External Speakers Policy
Dyson Institute

Status: Approved

Version number: 1.0

Effective from: January 2026

Review date: January 2027

Issuing authority: Prevent Lead

Reviewed by: Institute Leadership Group

Approved by: Institute Leadership Group

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out a place for external speakers in the Institute's governance structure for events. The Dyson Institute understands the importance of having external speakers being:

- Exposure to diverse perspectives: external speakers bring different viewpoints and expertise on topics and discussions. This encourages students and staff to think critically and embrace diversity.
- Enhancement of academic learning: experts in their fields provide knowledge and skills on topics.
- Enrichment of campus culture: they contribute to a vibrant and intellectually stimulating environment on campus, enhancing student experience.

This policy sets out the procedures for managing external speakers, events, and meetings at the Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology, to ensure compliance with the UK's Prevent Duty and Secure Duty which is the Institutes responsibility to uphold and promote freedom of speech, academic freedom, and equality.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, students, contractors, and visitors.
- All events, meetings, teaching and activities featuring an external speaker held on Dyson premises, online, or at external venues under the institution's name.

1.3 Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the below policies:

- Freedom of Speech Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology Health and Safety Policy and Standards
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Dyson Disciplinary Policy

2.0 Principles

The Dyson Institute is committed to freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law and has a comprehensive Code of Conduct accessible on the website.

The Institute will not permit any event or speaker that incites hatred, violence, or breaches the law.

All events must comply with the Prevent Duty, Equality Act 2010, and Human Rights Act 1998.

3.0 Responsibilities

Event Organisers: (Institute staff and students) Responsible for submitting event, guest lecture and speaker requests, completing risk assessments, and ensuring compliance.

Prevent Lead (DSL) / Deputy Prevent Lead (DDSL): Reviews high-risk events, provides guidance, and maintain records. A member of the Institute Management Board may do this in their absence.

Institute Health and Safety Champions: Responsible for ensuring that Health and Safety considerations have been factored into the planning, approval of speakers and delivery of the event.

Safeguarding team: Log and monitor all external speaker and event requests.

Dyson Institute Student Committee (DISC): It is the responsibility of the DISC event organiser to ensure this process is completed for events such as speaker series.

4.0 Procedures

For an event to proceed, organisers must comply with all the relevant requirements including the Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology Health and Safety Policy and Standards and Visitors Policy.

4.1 Notification and Approval

All events featuring external speakers must be communicated to the Safeguarding Team by submitting the external speaker/event request form at the earliest possible juncture, and at least **15 working days in advance**. Completion of this form will automatically notify the team via email at safeguarding@DysonInstitute.ac.uk. *See Appendix A for visibility on the questions that must be answered in the External Speaker/Event Request Form.*

In the instance that an external speaker drops out and needs replacing…. All reasonable efforts will be made to fast track this process for the event to continue safely.

4.2 External Speaker verification

All requests made by the event organiser using the external speaker/event request form are subject to a suitability assessment by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in partnership with one of the Institute's Health and Safety Champions, ensuring that an Institute approach is adopted. The team would consider:

- The speaker's background and previous statements.
- The event's topic and potential for controversy.
- Audience profile and likelihood of protest or disorder.
- Use the three-step framework based on the Office for Students' Guidance

4.3 Decision-Making

The institute may:

- Approve the event with or without conditions (e.g., security, moderation).
- Request further information.
- Refuse or cancel the event if there is a risk of:
    - Incitement to terrorism or hatred.
    - Breach of the law or institutional policies.
    - Safeguarding concerns.

These decisions are made based on what risk level the event is deemed as:

Low-risk events: proceed with standard approval.

Medium/high-risk events: are escalated to the Prevent Lead and External Speakers Assessment Panel which would include representation from the senior leadership team and safeguarding team for further review.

A decision will be made within 5 working days from confirmation of receipt of request, and will be communicated via email.

4.4 Appeals

Organisers may appeal a refusal or imposed conditions in writing to the Student and registry services within 5 days of receiving the response regarding the external speaker at the event to DysonInstitute.regulation@Dyson.com where it will be reviewed by a member of SLT who was not involved in the initial assessment.

Appeals will be reviewed within 5 working days, and an outcome will be provided to the event organisers via email.

If the appeal is upheld based on appropriate actions being implemented, this will be communicated via email. Non-compliance with the mitigations could result in staff disciplinary. All decisions are final.

5.0 Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is vital for external speakers at the Institute, and our policy reflects this commitment clearly. Before approving any event, the Institute applies a three-step framework based on the Office for Students' Guidance. First, we determine if the speech is 'within the law' by reviewing whether it is prohibited by relevant regulations, such as laws on defamation, harassment, incitement to violence, hate speech, or terrorism. If the speech is lawful, we then identify 'reasonably practicable steps' to enable it, which may include amending procedures or providing guidance. This ensures our engagement is responsive and supportive, upholding lawful free speech without unnecessary restrictions or procedures, and safeguarding the open exchange of ideas essential for a vibrant academic community.

6.0 Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty requires higher education providers to have robust procedures in place for assessing and approving external speakers. This is to ensure that campus events uphold freedom of speech within the law and do not promote extremist views or risk drawing individuals into terrorism. When considering external speakers, organisers must conduct an initial risk assessment covering security, safety, equality, diversity, and Prevent Duty concerns. They are also responsible for briefing speakers on lawful free speech, respectful conduct, and relevant Institute policies. The Institute balances its legal obligations with academic freedom and community welfare using a proportionate, risk-based approach. People involved in organising events should pay close attention to the background of speakers, anticipated audience, and potential risks identified in the External Speaker Proposal Form to help maintain a safe and inclusive environment. This is all to ensure the safeguarding of our students.

7.0 Conduct at Event

At events featuring external speakers, it's essential that organisers adhere rigorously to the Institute's established policies to safeguard both lawful free speech and the community's welfare. The organiser must be named for each event and is responsible for submitting the External Speaker Proposal Form at least 15 working days in advance, and briefing speakers on expectations regarding lawful free speech, respectful behaviour, and Institute policies.

The organiser is also tasked with assessing the nature of the event, expected attendance, and the speaker's background including their online presence. Any risks relating to security, safety, equality, diversity, or Prevent Duty must be identified, ensuring these factors are managed proactively so events are safe, inclusive, and compliant in their external speaker submission.

An event check list can be found on the 'Organising Events & Engaging External Speakers' SharePoint page linked here.

The Dyson Institute reserves the right to terminate any event planned or progress if risks materialise, if the external speakers form was not submitted or if a risk assessment was not completed. On site this can be done with support of security and in emergencies, the police. For offsite activities this must be considered in the risk assessment.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

The Safeguarding Team will maintain a log of all external speaker event requests and outcomes.

The Office for Students (OfS) oversees the implementation of the Prevent duty in higher education institutions in England. The Prevent lead provides the Secretary and Registrar the required information to submit an annual data return and accountability statement, signed by the Chair of Council confirming the Institute's compliance.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

9.0 Contact Details

If you require any support or have any questions about external speakers at an event or talk, please reach out to the Prevent Lead at Safeguarding@DysonInstitute.ac.uk

General queries can be raised to the Student Support Team at StudentSupport@DysonInstitute.ac.uk

If Security is required at an event or you have any concerns as the event is running, please contact Security on 07979 703 219

10.0Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and in accordance with the Prevent Duty, the following definitions apply:

- **External Speaker:** Any individual or group not employed by or enrolled at the Dyson Institute or Dyson Technology invited to speak at an event.
- **Event:** Any meeting, lecture, seminar, workshop, conference or gathering, whether in-person or online.
- **Prevent Duty:** The statutory duty under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- **Secure Duty:** For external speakers, secure duty usually refers to the organisation's responsibility to ensure their safety, privacy, and proper access during their visit. It also covers the protocols or checks the speaker themselves must follow to comply with site security for the security of staff and students and other site users.
- **High-Risk Event:** An event where there is a reasonable expectation of controversial content, reputational risk, or risk of non-compliance with the law.

11.0 Appendix A: RACI

	Stakeholders					
	Event Organiser	Prevent Lead/Deputy Prevent Lead	Safeguarding Team	Dyson Institute Student Committee	Dyson Institute Senior Leadership Team	Institute Health and Safety Champion
Submission of External Speaker/Event request form	A/R	C	C	A/R		
Review request form		A/R	I		®	C
Event Organsier informed of the form request outcome	I	A/R	I	I		I
Medium/high-risk events						
External Speaker Assessment Panel Convened		A/R	C		C	
Panel decision communicated to the event organiser	I	A/R	I	I	I	I
Appeal						
Appeal submitted to student and registry services	A/R	I	I	I	I	
Appeal reviewed					A/R	
Outcome of appeal communicated to the event organiser	I			I	A/R	

12.0 Appendix B: External Speaker Request Form

Questions you will be asked in the external speakers form:

<u>Organisers details</u>

1. Date of event
2. Name of organiser(s)
3. Event organiser(s) contact number
4. Event organiser(s) email address

<u>Event information</u>

5. Who will be Chairing/leading the event
6. Type of event or talk eg: conference, talk, DISC event or guest lecturer
7. Title of event or talk
8. What topic(s) will the external speaker cover
9. Who will be attending the event eg. Public, students, institute staff or students
10. Start and finish time
11. Location of the event: eg, roundhouse, lecture room, off site (provide off site address)
12. Expected number of attendees
13. How will the event be publicised

14. How do you plan to manage the security of the event
15. Do you plan on recording the event
16. Do you plan to have photography at the event and has approval been requested? – for onsite events

<u>Speaker's details</u>

17. External speakers name
18. Speaker's organisation(s) – if applicable
19. Speakers website or social media
20. Does the speaker have, or had previously, any known affiliations to any groups or organisations
21. Provide names and webpage links (where possible) of the speakers affiliations. Highlight if a speaker is speaking on behalf of a particular affiliation.
22. Is the speaker likely to, or in the past: receive a protest, given offense, extremist views or no known controversy.
23. Please provide details and links (such as news articles) in particular to any ticked options in q22. This should be what objectively would fit into these categories, and not whether you necessarily believe in it.
24. Has the speaker spoken at a previous event at the institute.
25. *clickable statements regarding risk assessment**
26. If you have not completed a risk assessment please explain why

Confirmation statement:

I understand I am responsible for briefing speakers on lawful free speech, respectful conduct and relevant institute policies.

13.0 Appendix C: Examples of events where external speakers would attend

Below are some examples of events the external speakers form would need to be completed:

- Speaker Series run by DISC
- Guest lectures by industry professionals or academics
- Conferences or symposiums with keynote addresses by external figures
- Debates or forums on topical issues
- Professional development sessions for staff and students
- Events organised by DISC on site with invited guests
- Talks or presentations from public figures