St George's
University of London

**Promoting Good Campus Relations:
Policy on Events and Meetings**

1.   Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Guidance for external speakers and external visitors document
- The Dignity at Work and Study Policy
- General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study
- The Student Union's 'No Platform' Policy
- Student Union Society Handbook
- SGUL Network Conditions of Use
- Information Security Policy Guidance on proper & improper use of IT Services.

1.1   Where this policy can be found

Copies of this policy can be found on SGUL's website pages under:

- human resources – policies page
- the Student Union's page
- the equality and diversity pages.

2.   Freedom of speech

In accordance with its duties as laid down in **Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986**, SGUL wishes to ensure that freedom of speech within the law -as specified in **Article 19 of the UN Covenant** and **Article 10 of the European Convention** (please see Appendix A) is secured for students, staff - including honorary and visiting staff - and for all persons authorised to be on the institution's premises, including visiting speakers

SGUL wishes to provide inclusive a learning environment of intellectual rigour where debates flourish and staff and students are able to engage in free-ranging discussions. Therefore every member of the university shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to hold opinions without interference, disability or disadvantage, and to freedom of expression within the law, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas.

3.   SGUL's values

Additionally SGUL is committed to creating a campus environment characterised by good relations between staff and students of different backgrounds.

The institution aims to ensure that people from all backgrounds, including those from all faiths and none, are afforded equivalent protection. SGUL actively wishes to promote a safe environment where people from different backgrounds or with different beliefs are tolerant and respectful of each other. Discrimination, intolerance and violence have no place on campus.

Therefore the right to freedom of speech must be balanced with the need to protect people from abuse, for example through the inciting of hatred. The university wishes to protect staff and students of all backgrounds are from intimidation, harassment and violent behaviour. Thus all freedom of speech must be within the constraints of the law.

4.   The Law

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The Equality Challenge Unit (the organisation established to promote equality for staff and students in the Higher Education sector) notes that legislation in this area is characterised by three key themes:

4.1   Protection of the special status of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):
- Education Act 1986
- Education Reform Act 1988

4.2   Anti-discrimination legislation and proactive equalities legislation:
- Human Rights Act 1998 (incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010.

4.3   Provisions that qualify rights:
- Public Order Act 1986
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice Act 2003 and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Terrorism Act 2006
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 amended **the Public Order Act 1986** to create offences involved in 'stirring up hatred' (namely the manifestation of hatred that could lead to a public order offence) against persons on religious grounds. The legislation ensures that protection is provided to people against harm because of their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. The law does not outlaw disagreement with or disapproval of a particular religious viewpoint, but rather focuses on those who stir up violence and hatred on religious grounds. The main offences cover:

- the use of words or behaviour or display of written material
- publishing or distributing written material
- the public performance of a play
- distributing, showing or playing a recording.

The Act also creates a new offence of producing threatening material with a view to using it in a way that is intended to stir up religious hatred. For example: If a student sent an email that could stir up hatred against people of a particular faith, this could constitute a criminal offence under the Act.

5.   Making decisions
Therefore to make finely balanced decisions SGUL needs to consider:

- the concept of freedom of speech
- the institution's values of inclusivity
- obligations laid upon Higher Education Institutions to remain within the law.

The Equality Challenge Unit's 2005 guidance Promoting Good Campus Relations states that

"...threatening behaviour such as hate crimes and intolerance can include:

'Crimes or behaviour motivated by prejudice, hatred or intolerance that intentionally demean individuals and groups defined by their ethnicity, race, religion and belief, sexuality, gender, conscience, disability, age or lawful working practices and which give rise to an environment in which people will experience, or could reasonably fear harassment, intimidation or violence.'

This definition is broad and encompasses the many ways in which campus harmony can be disturbed over time and the effect this can have on people. It also takes into account the fact that some incidents, while not viewed as 'serious crimes', can nonetheless have a serious effect on an individual or community..." (the Equality Challenge Unit: 2005).

Therefore while some individuals may be willing to accept that they could be prosecuted if they breach the law, the institution recognises that its first duty is to protect its staff and students and limit damage to the university's reputation.

6.   Organising an event

6.1   Definition of an event or meeting under this policy

The university recognises that in order to meet organisational objectives it will be necessary to hold meetings or events which contribute to the institution's core aims.

Such events include:

- Academic teaching related to programmes of study, lectures, seminars, placements organised by the university's departments
- Departmental meetings, training or workshops related to the business administration of the university.
- Research seminars.

This policy does not cover such core events.

Instead this policy relates to any other meetings or events organised by:

- St Georges Student Union societies
- St Georges staff societies or clubs
- individual staff
- individual students

and includes small group discussions, revision sessions, prayer meetings, external speakers, conferences, musical or theatrical performances, organisation of charity, volunteering, arts or sports events, etc.

It applies to any such event run on SGUL's premises or held on other premises under the auspices of SGUL's name.

6.2.   Who may book an event

Events may only be booked by a Student Society president or individual members of staff.
Staff or student societies may not host an event or meeting unless they agree to abide by this policy.

6.3.   How to book a room for an event or a meeting

Events are only permitted to be held on the university's premises if an official room booking is made using the institution's computerised room booking system. Room booking information is openly displayed on meeting location TV screens around the university. This requirement applies equally to all student union space, the multi faith and quiet contemplation room and halls of residence.

All room bookings must be made in the name of the staff member, or relevant Student Society president as appropriate and the following information provided:

a) **Full name of the event organiser:**
b) **Full name of the department or student society hosting the event/meeting**
c) **The title of the event**
d) **The date and time of the event**
e) **Clarification of the role of the external speaker or external visitor at this event -for example whether they attending in their capacity as a preacher, a political speaker, an expert on the topic to be discussed, or in another capacity --to be specified**
f) **The reasons why the external speaker or external visitor is attending this event**
g) **The topics any external speaker or external visitor plans to cover in any speech**
h) **Whether permission is sought for information or merchandise to be distributed –to be specified**
i) **Whether permission is sought for a collection to be taken up- to be specified.**

It is therefore the responsibility of the individual staff or Student Society president to ensure they are aware of any events being carried out in their name.

6.4 Selling/freely distributing merchandise/information or taking up a collection

If it is desired that posters, leaflets, T-shirts, books or other materials be either sold or freely distributed, or a collection be taken up before during or after event permission must be sought when making a room booking.

6.5 Categorising events: 'green' and 'red' flags

The university uses a 'traffic light' system to categorise events. The vast majority of events run by staff departments or student societies will not require any discussion. Such events will automatically receive a 'green' flag and thus be permitted go ahead.

Other activities -including the discussion of certain subjects which may be controversial or invitations to speakers who may discriminate against or denigrate others - may be potentially problematic for the institution. Such events will receive a 'red' flag and require further discussion.

In these cases the staff member or president of the Student Society which wishes to hold such an event is strongly encouraged to discuss the event with the Promoting Good Campus Relations Team (please see point 11 below).

6.6 Transparency of events and meetings

In the interests of openness and transparency all staff and students should be aware that if an event is run on the institution's premises, or using the institution's name –including under the auspices of an St Georges student society - then all members of the institution have a right to attend these events.

Members of the university do not need advance permission to attend any such events. From time to time the institution may decide to carry spot checks to establish that events are run in accordance with this policy.

7. External speakers

7.1 Definition of an external speaker

An external speaker is defined as any speaker who is not a current member of SGUL's staff or a current student at St Georges. Accordingly:

- student alumnus
- ex- St Georges employees
- current or ex-St Georges NHS Trust employees

are classed as external speakers.

However in addition, if a current member of staff wishes to speak or facilitate a meeting on any topic for which they are not currently employed to teach by the university, then for the purpose of this policy they are also classed as an external speaker.

The event organiser must return signed copies of the 'guidance for external speakers and external visitors' form in line with the guidance contained within that document.

7.2 Informally inviting external visitors or external speakers to attend
External speakers and external visitors may only be transparently and formally invited into events via the policy outline in this document. It is not permitted to ask external speakers and external visitors to attend events at the university on an ad hoc informal basis. Any such breaches in policy may result in serious consequences such as disciplinary action, for the individual who invited the external speaker or external visitor and/or the Student Society president.

7.2   Proposing to invite an external speaker
If an individual wishes to invite an external speaker to St George's this invitation must be formally approved before an invite is extended. Anyone wishing to organise an event should follow the Guidance for all External Speakers and External Visitors available on the equality and diversity pages, which encloses a request form.

Individuals should submit their completed request form in writing to the university **at least 10 working days** before any proposed event.
The following information must be provided on the request form:

a)   Full name of the event organiser
b)   Full name of the department or Student Society hosting the event/meeting
c)   The title of the event
d)   The date and time of the event
e)   Clarification of the role of the external speaker or external visitor at this event -for example whether they attending in their capacity as a preacher, a political speaker, an expert on the topic to be discussed, or in another capacity –to be specified
f)   The reasons why the external speaker or external visitor is attending this event
g)   The topics any external speaker or external visitor plans to cover in any speech
h)   Whether permission is sought for information or merchandise to be distributed –to be specified
i)   Whether permission is sought for a collection to be taken up- to be specified.

Proposals should be addressed to:

▪   for staff- the Secretary and Academic Registrar
▪   for students- the Student Union President.

The university will consider this request and respond in writing **within 3 working days.**

If an external speaker is proposed after this deadline then the university may decide to automatically refuse permission to extend an invitation.

7.3   Checking the credentials of external speaker
The St George's will need to consider whether the speaker's contribution, attendance or conduct is likely to:

•   interfere with the rights and freedoms of others
•   affect public safety
•   lead to disorder or crime

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- incite/stir up racial or religious hatred
- cause others to fear that violence will be used against them
- lead to an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

In measuring this risk the institution may consider:

- the speaker's history and the organisation they represent
- the impact such a visit will have on campus
- the impact such a visit will have on community relations and the wider community
- guidance documents, such as the institution's race equality policy and other relevant equalities schemes.

The Students Union and the university are committed to ensuring they are fully briefed on all events which run in their names. Therefore it is the responsibility of:

- the Student Union president for all student requests
- the Deputy Director of Estates for all staff requests

to make appropriate checks to verify the credentials of the speaker.

Additionally, the institution may also make any background checks it deems appropriate. A proposed visiting speaker may be excluded on the grounds of his/her prior conduct or his/her prior denial of free speech to others.

7.4 Formally inviting an external speaker

Once an external speaker has been approved then the individual who wishes to invite the speaker must send a written invitation to him/her the detailing:

a) **The title of the event**
b) **The date and time of this event**
c) **The topics any external speaker or external visitor cover in any speech**
d) **Full name of the event organiser:**
e) **Full name of the department or student society hosting the event/meeting**
f) **The title of the event**
g) **The date and time of the event**
h) **The topics any external speaker or external visitor plans to cover in any speech**
i) **Whether or not permission has been granted for information or merchandise to be distributed**
j) **Whether or not permission has been granted for a collection to be taken up.**

The invitation must also include a copy this Promoting Good Campus Relations Policy. It is the personal responsibility of the event organiser to make certain the external speaker or external visitor is aware of the need to abide by SGUL's policy and comply with SGUL's values surrounding freedom of speech (please see points 3 and 4 above).

8. External visitors

8.1 Inviting external visitors to attend the event

An external visitor is defined as anyone who is not a current member of SGUL's staff or a current student at SGUL. Accordingly:

- student alumnus
- ex-SGUL employees
- current or ex-St Georges NHS Trust employees

are also classed as external visitors.

The university must be informed if the organiser of the event wishes to request permission to invite external visitors to attend an event.

The event organiser must return signed copies of the 'guidance for external speakers and external visitors' form in line with the guidance contained within that document.

9. Promoting Good Campus Relations (PGCR) Team

9.1 The role of the group

The role of the PGCR team to support staff or students considering running a particular event. This team may be called upon to help the university to make fine judgements about individual proposals and quick but effective decisions. The PGCR team can help individuals talk constructively about their proposed event and consider any possible consequences should a particular event go ahead.

The PGCR team may conduct its business by phone or email if it is impractical for it to meet in person.

If necessary the PGCR team may make its recommendations by majority. If there is no majority, the Chair of the PGCR team shall make its final recommendations.

The PGCR team does not consider the detailed day-to-day administrative actions which are undertaken to organise an event or meeting. It limits its advice to helping staff and students think constructively about their proposed event, consider the possible consequences and help to explore different options to avoid any one-sided views.

9.2 Promoting Good Campus Relations Team Membership

- Dean for Staff and Students: Chair
- Secretary and Academic Registrar
- Director of Student Services
- Equality and Diversity Adviser
- Student Union President
- Deputy Director of Estates responsible for campus security.

9.3 Process of referral to the PGCR team

The PGCR team is able to convene at short notice so as to be able to promptly support staff and students considering a particular event.

Student Society presidents can request that the PGCR team be convened by contacting the Student Union president, the Dean for Staff and Students, or the Equality and Diversity Adviser.

Staff members can request that the PGCR team be convened by contacting the Dean for Staff and Students or the Equality and Diversity Adviser.

9.4 Discussing a potential event

While SGUL may be happy to host an event which explores controversial issues it is always keen to ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for debate.

The PGCR team will help explore different options with the staff member or student society president.

The group may suggest that an activity be partly allowed, or fully allowed but under certain conditions. For example if a student society wished to show a film on a controversial topic, the PGCR team might advise that a debate be organised immediately afterwards with different viewpoints represented to avoid any one-sided view.

In deciding whether or not to recommend that an event goes ahead, the PGCR team will reach their decision after careful consideration. To help make its decision the group may consult with relevant internal or external organisations.

A log will be kept of all proposals received. The PGCR team will document the reasons for its recommendations to demonstrate that concepts of reasonableness and proportionality have been taken into account.

9.5 Recommendation not to hold an event

If an event is perceived to be a threat to the safety of staff and students or to the reputation of the university or to the rights and freedoms of others then the PGCR team might make a recommendation that the event does not go ahead.

If despite this recommendation, an individual staff member or student decides to embark on a course of action contrary to the PGCR team's advice, the PGCR team would then inform the university that this was the case.

9.6. Appealing the PGCR team recommendation

If a staff member or student society president wishes to proceed with an event despite the recommendations of the PGCR team s/he may then appeal directly to the Principal or - in the Principal's absence - his/her nominee.

This appeal must be made in writing **at least 5 working days** prior to the date of the proposed event.

The Principal will consider their application **within 3 working days** of its receipt.

Occasionally the Principal may decide to meet with the staff member or student society president to discuss the matter further.

The Principal will make a decision and provide his/her reasons in writing to the person making the appeal. The Principal's decision will be final.

The university reserves the right to decline to hold any event.

10. Publicising events

SGUL has a public duty to promote good relations between people, including those from different racial groups and therefore will not tolerate the publication and dissemination of online materials that are likely to incite racial and religious hatred.

These actions could constitute a criminal offence. Therefore in order to ensure transparency, it is not permitted to publicise an SGUL event in a foreign language. All invitations, posters, bookings and publicity material must be in English.

11. Segregation, including gender segregation - at events

In principle, segregation at events is NOT part of St George's event policy - this includes gender segregation. However should the Promoting Good Campus Relations team ever agree to segregation at an event on any grounds, then the university will publish the reason for such a decision internally **at least 5 days before the event** so that this decision is open to challenge from university members.

12. Security

The institution's Head of Security, or his/her nominee, will normally be responsible for the management of any event that may pose a security and/or safety risk to any person, building or facility at SGUL. The Head of Security will act as the main point of contact for the Police.

However the institution does not wish to invite the police to every event and neither would this be practical. Ticketing an event, or asking for a police presence remains an option but the university would prefer to only use these measures as a last resort.

If in certain circumstances, measures such as the hiring of professional security staff or ticketing of an event are required then costs will in principle fall to the staff member or student society who/which is organising such an event.

13.   The responsibilities of the event organiser

All event organisers assume responsibility for any event organised by them as an individual or on behalf of the society they represent. This includes returning signed copies of the 'guidance for external speakers and external visitors' form in line with the guidance contained within that document. Therefore they need to be aware that the university holds them personally responsible for ensuring that all events and meetings remain within the guidelines outlined in this policy. If a Society president is unsure as to how to achieve this, s/he is strongly encouraged to seek advice from the PGCR team (please see point 11 below).

13.1   Liability insurance

All individual staff or Student Society presidents who wish to organise an event are obliged to get liability insurance to mitigate against the risk of them or their society being sued by third parties for negligence.

13.2   Participation in external events

Individual staff and Student Society presidents are also responsible for any events their society holds outside SGUL's premises. The actions of an individual staff member or Student Society President when outside SGUL's premises must also be in keeping with all the guidelines contained within this policy.

If the society is invited to participate in an action which they would not be permitted to carry out when on SGUL's premises then the institution strongly recommends they should not do so. This includes musical or theatrical performances at external venues.

13.3   Responsibilities for joint events

Some staff or Student Societies may be affiliated to other external bodies. If a member of staff or Student Society president decides to run a joint event with an affiliated body it is their responsibility to ensure SGUL is not involved with any external event which does not comply with these guidelines.

13.4.   The consequences of failing to uphold good practice

The university automatically assumes that its staff and students will behave responsibly and follow the guidelines outlined in this policy.

The named organiser for all meetings is culpable whether or not s/he was aware of actions taking place in her/his name.

Failure to uphold good practice, for example:

- the content of the meeting does not tally with the description in the room booking system/ or that provided in a verbal announcement or a written invitation or the signed external speakers guidance
- an external speaker is invited in without following the proper procedure
- views are expressed at a meeting which breach the law
- an event is publicised in a language other than English
- any segregation is attempted - including gender segregation -when this has not previously been approved by the PGCR team

will be considered a breach of this policy.

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Any breaches in policy may result in serious consequences. For staff this may include disciplinary action or dismissal, for students this may include disciplinary action, referral to a Fitness to Practice Committee, or expulsion from the university.

Internal speakers or visitors- staff and students- who breach this policy will be dealt with under the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the appropriate bullying and harassment procedures.

APPENDIX A

UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19:

(1)   Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

(2)   Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his/her choice.

(3)   The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals.

European Convention on Human Rights, Article 10 (also contained in UK law in the **Human Rights Act 1998**):

(1)   Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include:

Freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

(2)   The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

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