student Liaison in advance of all expected external speakers with as much notice as possible, including their names and visiting time.
- External speakers should expect to show, on arrival to the college, formal identification documents from their employer, or a driving licence, for example.
- The external speaker/visitor will be provided with a visitor badge and be signposted to the evacuation procedures.
- The external speaker will be asked to download a copy of the visitor's leaflet or provided with a hard copy of the leaflet. They will sign in the visitors book.
- Visitors will be shown where the toilets are located and provided with other key information, e.g. what to do in the event of a fire drill/evacuation, where to leave their belongings securely.
- The external speaker will be escorted by a Debut staff member to the location where they will be assigned and told that if they wish to access any other area of the building (toilets, refreshments area) they must ask a staff member so they are chaperoned.
- A staff member will be assigned to the external visitor to assist in setting up any visual presentations and linking IT equipment to the SMART boards and will provide the wi-fi password.

## **Parking & Belongings of External Speakers**

Debut cannot guarantee a parking space on site for such visitors. The Head of T,L &A will advise all external speakers the parking facilities they can access near to centre locations and cannot take responsibility for any vehicles whilst on visits. All external speakers must take full responsibility for their own personal belongings and equipment and be advised by the Head of T,L&A that Debut cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage to any property.

## **Expectations & Behaviour**

All external speakers should be made aware by the person arranging the event that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and Debut's code of conduct policies including, ensuring that they:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law;
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts;
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony;
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge;
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause, without express permission of Debut.

## **Safeguarding**

External Speakers are asked to ensure compliance with Debut's safeguarding procedures at all times. Where possible, any external speakers who may hold a DBS will be asked to produce a copy of it prior to the visit. We understand that a large majority of the external speakers Debut invites in for enhancing learner and staff knowledge may not hold a DBS, therefore the college's strict protocols regarding being escorted by a staff member when attending any premises to ensure safeguarding of learners and staff is maintained during their visit. If an external speaker notices a safeguarding, H&S or other concern, they are requested to report it to a staff member immediately.

The Head of TL&A will conduct a research into the proposed External Speaker. Potential concerns may be raised concerning (but not limited to) the following:

- any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations>

- talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist;
- a speaker known to have spoken at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation;
- a speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial;
- links to any person or group connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature;
- a speaker who has a significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues;
- a speaker from a political party during an election purdah.

The potential for any decision about an event to limit freedom of speech will be made solely by the Academy Director.

- The potential for the event to cause reputational damage to the College.
- The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to learners or members of staff AND/OR to give rise to breach of peace.

Decisions may be selected from the following courses of action:

- Not to approve the event.
- Not to permit the external speaker to attend (if it is a wider event).
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation; independent filming; the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

### **Staff process to follow when arranging a visit to college**

- Staff organiser will issue to the External Speaker a copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Safeguarding Policy prior to the visit.
- Staff organiser will complete any external checks.
- Staff organiser will ask to be sent all presentation information prior to the visit to check its suitability (handouts, PowerPoint presentations, details of information to be relayed. The organiser will advise the External speaker if there are any parts of their presentation that are not suitable and should be changed/excluded.
- Staff organiser to complete the Due Diligence Spreadsheet with any external visitors names, organisation and who will be their designated chaperone.

Please refer to Debut's linked policies below for additional information regarding External Speaker protocols:

- Anti-Bullying, Anti-Harassment and Victimisation Policy
- Code of Conduct – Staff Policy
- Code of Conduct – Learner Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Counselling Policy
- COVID policy
- Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy

- Data Protection/Privacy Policy
- Employer (Work Based) Support & Expectation Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Guidance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Health & Wellbeing Policy
- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Policy
- Learner Contribution & Learner Voice Policy
- Meetings Policy
- Observation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff CPD/Personal Development Training Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

### **Policy Revision**

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