

## Visiting speaker code of conduct

This should be provided to all visiting speakers BEFORE an event, alongside any further information, including the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and Visiting Speaker Policy.

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. This code of conduct exists to ensure all speakers taking part in any event, lecture or activity hosted or run by Walbrook, whether in person (on campus or elsewhere) or in digital form, act in accordance with Walbrook's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice, Visiting Speaker policy and the Prevent duty.
- 1.2. This Code of Conduct aligns with Walbrook's obligations under the Education Act 1986, the Prevent Duty, and the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. It is also informed by the guidance issued by the Office for Students (Regulatory Advice 24), which sets clear expectations for higher education institutions to secure and promote freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law.

### 2 Conduct

- 2.1 Walbrook expects visiting speakers to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others.
- 2.2 In line with the principle of academic freedom, visiting speakers are entitled to express lawful views, including those that challenge received wisdom or prevailing norms, without fear of being silenced or penalised.
- 2.3 Walbrook is committed not only to protecting but to actively promoting freedom of speech within the law. This includes welcoming diverse perspectives, even those that may be controversial or unpopular, provided they are expressed lawfully. Visiting speakers are encouraged to participate in open, respectful debate and contribute to the academic and intellectual development of our community.
- 2.4 Walbrook reserves the right to not permit a visiting speaker to speak at or attend an event, to refuse to permit an event and / or to halt an event at any time if it reasonably considers there may be a breach of the freedom of speech and visiting speaker policy or of any legal obligation.
- 2.5 Set out below are some examples of Walbrook's expectations. These examples aren't intended to be an exhaustive list of unacceptable conduct by visiting speakers.
- 2.6 During the event at which they participate, no speaker shall
  - I. act in breach of criminal law
  - II. incite hatred or violence or any breach of criminal law

- III. encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism
  - IV. spread hatred and intolerance
  - V. discriminate against or harass any person or group on the grounds of their sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religious or other similar belief, sexual orientation or age
  - VI. defame any person or organisation
  - VII. raise or gather funds for any visiting organisation or cause without express permission of Walbrook.
- 2.7 During the event at which they participate, all speakers shall
- I. comply with Walbrook's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and Visiting Speaker Policy
  - II. present ideas and opinions, those that may be contentious or potentially offensive, in the spirit of academic debate, i.e., being open to challenge and question
  - III. follow Walbrook's policy on and instructions relating to health and safety, the Prevent duty, and equality and diversity.

### **3 Legal context**

- 3.1 Higher Education Providers operate in a complex legal environment and so it's vital that all individuals involved in the visiting speaker process, including the speakers themselves, understand the legal framework and context that governs this area. Examples of some of the relevant areas of law are given below.
- I. Private rights. People are entitled to protection from harassment, defamation and unlawful breach of their human rights, as well as from unfair treatment under equality law. Health and safety law, data-protection, and contract law may also be relevant in this context.
  - II. Criminal law. Hate crimes, harassment, breach of the peace, and terrorism all come under criminal law. There's also legislation around public meetings, public processions/assemblies, and public order which may be of relevance.
  - III. Public law. Freedom of speech and some duties under the Equality Act are captured under public law.
- 3.2 Walbrook retains the right to share information about visiting speakers with other institutions where legal and appropriate (including, but not limited to, the police or other higher education providers). In these incidences, Walbrook will consider each case on its facts and risks to maintain an appropriate balance.

## 4 Inclusivity

- 4.1 Higher Education Providers have duties under the Equality Act 2010 as education providers, employers, and service providers. They mustn't unlawfully discriminate against students, employees, and other individuals to whom services are provided.
- 4.2 Inclusivity should be at the heart of all academic meetings, events, lectures or meetings provided for students, and at events attended by members of the public or employees of the university. Usually, attendance at these events will be open to anyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. However, there may be exceptions, for example, events that are for the purpose of collective religious worship or events held in countries that insist on segregation.

## 5 Complaints and appeals

- 5.1 If a visiting speaker believes that their freedom of speech has been unjustly restricted, they may raise a concern through Walbrook's internal complaints procedure. If unsatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate their complaint to the Office for Students (OfS) under its statutory complaints scheme.

## 6 Oversight and Transparency

- 6.1 This Code of Conduct is overseen by the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, who ensures its consistent application. A summary of speaker-related decisions and complaints is reviewed to maintain transparency and accountability.

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