External Speakers and Events Policy

Version 8.0

Approved by the Board of Governors

Last reviewed: September 2026

The following sets out how London School of Science & Technology ("LSST" or "the School") approves and manages external speaker events and off-campus events.

The UK Prevent Duty established under the *Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015)* requires Recognised Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs) to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The published guidance for RHEBs identifies external speakers and off-campus events as potential risk factors which must be given due consideration within an RHEB's Prevent Duty strategy.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

1. *LSST Prevent Policy*
2. *LSST Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech*
3. *LSST Policy on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion*

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. LSST will, from time to time, invite external speakers from relevant industry or professional backgrounds to enrich the learning opportunities it provides with specific insight and expertise. The School may at times also arrange off-campus events or "away days", which may involve external speakers.

1.2. LSST considers external speaker contributions and off-campus events to be essential to the enhancement of its learning opportunities and commits to ensuring that these are conducted in spirit of academic freedom and professional integrity. This policy outlines the steps the School will take to ensure such events are of genuine value to students' learning experience and that the principle of protecting freedom of speech within the law is respected.

1.3. It additionally outlines how LSST will prevent the misuse of its platform by those who seek to promote extremist ideologies, falsehood or hate, which is contrary to the School's values, which are the British Values.

1.4. LSST will have oversight of all external speaker events and off-campus events and maintain a due diligence approval process to ensure such events do not pose a risk to the wellbeing of the School's community or its academic integrity.

2. EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

2.1. The UK Prevent Duty established under the *Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015)* requires Recognised Higher Education Bodies (RHEBs) to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

2.2. The Human Rights Act 1998, which brings the European Convention on Human Rights into direct effect in national law. Article 10 of the Convention articulates freedom of expression as a human right and sets out the limited circumstances in which that right might be circumscribed (such as to protect public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, or for the protection of the reputation or rights of others).

2.3. Higher Education providers in England have duties under the *Higher Education and Research Act 2017* (as amended by the *Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023*) to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law for staff and students and for visiting speakers.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. 'Freedom of speech means the freedom within the law, to receive and impart ideas, opinions or information by means of speech, writing or images (including in electronic form) without interference.

3.2. Academic freedom, in relation to academic staff at LSST, means their freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and

controversial or unpopular opinions, without loss of their jobs or privileges at LSST, or the likelihood of their securing promotion or different jobs at LSST being reduced.

3.3. An ‘External Speaker’ is anybody who is neither a registered student nor a paid employee or a contractor of LSST.

3.4. An ‘event’ may be one that is hosted on School premises, an external venue, or online environment (such as live webinars), in the name of LSST or by third parties in connection with LSST or involving its students in that capacity.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1. The School is committed to preserving an environment in which staff and students are encouraged to exercise their civil rights as citizens, including the right to academic freedom and freedom of speech. However, it must be understood that these are not absolute freedoms. Incitement to violence, hatred or breaking the law is illegal and such discourse has no place within an academic environment.

4.2. All external speaker events or away days organised or hosted by the school must:

- Be without risk to the academic integrity of the School, its community or its reputation.
- Be compliant with the law.
- Take place in accordance with and in the spirit of this policy.
- Adhere to the LSST Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.

4.3. The School will work with event organisers and if necessary external speakers themselves to make sure that all decisions on whether to approve or reject an application are fair and made on the basis of sound due diligence.

4.4. Where permission to run an event is granted under this policy, the organiser will be responsible for ensuring that the event is conducted in line with all applicable School policies, including its obligations under the Prevent Duty, as well as any conditional restrictions set.

4.5. All speakers must be made aware by the organiser of the event of their responsibility to abide by the law and the School’s various policies, including that they:

- Must not incite hatred or violence or call for the breaking of the law.
- Must not support any proscribed organisation.
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.

- Must adhere to the principle of free speech within the law.
- Must seek to avoid insulting other faiths, beliefs 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 the School.
- Must not undermine the School's shared values, namely:
    - Respect for democracy and support or participation in the democratic process.
    - Respect for the basis on which the law is made and is applied (the Rule of Law).
    - Support the equality of opportunity for all.
    - Support and respect for the liberties of all within the law.
    - Respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

5. PROCEDURAL APPROACH

5.1. Any staff member or registered student organising an external speaker or event must follow the procedure set out below.

5.1. Organising an Event

5.1.1. All event organisers are required to complete an External Speaker/Events Request form and submit it to the relevant Dean of the Campus, who will make a cursory assessment as to the suitability of the speaker and/or the event. Students organising events through the Student Union must submit their External Speaker Form to the Student Union Coordinator.

5.1.2. The form must be submitted as soon as the event date, format and topic are confirmed and no later than 2 weeks before the event date.

5.2. Vetting and Approval

5.2.1. The Dean or Associate Dean of the Campus or the Head of Student Lifecycle or the Head of Careers will initially review the request form to ensure that the proposed event is relevant, appropriate and that there are no obvious risks to academic integrity or the School's community.

5.2.2. They or their team members will undertake preliminary research by visiting the speaker or event coordinator's website, reviewing social media accounts, as well as an internet-wide search for any relevant comments, posts or statements that have been made by any parties. Where the speaker or event is associated with a company or

external organisation, a search will be made in Companies House records and the organisation's website and other published information.

5.2.3. They will then forward the request form with their remarks to the Prevent Lead, who may conduct additional research before considering the recommendations of the Dean, Associate Dean, Head of Student Lifecycle, or Head of Careers. Such additional research may involve:

- Further consultation with the Student Union, DSOs, Police, and/or the Local Authority Prevent Coordinators.
- Consultation with other academic institutions who are known to have hosted a particular speaker or been involved with a certain event.
- Checking for links to proscribed organisations listed at Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK where there is any concern about the political orientation of speakers or those involved with events or their affiliations.

5.2.4. The DPL will then approve or reject the application, giving their reasons to the Dean or SU Coordinator, who will pass these on to person organising the event.

5.2.5. The starting point for a decision will always be to approve a speaker request. However a decision of refusal may be given when the following apply:

- Resources required to run the event outweigh its benefit.
- The event is not inclusive or discriminates unlawfully against certain groups in breach of the School's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- There is clear risk to the academic integrity of the School, its reputation or the wellbeing of its community, which may include:
    - Potential harm to staff, students or the general public.
    - Potential for breach of the peace.
    - Potential for misuse of the School's platform to spread extremist ideology, hatred or advocate breaking the law.
- Hosting or attending the event may for any other reason cause the School to fail in its wider legal responsibilities.

5.2.6. Where the Prevent Lead is minded to refuse permission for the event, they may set additional conditions or restrictions which, if applied, would make the request acceptable. These may include:

- Appointing an independent moderator for the event.
- Operating a panel to address opposing views.

- Additional security at the event.

5.2.7. The Prevent Lead may, at their discretion, request the completion of a full risk assessment in relation to any external speaker activity or external event, which identifies how the organisers will respond if a risk develops during the event itself.

6. REPORTING CONCERNS

6.1. Where Concerns Are Raised Prior to the Event or Where an Event Has Been Refused

6.1.1. External speaker events and off-campus events will be publicised with sufficient time for the members of the academic community to respond. Those wishing to raise a concern about a programmed event (for example for any reason given above in *5.8 above*) should contact the event organiser, the Dean or SU representative or the Prevent Lead in writing with their concerns or information about why the event may be unsuitable.

6.1.2. Conversely, those who feel that an event has been refused without good reason or that a decision of refusal goes against the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech should request a review of the decision by appealing to their Dean and SU Representative.

6.1.3. Concerns raised about an approved, programmed event will be reviewed by the Prevent Lead, the Dean and an SU Representative. Consultation with the wider student body may also take place. The Prevent Lead will report back to the event organiser and/or appellant(s) as to any change of decision or new conditions which apply to an event.

6.2. Where an Issue has Developed During an Approved Event

6.2.1. Where an issue (such as those in *5.8 above)* develops during an event, the organiser will be responsible for the immediate control of the situation. Organisers should ensure that external speakers who express extremist ideology, hatred or advocate breaking the law should be openly and vigorously challenged in the same forum.

6.2.2. Following the event, the nature of the issue should be promptly reported by the organiser to the Prevent Lead. In this instance, the School may decide to investigate the matter fully. The outcome of such an investigation may conclude that:

- There is a requirement to notify external bodies about the issue and the persons involved in order to comply with a public duty (including the Prevent Duty).

- The severity of the breach may warrant additional actions to support those affected and/or protect the School's academic integrity and its reputation.

7. SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT AN EXTERNAL SPEAKER

7.1. The School may at times need to share information about an external speaker with the other academic institutions and relevant authorities or prevent partners, this may be because:

- Research into the speaker or off-campus event at the investigation stage has exposed potential risks to the safety or wellbeing of individuals or communities.

- The conduct of an academic speaker during an approved event, either on or off-campus, has given rise to concerns about that person's suitability for engaging with students or any other particular groups.

- Another institution or organisation has contacted LSST to enquire about an external speaker which the School has previously hosted.

7.2. The School is fully compliant with all applicable data protection laws and the procedures for sharing information about individuals outlined in the School's *Data Protection Policy* will apply. Where in doubt about externally sharing any information about individuals that is not already in the public domain, the School's Data Protection Officer should be consulted.

7.3. In accordance with our obligations as detailed in LSST Prevent Duty Policy where prevent related serious incidents have occurred (such as those in *5.8 above),* the School will engage with regional DfE prevent coordinators, and other local authorities. The legal basis for sharing information will be the discharge of public function, namely reporting of unlawful (or suspected unlawful) activity.

7.4. In the event that another institution contacts LSST to enquire about a previously hosted speaker, the School must offer a fair and honest opinion of the individual and will be mindful to avoid any criticisms which may undermine the personal or professional reputation of a speaker, where these may be open to objective opinion.

8. REVIEW AND UPDATE

8.1. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Prevent Lead. Proposed changes to the policy will be reviewed by the Publications Committee and ratified by the School's Board of Governors.

VERSION HISTORY

Versions	**1.0 – 3.1**	
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