WALBROOK
Institute London

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 applies the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, OfS Regulatory Advice 24 as updated on 5 August 2026 and the Prevent duty.

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 may impose proportionate, evidenced conditions or refuse or stop an event where required by law or necessary to address a substantiated risk, after considering reasonably practicable steps to secure lawful speech. The decision and reasons will be recorded under the Visiting Speaker Policy.

2.5 Set out below are some examples of Walbrook's expectations. These examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list of unacceptable conduct by visiting speakers.

2.6 During the event at which they participate, no speaker shall:

(a) act in breach of criminal law;

(b) incite hatred, violence or any breach of criminal law;

(c) encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism;

(d) engage in conduct that constitutes unlawful harassment or intimidation;

(e) discriminate against or harass any person or group by reference to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;

(f) defame any person or organisation;

(g) 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:

(a) comply with Walbrook's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and Visiting Speaker Policy;

(b) present ideas and opinions, including those that may be contentious or potentially offensive, in the spirit of academic debate, remaining open to challenge and question;

(c) follow Walbrook's policy on and instructions relating to health and safety, the Prevent duty, and equality and diversity;

(d) promptly report safeguarding concerns to safeguarding@walbrook.ac.uk and concerns about radicalisation or terrorism to the Prevent Lead through the route in the Prevent Policy; where both arise, notify both officers. Call 999 where there is immediate danger.

3. Legal context

3.1 Higher education providers operate in a complex legal environment and so it is 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.

(a) 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.

(b) Criminal law. Hate crimes, harassment, breach of the peace, and terrorism all come under criminal law. There is also legislation around public meetings, public processions/assemblies, and public order which may be of relevance.

(c) 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 instances, 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 must not unlawfully discriminate against students, employees, and other individuals to whom services are provided.

4.2 Attendance at Walbrook events will ordinarily be open without unlawful discrimination. Any proposed exception, including an event involving separate attendance arrangements, requires advance review by the Chief Operating Officer, with recorded legal and equality reasons, and approval by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive.

5. Complaints and appeals

5.1 An actual or invited visiting speaker may use Walbrook's internal complaints route and, if eligible, complain to the OfS free speech complaints scheme in accordance with its published rules, which took effect on 1 September 2026 and are not retrospective. The organiser must provide a link to the OfS scheme information.

6. Oversight and Transparency

6.1 The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) provides management assurance on this Code and is responsible for escalation. Decisions and complaints under this Code are reported within the annual Visiting Speaker and Freedom of Speech Report, prepared by the Chief Governance Officer. The Safeguarding and Prevent Group scrutinises Prevent-related matters, recommends to SLG under its terms of reference, and escalates material concerns immediately.

7. Document Control

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