

# Code of Practice on Free Speech

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## Code of Practice Statement

### Our Commitment to Free Speech

Canterbury Christ Church University strongly endorses and promotes freedom of speech and academic freedom as part of [our Mission and Values](#). It is enshrined in the [University's Articles of Association](#) (Article 92). Free speech supports an environment for innovation, critical thinking, and scholarly engagement. You can read more about our approach on [our free speech webpage](#).

Freedom of speech empowers all individuals to express their opinions and ideas openly without interference, provided these expressions are within the law.

Academic freedom safeguards academics' intellectual autonomy, enabling them to explore, question, and introduce new or contentious ideas within the law without fear of negative repercussions affecting their employment or careers.

We support individuals' right to express their views freely within the law to encourage a diversity of perspectives within the University, even when controversial or contested. We recognise that free speech within the law may include speech that some find offensive. We expect those attending University events to be respectful of the differing opinions of others in the interest of open debate.

We integrate the free speech principles into our operational and policy-related activities to create an environment where we can promote different viewpoints while respecting the person.

We recognise the role of protest as a form of valid expression, provided it does not obstruct the free exchange of ideas, incite hatred or unlawful harassment or put individuals' health and safety at risk.

## Who needs to know about the Code?

- All members of the University Staff
- Emeritus Readers and Professors
- Visiting Lecturers and Researchers
- Students and Apprentices
- Applicants
- Visiting Speakers
- Visitors to Public Events.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Purpose of the Code of Practice

We set out our commitment to the free speech principles in our Code of Practice on Free of Speech, which emphasises the very high level of importance we attach to lawful free speech in expressing a viewpoint as foundational to a university. Alongside the Code, we provide a fuller summary of its contents on [our free speech webpage](#).

We explain the relevance of free speech to all our activities, including learning, teaching and assessment, and research. Free speech extends to meetings, training, events, and public engagement with visiting speakers. We pledge to protect lawful free speech to foster dialogue and debate in all these activities.

We have an internal process to address eligible complaints about free speech and a separate process for raising concerns about events.

### Contacts

Governance and Legal Services are responsible for overseeing the Code of Practice on behalf of the Governing Body and the Vice-Chancellor.

The team can be contacted by emailing: [freespeech@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:freespeech@canterbury.ac.uk).

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Contents

Introduction .....	4
Free Speech Definitions .....	5
Scope of the Code of Practice on Free Speech.....	5
Publication of the Code of Practice on Free Speech .....	6
Our Values Relating to Free Speech .....	6
Procedures when Organising Meetings, Events and Other Activities.....	8
Procedures for Organising Events with External and Visiting Speakers .....	10
Expected Conduct for Freedom of Speech Within the Law.....	13
Criterion for Passing on Security Costs for Events.....	15
Codes of Conduct and Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.....	16
Research.....	17
University Arrangements for Free Speech Complaints and Concerns.....	18
Training and Induction .....	19
Review of the Code's Effectiveness .....	20

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Introduction

Inspired by our Church of England foundation, the University's mission is to pursue excellence in higher education: transforming individuals, creating knowledge, enriching communities, and building a sustainable future.

We value:

- The development of the whole person, respecting and nurturing the inherent dignity and potential of each individual.
- The integration of excellent teaching, research, and knowledge exchange.
- The power of higher education to enrich individuals, communities, and nations.
- Our friendly, inclusive, and professional community of students and staff, preparing individuals to contribute to a just and sustainable future.

Article 92 of the [University's Articles of Association](#) enshrines free speech:

*As the University was established as a Church of England Foundation and continues to be so, no Member should at any time undermine the ethos of the University or the Code of conduct based on that ethos. The Governing Body shall ensure that Academic Staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy or losing their jobs or any privileges they may have at the University. Subject to the foregoing, every individual associated with the University shall have the right to freedom of expression within the law. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by the University and they shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and without interference.*

Within our mission and values, we consider freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law integral to our educational mission. They are crucial for fostering a vibrant community where innovative ideas, critical thinking, and scholarly engagement flourish.

We firmly believe in protecting free speech and acknowledge its importance in fostering dialogue, personal growth, and promoting knowledge, which is central to our values. Our commitment is to foster a dynamic environment where we protect and celebrate freedom of speech, academic freedom and the open exchange of ideas.

This Code of Practice affirms our dedication to ensuring our University remains a space where intellectual curiosity, debate, and diversity of thought thrive.

The Code sets out the steps we deem reasonably practicable to secure free speech in an inclusive environment that hears all views and respects the individuals making them, enriching our academic community, advancing knowledge and contributing to broader societal discourses.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Free Speech Definitions

**Freedom of speech** means everyone may express lawful views and opinions freely, in speech or in writing, without interference.

**Academic freedom** means protecting the intellectual independence of academics to question and test received views and wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial, contested or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in danger of losing their jobs or privileges or reducing the likelihood of them securing promotion or different roles at the University.

Together, they represent **free speech**. Free 'speech' includes written materials and other forms of expression. It does not just include the spoken word.

Free speech includes lawful speech that may be offensive and hurtful to some. Unless restricted by law, individuals may engage in free speech.

Free speech 'within the law' is protected. Unlawful speech is unprotected. Speech that amounts to unlawful harassment or discrimination is unprotected, as it is not free speech within the law and may be subject to legal or disciplinary action.

Throughout the rest of this document, 'Free Speech' has the meaning of 'Free Speech within the law'.

### Scope of the Code of Practice on Free Speech

#### Application of the Code of Practice

This Code outlines how we fulfil the duty to promote and protect free speech.

Across all our activities, we maintain a consistent approach to safeguard free speech and prevent discrimination, harassment, or any form of unlawful conduct.

#### Coverage

All members, including staff, students and external and visiting speakers, must adhere to this Code of Practice to foster an environment where free speech is respected and upheld.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Publication of the Code of Practice on Free Speech

#### **Raising Awareness of the Code of Practice**

The University is to inform our students, members, and staff about our Code of Practice at least once annually. This section details these obligations.

#### **Publication of the Code**

Because accessibility for all stakeholders is a priority, we make the Code available through our website. We publish the Code in a prominent position to ensure maximum visibility.

We make the Code accessible to students, staff, visiting speakers, and prospective students with no firewall, password or security check.

#### **Clarity and Accessibility**

We provide a straightforward statement summarising the Code's content to ensure stakeholders understand its significance and how to access it by providing direct links.

#### **Communication of the Summary of the Code of Practice**

We provide the summary statement to all students and staff in writing each year to ensure the awareness of all students and staff.

### Our Values Relating to Free Speech

#### **Our Commitment to Free Speech**

We unequivocally support free and open inquiry in all matters relating to our work. We assert that free speech is fundamental to our University's purpose, underpinning our commitment to education, research, and public engagement. This principle guides our policies and practices, ensuring our community remains a vibrant forum for intellectual exchange.

Within the academic setting, we provide a very high level of protection for the lawful expression of ideas and viewpoints, no matter how controversial, contested, or unpopular they may be.

Free speech enables staff, students and visiting speakers to explore, debate, and innovate within the law without restriction. It is essential when cultivating a critical and open-minded academic culture.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Free Speech Over Comfort

Freedom of speech may involve expressions of ideas that are offensive to some.

Our role is not to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive where expressing those ideas and opinions is lawful.

Instead, our mission is to facilitate the unfettered exchange of ideas. Exposure to diverse viewpoints is essential for critical thinking and pursuing knowledge.

While we promote a community marked by respect and understanding, we recognise that exposure to differing viewpoints, including those that may challenge or unsettle, is part of the educational journey.

Dialogue, education, and mutual respect form the foundation of our approach to speech, which some might consider offensive speech within legal limits, as we strive to balance the protection of free expression with the well-being of our community members.

### Debate and Deliberation

Creating an inclusive and respectful environment supports our students, faculty, staff, and affiliates in exercising their right to free speech, enriching our academic and social community.

Consistent with the principles of debate and deliberation, we actively support a culture where people can openly discuss and critique ideas and opinions, regardless of their popularity or acceptance.

It is not our role to prevent exposure to differing views. It is to encourage respectful and constructive dialogue.

### Prohibition of Obstruction

We prohibit any actions that obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views, regardless of how objectionable these views might be to some.

Our commitment is to create an environment where physical, verbal, or administrative barriers do not impede free speech.

### Invitations to Speakers

Members of our university community may invite and engage with speakers of their choosing. In this Code, we set out the arrangements for organising events involving external speakers. We do this because an essential part of securing free speech is the sound organisation of the event.

We uphold the principle that the free flow of ideas contributes to the richness of academic and social discourse, regardless of the perspectives presented by invited speakers.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### **Institutional Neutrality**

The University maintains neutrality regarding our community's political, social, and religious views. We uphold our commitment to free speech by ensuring that we hear all viewpoints with respect for the speaker.

### **Restrictions on Unfettered Free Speech**

While our commitment is to protect free speech, there is a need to do so within the law.

We reserve the right to restrict speech that violates the law, engages in defamation, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, or invades privacy. We would do so because we believe we have a lawful basis.

### **Regular Review**

We will review this Code annually to ensure it continues to reflect the University's commitment to free speech within the law.

## Procedures when Organising Meetings, Events and Other Activities

### **Principles of Access**

Our commitment is to prevent inappropriate restrictions on access to our premises based on individuals' or groups' ideas, opinions, policies, or objectives.

All arrangements concerning providing University premises for speaker events will uphold this principle.

### **Scope of the Procedures when Organising Meetings, Events and Other Activities Related to the Academic Life of the University**

The scope of the procedures for organising meetings, events, and other activities is broad in terms of the University's academic life.

The Code is not limited to external and visiting speakers or events. The Code applies to the procedures to be followed by staff and students when organising any activities related to the academic life of the University, whether those activities occur on or off campus or online.

The Code does not extend to organising other activities that are social in nature and unrelated to the academic life of the University.



## **Code of Practice on Free Speech**

### **Regulation of Event Spaces**

While promoting an open platform, the University reserves the right to reasonably and proportionately regulate the use of its premises for events.

Such regulation may consider the suitability of specific venues and times for events, ensuring alignment with the University's operational needs and values without compromising free speech.

We will explore alternative arrangements in situations where the nature of an event might disrupt campus harmony (e.g., booking spaces next to sensitive areas). It ensures freedom of speech while respecting the diverse makeup of the University community.

### **Non-Cancellation**

Exposure to a broad spectrum of views is essential to academic excellence and informed citizenship.

We will not cancel events simply because of objection or protest against the lawful expression of viewpoints through free speech.

Should there be significant objections to a planned event based on the expressed viewpoints, the University will seek resolutions that avoid cancellation while respecting the free speech rights of all community members. The University may, where appropriate, arrange a meeting, event, or other activity at a different time, date, or venue.

### **Supportive Measures**

When there is an expectation that the focus or content of an event will address controversial or contested views, we will explore measures to support potentially affected attendees rather than restrict discussion. It might include providing access to counselling services or organising follow-up discussions to address concerns.

### **Free Speech and Personal Safety**

The University's commitment is to preserve free speech and academic freedom while taking necessary measures to ensure personal safety.

### **Point of Contact**

Governance and Legal Services is the University's Point of Contact for questions about the process relating to speaker events. You can make contact by emailing [freespeech@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:freespeech@canterbury.ac.uk).

### **University Free Speech Complaints Scheme**

The University adopted a Free Speech Complaints Scheme, outlined in this Code.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Procedures for Organising Events with External and Visiting Speakers

#### External and Visiting Speakers

**External Speaker:** An external speaker is someone unaffiliated with the University who can provide expertise, perspectives, or knowledge unavailable within the University. External speakers usually participate in a one-off event. It does not include a person who wanted or requested an invitation to speak but was not invited.

**Visiting Speaker:** A visiting speaker is a person with a temporary but more engaged role than an external speaker who might be involved in a series of lectures, workshops, or extended engagements rather than a single presentation. Visiting speakers might have a more extended and interactive role with their audience. Visiting speakers might also participate in other activities, such as mentoring or collaborative research, during their visit.

#### Importance of Event Organisation to Secure Free Speech

A well-planned event involving an external or visiting speaker is essential in securing free speech. It applies not only to special events, such as public lectures, with an external or visiting speaker where members of the public may attend. It extends to events where external or visiting speakers participate as a part of a course or module provision and staff development activities.

#### Principal Organiser

The University adopts the principle that, for each event, there is to be a Principal Organiser responsible for organising an event with one or more external or visiting speakers.

To support Principal Organisers in their work, we provide:

- (a) A role description of the Principal Organiser
- (b) Guidance for organising events, including planning and managing events that may provoke controversy
- (c) Training to support Principal Organisers in their work.

#### Planning Speaker Events and Due Diligence

In planning events, Principal Organisers must consider how they align with the principles of free speech.

Principal Organisers must submit a brief outlining the event's purpose, nature, and expected outcomes four weeks in advance, including undertaking due diligence on proposed speakers.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

Where there is a need to organise an event with less than four weeks' notice, the Principal Organiser must contact [insert contact details] immediately.

The Principal Organisers must identify events that may provoke controversy as part of the due diligence process.

We provide Guidance for Principal Organisers on the due diligence process.

### **Management of Events that May Provoke Controversy**

There is a need to identify events that may provoke controversy because securing free speech requires more detailed planning.

There is a need for the Principal Organiser to

- (a) Seek agreement for the event before inviting the external or visiting speaker.
- (b) Engage with central Professional Support services as part of the organisation of the event.
- (c) undertake a risk assessment, setting out the arrangements for mitigating potential risks associated with such events.
- (d) Ensure the event proceeds in a manner that is respectful to the free speech rights of all parties involved.
- (e) Comply with this Code and University Guidance on Organising Events where an External or Visiting Speaker holds Contested or Controversial Views to secure free speech.

### **Review of Events where an External or Visiting Speaker holds Contested or Controversial Views**

The starting point for any event is that it should go ahead and that withholding agreement or cancellation is exceptional and undesirable.

The purpose of the review process is to consider the risks identified by the Principal Organiser and to ensure the steps are in place to enable the event to proceed.

Governance and Legal Services undertakes the review and has the authority to consult with other members of the University besides the Principal Organiser, where deemed appropriate.

Ensuring that decisions are compatible with the duties relating to free speech is essential in reviewing event planning. It entails evaluating how decisions might directly or indirectly influence freedom of speech, positively or negatively.

Governance and Legal Services will consider the request based on reviewing and assessing its compatibility with statutory free speech duties. Governance and Legal Services will record the decision with a rationale, especially where compromising is necessary to balance free speech with other competing interests or concerns.

Where issues concerning the external or visiting speaker relate to the Prevent duty, Governance and Legal Services will escalate the matter further to the OfS Prevent Lead following consultation

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

with the Head of Safeguarding. The Prevent duty escalation process will form the basis of the process.

A Principal Organiser dissatisfied with the University's decision may appeal by submitting a written request within 14 days of the decision. Appeals will be on the grounds of

- Procedural fairness and/or
- Provision of relevant, fresh evidence not available at the time of the initial decision.

A Senior Management Team member without previous engagement in the matter will consider the appeal.

The approval and appeal process will not take longer than necessary to ensure the orderly organisation of the event.

### Free Speech and the Management of Events and Activities

Principal Organisers must arrange activities that respect the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom in this Code. It includes ensuring the expression of diverse viewpoints in a respectful and non-threatening environment.

Principal Organisers must manage the participants' conduct and address any issues that may arise during the activity that could impede free speech.

### Post-Activity Review

The Principal Organiser should conduct a review following the activity to evaluate its adherence to this policy and to identify lessons learned for the planning of future events.

Feedback from participants should be part of this review.

### Learning from Concerns

When concerns arise about freedom of speech and academic freedom, we address them in the planning stage. In addition, we incorporate any lessons learned when we review relevant policies, practices, and procedures.

We provide a Guide to Raising Concerns about Free Speech.

## **Code of Practice on Free Speech**

### **Expected Conduct for Freedom of Speech Within the Law**

#### **Upholding Freedom of Speech Across the University**

All constituent parts of the University, including academic and administrative staff, students, and visiting speakers, are to uphold this value of freedom of speech across all its activities.

The University provides platforms and opportunities to express diverse viewpoints and protect individuals' rights to engage in free speech.

#### **Right to Freedom of Speech Within the Law**

The University emphasises the very high level of protection for the lawful expression of viewpoints. This protection is crucial for an environment where scholarly inquiry, debate, and the dissemination of knowledge can thrive.

Everyone, including students, staff, and visiting speakers, may exercise free speech. It enables individuals to express freely their thoughts, ideas, and opinions, contributing to dialogue.

However, accompanying this right is the responsibility to ensure that such expressions are within the law.

#### **Respectful Dialogue**

The University expects all members to engage in discussions with respect and civility.

The right to free expression does not include conduct that disrupts, obstructs, or otherwise impedes the lawful expressions of others. We will not tolerate personal attacks, harassment, or behaviour that violates the dignity of others when expressing free speech.

#### **Responsibility for Exercising Freedom of Speech with the Law**

While advocating for the broadest possible freedom of expression, we emphasise that free speech comes with responsibilities.

Specifically, individuals, including visiting speakers, exercising their right to speak must ensure their expressions do not infringe the law. We will hold the speaker accountable for their actions when speech crosses these boundaries.

Our support for freedom of speech does not extend to endorsing or protecting illegal activities.

We unequivocally condemn unlawful discrimination against someone because these characteristics have protection under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These characteristics have a common designation as protected characteristics, and individuals with these characteristics must not subject others to discrimination or harassment while exercising freedom of speech.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Commitment to Diversity of Views

Exposing staff and students to diverse viewpoints creates an environment ripe for learning, critical thinking, and meaningful dialogue.

This diversity is not just a goal but a commitment to fostering understanding and growth across our entire community.

### Inclusivity of Offensive Speech Within Legal Bounds

Recognising that freedom of speech may include speech that some find offensive or controversial, the University affirms its commitment to protecting lawful expression while fostering a culture of respect and understanding.

### Obstructive Behaviour

No one in the University is to take any action aimed at obstructing or complicating the organisation, execution, or promotion of a meeting, event, or other activity because of:

- The topics planned for discussion or
- The statements, beliefs, or opinions expressed or held by anyone involved in organising or taking part in the event, including those of visiting speakers.

Prohibited actions include:

- Preventing or hindering the meeting, event, or other activity from happening.
- Rendering the meeting, event or other activity impossible or impracticable to hold or more difficult or expensive to organise or publicise.
- Knowingly making misrepresentations or exaggerated claims of the likely negative consequences of holding an event, for instance, making claims of likely violent protest unsupported by credible evidence.
- Acting on such misrepresentations or exaggerated claims, knowing they are misrepresentations or exaggerated.
- Threatening violent protest or other adverse consequences concerning the holding of the event, other than a protest exercised as free speech within the law.

We will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent obstructive behaviour, including starting and utilising staff or student disciplinary procedures when appropriate.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Role of Protest in Free Speech

Protest plays a crucial role in free speech, offering an avenue for highlighting societal issues and contributing to public discourse.

However, it is paramount that protest, as a form of expression, does not obstruct or shut down the exchange of ideas through free speech.

Conducting protests must allow for the continuation of debate and dialogue in the interests of free speech.

## Criterion for Passing on Security Costs for Events

### Security Costs

The University will ensure that, apart from in exceptional circumstances, use of its premises by any individual or body is not on terms that require the individual or body to bear some or all of the costs of security relating to their use of the premises.

The Policy on Handling Security Costs for Events outlines our approach to security costs.

### Criterion for Exceptional Circumstances

We established a criterion to determine the elements of exceptional circumstances in which we may impose the security costs on the event's organiser(s).

Our criterion is that the University will absorb the first £1,750 of security costs. The event organisers must fund the balance above £1,750.

### Rare Application

The financial responsibility for security should not routinely fall on event organisers.

### Objectivity and Neutrality

Arrangements for assessing security costs and determining exceptional circumstances must be clear, objective, and neutral.

The assessment will not consider:

- The ideas or opinions of any individual involved in the event.
- The policies, objectives, or the ideas or opinions of any members of an organising body.
- The content of the ideas or opinions for presentation at the event.

### Uniform Policy Application

We have developed a policy that ensures a uniform approach to the passing on of security costs. It is to provide fair and equitable treatment of all events and activities irrespective of the subject and organiser(s).

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### **Transparency and Process for Appeal**

We will provide organisers with a detailed written summary of the expected security costs and an explanation of the calculations made.

We will advise and support the event organiser(s) to enable the event to proceed within the cost limits with mutually agreed adjustments.

Our policy includes provisions for an appeal process, allowing for a review of the security cost assessment.

The Policy on Handling Security Costs for Events sets out the details of the review and appeals process.

## Codes of Conduct and Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

### **Codes of Conduct and Free Speech**

Codes of conduct that regulate or potentially regulate speech, including but not limited to policies on harmful speech, must:

- Define restricted categories of speech in a manner that does not infringe upon lawful freedom of speech or academic freedom.
- Include an objective component in their definition to ensure interpretations do not solely rely on the perception of the individual alleging harm.

We review and, where necessary, revise Codes of Conduct and other documentation to ensure they are not unduly burdensome and do not unjustly restrict lawful free speech.

### **Breadth of Terms**

The language and terms used in any code, contract, or policy must avoid excessive breadth that could suppress the lawful expression of specific viewpoints or a broad spectrum of legally permissible content.

### **Misrepresentation of Legal Duties**

Policies must not deter lawful free speech by inaccurately representing the University's legal responsibilities. It includes avoiding oversimplifications that may neglect the importance of free speech rights.



## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Protests, Demonstrations, and Distribution of Materials

Policies regulating protests, demonstrations, written materials distribution, or recruitment must not impose restrictions based on the expression or support of particular lawful viewpoints.

## Research

### Scope of Freedom

Staff and students may pursue academic research freely within the confines of the law.

This principle maintains that academic inquiry and pursuing knowledge should be free from fear of censorship or reprisal, regardless of the findings or the perspectives they may support.

### Internal Policies and Values

Any perceived or actual conflicts between the research outcomes or supported viewpoints and the University's policies or core values should not hinder or influence research activities.

The integrity of the research process and its conclusions need protection from compromise or limitation imposed by internal governance, ethical stances, or institutional preferences.

### External Pressures

The University will defend the independence of academic research against any external pressures that seek to influence, alter, or suppress research findings because of their potential implications or the viewpoints they advocate.

External influences encompass but are not limited to political, commercial, societal, or international pressures that may attempt to sway the direction or outcomes of academic inquiry.

### Implementation of Protections

The University will take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the freedom of speech and academic freedom in research.

These measures should ensure an environment where academic work can proceed unimpeded by the abovementioned concerns. These include, but are not limited to, policy development, awareness-raising, advocacy, and establishing clear guidelines and support mechanisms for researchers facing potential infringements of their academic freedom.

## **Code of Practice on Free Speech**

### **University Arrangements for Free Speech Complaints and Concerns**

#### **University Free Speech Complaints Scheme**

We have a Free Speech Complaints Scheme, which outlines the arrangements we adopted to handle free speech complaints.

The aim is to facilitate a respectful, equitable, and timely resolution of free speech complaints while upholding the principle of free speech and lawful expression of opinions.

#### **Who can make a free speech complaint?**

An eligible person can make a free speech complaint, which we define as:

- Current students and former students where the matter complained about occurred when registered at the University.
- Current staff members and former staff where the matter complained about occurred when employed at the University.
- Individuals who were, or invited, to be external and visiting speakers at the University; it does not include a person who wanted or requested an invitation to speak but was not invited.

#### **Definition of a Free Speech Complaint**

A free speech complaint is a complaint made by an eligible person who:

- Claims that the person making the complaint has suffered adverse consequences (which need not be financial) as a result of an action or inaction of the University; and
- Claims that (or give rise to a) question whether the action or inaction was a breach of the University's free speech duty.

#### **Prompt Process Resolution**

The University will seek the resolution of a free speech complaint as expediently as possible, consistent with ensuring fairness and justice.

The Procedure sets out the steps we would take to ensure timely resolution.

#### **Principles of Impartiality and Fairness**

We will address free speech complaints impartially, fairly and without bias. By addressing complaints impartially, we evaluate each complaint based solely on the facts presented, favouring no party or allowing external influences to affect judgment.

The Procedure outlines the procedures to maintain objectivity and avoid conflicts of interest.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Restriction on Vexations or Frivolous Complaints

The University will not engage in or encourage free speech complaints without substantial merit or would represent investigations into inconsequential matters, particularly if the lawful expression of opinions motivates such complaints.

The Procedure demarcates the bounds of acceptable complaints and investigations, firmly excluding actions based on the lawful articulation of viewpoints.

### Free Speech Concerns

Raising concerns about freedom of speech and academic freedom, particularly involving an external speaker, is a means of exercising the freedom of speech within the law. Therefore, we support raising concerns, which we distinguish from a free speech complaint.

However, raising concerns requires a careful balance between respecting freedom of speech and academic freedom and addressing the concerns raised. Therefore, we provide a Guide to Raising Concerns about Free Speech.

## Training and Induction

### Provision of Training and Induction

Staff engaged in decision-making processes, including admissions, appointments, disciplinary actions, and policy development, undergo training in free speech.

This training aims to provide staff with an understanding of the University's Code of Practice and relevant legal frameworks.

### Induction for Staff and Students

We will offer staff and students an induction in freedom of speech and academic freedom.

The induction establishes a foundation for understanding the need to accept diverse opinions to support free speech principles.

### Prohibition of Endorsement Requirements

Consistent with our commitment to fostering a balanced and inclusive academic environment, we prohibit training or induction activities that force participants to agree with controversial viewpoints or value judgments.

Educational materials and activities must encourage critical thinking and open discussion rather than ideological conformity.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

### Review of the Code's Effectiveness

The Free Speech Oversight Board will review and recommend policy updates, particularly the Code of Practice on Free Speech, to ensure they align with our commitment to free speech and the legal and regulatory requirements. It includes implementing necessary modifications to address issues arising from its implementation, new challenges, or regulatory changes. The Board approves guidelines for planning university events and activities that adhere to commitments to free speech and any updates.

It oversees the development and implementation of educational and training initiatives focused on free speech for staff and students, academic freedom for academic staff, and the arrangements for resolving complaints and concerns related to potential breaches of the Code.

The Board serves an advisory role to the Senior Management Team and Governing Body on matters related to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Each year, the Board prepares and approves an annual report highlighting the state of free speech within the University and the Code's continued relevance and effectiveness, documenting significant activities, trends, and operational procedures.

## Code of Practice on Free Speech

Document information	Description of document information
<b>Document title</b>	Code of Practice on Free Speech
<b>Department owner</b>	Governance and Legal Services
<b>Document category</b>	<b>Academic</b> - Documents directly affecting research, assessment or teaching within the University <b>Administrative practice</b> - Documents of an administrative or operational nature <b>Equality and diversity</b> - Documents relating to the promotion of equality and diversity <b>Ethics and compliance</b> - Documents concerning appropriate conduct or compliance with legal or regulatory requirements <b>Governance</b> - Documents relating to the governance of the University <b>Human resources</b> - Documents impacting working relationships with the University for members of staff irrespective of status <b>Students</b> - documents directly affecting student life at the University
<b>Document owner</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Document manager</b>	University Solicitor
<b>Related University policies</b>	<a href="#">University's Articles of Association</a>
<b>Related University procedures</b>	Free Speech Oversight Board Guidance for Principal Organisers on the due diligence process University Guidance on Organising Events where an External or Visiting Speaker Holds Contested or Controversial Views Prevent duty escalation process Free Speech Complaints Scheme Guide to Raising Concerns about Free Speech
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## Code of Practice on Free Speech

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<b>History of revisions of the document</b>	1.0 Governing Body 25 June 2024  1.1 Senior Management Team 19 November 2024 following the pausing of implementing the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023  1.2 Extended by the Governing Body for a further year, June 2025
<b>Web address</b>	<a href="#">Code of practice on free speech - Canterbury Christ Church University</a>