

## List of areas for consideration by the Potentially Sensitive Events Group

*To be included in the paperwork for all PSE Group meetings.*

**Important: the University and YSU must not interfere with free speech or academic freedom any more than is necessary to ensure an event goes ahead safely and within the law (OfS Regulatory Advice 24, paragraph 35).**

Within the context of the relevant legislation and University policy:

- Is it lawful to proceed with the event?

The OfS advises that organisers who invite speakers they expect may use the event to break the law, may fall foul of the law themselves (OfS Regulatory Advice 24, paragraph 180c). If the PSE Group considers that this may be the case, it should advise the organisers of this possibility.
- Are there any concerns based on views expressed online or through social media?
- Has a satisfactory risk assessment taken place for the event?
- Management of the event:
  - Who will introduce/chair the event? Do they have sufficient independence and experience to ensure that dialogue remains respectful and fair, difficult content is signalled, and a range of views are heard? Are they able to withstand criticism inside and outside the event? [Guidance on Chairing a Potentially Sensitive Event](#) is available from the GAO.
  - Which senior member of the University (normally a member of UEB or their nominee) will be present at the event?
  - Have all contributors been made aware of the University's [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#) and that any event must take place within the provisions of this policy? (this is standard University practice)
  - Is the venue accessible to all invitees i.e enabling them to participate?
  - Are there arguments for allowing/not allowing recording of the event (visual and/or audio; official and/or informal), or specifying particular conditions (e.g. venue; categories of attendees)? How will arrangements be communicated and enforced? If recording is to be allowed, has permission been sought from any invited speakers (internal and/or external)? How will other attendees/contributors be notified and their consent gained?
- Is there a likelihood of protest and/or disruption?

(Considerations: venue: location, capacity, notification; engagement with possible protestors in advance; designated protest areas; security arrangements for all parties; implications of any parallel meetings; restricted ticketing and door checks; reviewing information on attendees/ data protection; threshold for termination of the event; police involvement)
- Is there a need to reach out to:
  - Support staff and students (including societies/networks) who may feel unsettled by the Visiting Speaker's invitation, before, during and after the event?
  - Colleagues where the event could have implications for their academic activity so that relationship management can be pursued as necessary?If so, how will the above be undertaken?
- External communications
  - Has advice been sought from External Relations on publicising the event? Is there a need for particular care in the use of language?

- What steps have been taken to monitor/manage media fallout (including social media) before and after the event?
- What steps have been taken to manage official University statements/responses, including in response to any internal/external complaints, before and after the event?
- Has the VC's Office been informed?

The [Advance HE Freedom of speech and academic freedom: activities and events checklist](#) (May 2024) is a useful point of reference.