

**Board of Trustees**  
**January 2015**

### **Policy on Visiting/External Speakers to CUSU**

At the current time CUSU has a procedure for handling External Speakers but no policy. CUSU is aware that other students' unions are being visited by the Charities Commission to check their 'External Speakers' policy and this paper aims to address this deficit.

### **CUSUs' Existing Commitments**

CUSU acknowledges the obligations to uphold freedom of speech within Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986. To comply with its statutory obligations, it has embodied the code of practice laid down by the as Bye Laws N of the Articles of Association which states:

'CUSU has a duty to ensure that all members, formally recognised societies and groups of members have the right to the freedom of speech within CUSU as far as reasonable within the law and they shall not be denied any facilities or entitlement on the grounds of their beliefs.' The executive 'shall deny the use of its premises...' to a group where such use is contrary to criminal law. CUSU BOT and the university will be informed of this.

The Executive may deny use of facilities where:

- The speaker may inspire criminal activity
- The event supports an unlawful organisation
- It leaves CUSU open for damages / breaks commitment health and safety
- The event may lead to injury /damage to property / breach of peace
- Where CUSU has been misled as to the nature of the event

It is also noted that one of the objects of CUSU shall be:

To actively promote equality of opportunity, access and good relations amongst its members, and employees, regardless of ethnic or national origin, colour, gender, sexuality, disability or illness, age, cultural, political and religious beliefs, or caring responsibilities.

That the university has developed a policy on external speakers in conjunction with CUSU, namely 'Faith on Campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy' (appendix B). Specifically relevant are highlighted in red.

### **Proposal**

That the Board of Trustees accepts the paper in appendix A: 'Coventry University Students Union - External Speakers Policy & Guidance'.

**Paul Burt**  
**24<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

## **Appendix A**

### **Coventry University Students Union - External Speakers Policy & Guidance**

1. Freedom of expression and speech are basic human rights to be protected and are protected by law. CUSU is bound by its Articles of Association (specifically Bye Law N) on Freedom of Speech which defines these protections and their application.
2. Open debate is central to the culture of academic freedom, the development of students ideas and understanding and is protected by an act of parliament relating to freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus. CUSU encourages dialogue and greater understanding across the whole student community
3. Student safety and welfare is at the heart of the CUSU's policies and practices.
4. The freedom to express views can sometimes be tempered by the need to secure freedom from harm for students and communities.
5. CUSU believes that proselytising by any group is not allowed on campus. Within the context of this policy, proselytising is taken to mean 'the practice of an external third party by preaching, agitating or cajoling to persuading an individual into accepting a particular way of thinking and acting, whilst in some way insinuating that they are a part of the university'. Where there is a potential for the rights of freedom of speech to come into conflict in relation to controversial speakers, CUSU is committed to collaboration that will allow it to reach sound, evidenced judgements about the organisation or person in question and that allows the union to meet its various legal obligations.
6. The Committee of the club/society organising any event are responsible for the activities that take place within their events.
7. All speakers will be made aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, the university and the union's various policies, including that:
  - They must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law
  - They are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
  - They must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
  - Within a framework of positive debate and challenge seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups
  - They are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the Executive Committee.

### **Background**

8. Clubs and Societies must notify the Union of any events that involve external speakers (defined as individuals or organisations that are not part of CUSU or Coventry University) through these procedures.
9. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised until the speaker has been cleared through the appropriate procedures as provided in this policy.
10. The Union reserves the right to cancel or prohibit any event if the procedures provided herein, and in related policies, are not followed or if the relevant health, safety and security criteria cannot be met.
11. The Union reserves the right to deny a platform to racist and fascist individuals and organisations that are proscribed by appropriate bodies (e.g. the University, HEFCE, ECU, Home Office) in line with its no

platform policy. Individuals and members of organisations that fall within the no platform policy and where this judgement is made the event will automatically not be approved.

### **Initial process**

12. The Union's 'External Speaker Request form' requires event organisers to provide, with at least 28 days notice.

13. Any failure to disclose full speaker details or adhere to the defined time periods may result in an event/booking being cancelled and could result in referral for union disciplinary action.

14. On receipt of the form the Sports and Societies Staff will check all speakers. This information is then noted on the booking form including a link to the most relevant information about the speaker. The Sports and Societies Staff will receive regular training and briefing on controversial speakers and will liaise closely with student clubs, societies, religious and cultural groups and University security.

15. The Membership Services Manager will review the completed sheet. He/she will refer any speakers to the General Manager, Chair of Executive Committee and/or the Director of Student Services. They will provide the most relevant information for any speakers that are a cause for concern.

### **Referred speakers**

16. Any events with referred speakers will be investigated by the General Manager, or their representative, for decision by the Chair of Executive Committee on behalf of the Trustee Board.

17. They will conduct a short investigation into the speaker and the event that, wherever possible, takes representations from the students club/society related to the booking and from any number of concerned student groups, university officials and external bodies.

18. In making recommendations they will assess risk on the following basis:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech as per the university's code of practice in pursuance of the 1986 Education Act
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause the union to be in breach of its Articles of Association including its Freedom of Speech policy and its Equal Opportunities policy
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause the union to fail in its wider legal duties
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputational risk to the Union
- The potential for the speaker's presence on campus to cause fear or alarm to members of the student body
- The potential for the speaker's presence on campus to give rise to breach of peace

19. They may make one of the following recommendations

- On the basis of the risks presented to not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead
- On the basis of the risks presented to fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted
- On the basis of the risks presented to permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk

20. Regulatory steps designed to reduce risk may include:

- Requiring that the event be filmed by an independent body
- Requiring that the event be observed by union, university or third party officials
- Requiring that the event be stewarded or subject to security on the door

- Requiring that an event promoting a particular view includes an opportunity to debate or challenge that view
- Requiring that an event closed to club/society members only be opened to all members of the union
- Requiring that a copy of any speech to be delivered by the speaker be submitted to the union
- Requiring that the location or time of the event is changed
- Requiring that the event has an independent chair

21. When considering any regulatory steps designed to reduce risk, their potential to in and of themselves cause risk (for example, the sense of oppression felt by the imposition of security on the door) should be taken into account.

22. The recommendation will be put to the Chair of Executive Committee who will make a decision that is routinely communicated to the Board of Trustees. Where members of the Board of Trustees disagree with the decision they can call an extraordinary meeting.

23. Where the club / society in question disagrees with the decision made they shall have the right to appeal which will be considered by the Chair of Executive.

24. Where students or student groups disagree with the decision made they shall have the right to submit a complaint in the usual way, a remedy to which shall be the option to consider the complaint an appeal as above.

25. An annual report on referred speakers will be produced by the Chair of Executive Committee for the Board of Trustees.

26. All room bookings with an external speaker on University premises (including the Students' Union) will, following the above process, also need to be approved by the Director of Student Services in line with any policies and procedures that they have in place (specifically 'Faith on Campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy').

27. All room bookings with an external speaker will also be bound by the general room booking regulations and opening times for the particular building involved. These can be found on the room booking form.

## **Appendix B Coventry University**

# **Faith on Campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy**

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### **Purpose of the Policy**

This document seeks to provide consistent, open and University-wide guidance about accepted religious presence across the campus, drawing together existing principles observed by the University, Students' Union and the Spirituality and Faith Centre. This information is for all students, staff and visitors and explains expected standards of conduct and behaviour. It also outlines a formal response to the presence of unauthorised external religious groups within University buildings and on the campus itself.

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### **Overview**

This policy document signposts good practice vis a vis the presence and observation of faith across campus. It details conditions of work and of conduct for university chaplains, provides guidance for dealing with the

unauthorised presence on campus of external religious bodies, and finally outlines the close working relationship between the Students' Union and student faith societies.

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## **Introduction**

As the winner of 'Modern University of the Year 2014', Coventry University recruits students from across the UK and around the world. It is a dynamic institution where people of many different faiths and no faith at all, as well as diverse cultures, come together to study and work as part of a wider academic community.

As part of the wider support services, the Spirituality and Faith Centre (hereafter SFC) sees this diversity as a wonderful opportunity rather than a difficulty to build and work on an informed and welcoming environment founded on trust, dialogue, openness and mutual respect. Recognising the centrality of faith and culture to student identity and formation, the University receives Chaplains from across different religions and denominations to act as a resource for guidance, advice and information both within and beyond the University. Chaplains agree to work in accordance with the institution's policies of Equality and Diversity and Dignity and Respect as part of a team of faith practitioners.

Whilst recognising that all of us want to be understood and respected and perhaps even strive to encourage others to see things from our own perspective, those appointed to serve in the team of Chaplains will seek to embody a non-proselytising approach to their pastoral support. This is in order to create a space where the student experience can be enhanced, staff supported, and matters of faith and philosophy be openly discussed without intimidation or pressure whilst showing respect and courtesy for each other.

In order to facilitate a safe campus where academic freedoms are respected and faith can be comfortably practised and courteously discussed, the following codes of conduct are proposed for all Chaplains appointed to the SFC. Furthermore these procedures will apply when authorising any visits by external faith organisations. It is also hoped that this document will serve as guidance to the Students' Union faith societies, alongside the SU regulations, in their work and activities across the campus.

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## **The Policy**

The University formally appoints and receives chaplains to meet the identified pastoral needs of its wider community. As a chaplain appointed to and received by Coventry University, it is expected that the values in the Code of Conduct (appendix One) will be embodied both in her/his pastoral care and dealings with students and staff. The chaplain should also seek to encourage the values to be central to the ethos of the SFC, faith societies and individuals across the institution.

### (1) External Faith Organisations on Campus

<b>It should be noted by all external bodies that the campus buildings are private property and there is not (nor has ever been) an automatic right of access to those who are not students or staff.</b>
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For students and staff whilst on campus there are a series of policies regarding freedom from harassment, bullying or discrimination to which they are expected to consent and observe. Deliberate breaching of these may have consequences for the individual. For this reason, visitors who may not be familiar with the University requirements are usually accompanied on campus by staff and/or students who are responsible for the actions of their guests.

Finally, the University Charter identifies the institution as a secular institution which means that it has no bias either for or against any religious group, but is driven by the needs identified across its student body and the enhancement of the 'student experience'. Where concerns are identified in these areas the University will, as a matter of urgency, seek consultation and support from the respective sources within the institution listed below to remedy these needs.

#### i. Students' Union, student groups and external speakers

The University and Students' Union seek to encourage dialogue and greater understanding across the whole student community. To promote this, the SU facilitates the establishment of student societies (including those of faith interests) both to educate and encourage students to take a pro-active part in and across the student community. An officially affiliated/registered SU society (formed when 10 current students or more are willing to support such a group) agrees to work within the policies of the SU and is able to book rooms for meetings

and invite external speakers (after submitting a completed external speaker request form to the SU for approval) to address such groups. **For many external religious groups this will often be the first legitimate means of access to University premises by invitation to talk about their beliefs to student societies.**

ii. Spirituality and Faith Centre

The SFC on occasion organises events and lectures to which outside faith bodies may be invited to attend and contribute. They might also be asked to join shared sessions and speak at these. The Chaplains are **always willing to receive information about faith events and activities to which students are invited**. These are usually advertised by the SFC on the third floor of the Hub where the University's faith provisions are based. It is requirement that external faith groups will initially liaise with the SFC team about all such matters. In this way, the SFC will remain informed about all developments. External faith groups can also supply any advertising literature for interested students and staff via the SFC team.

iii. Student Multi-Faith Forum

The Students' Union has initiated a Multi-Faith Forum consisting of sabbatical officers, representatives of student faith societies and Chaplains. Through this forum concerns about religious and cultural issues can be discussed and, if deemed necessary, forwarded to the full Students' Union Council for action and redress

iv. External speakers coming to the campus: procedure

As will be clear from the sections above, a variety of issues can and often are raised by external organisations visiting the campus for the purpose of proselytization<sup>1</sup>; such activities are best focussed in places of worship or the more public spaces of the city, subject of course to the requirements of the law.

Groups that desire to come on campus must therefore, in the first instance:

- submit a written request to the Director of Student Services (or their nominated representative) supplying details of:
  - their planned activities,
  - publicity,
  - venue and
  - number of people involved.
- Furthermore, an explanation needs to be given why this event needs to be run on the University campus.
- This should be done at least four weeks prior to the planned event. This is the same requirement from student societies when they likewise plan events on campus (see attached SU events form).

The Director will then consult with SU, Faculty members (if the event is not in the Hub), Chaplains and Protection Services and will seek to arrive at a response as soon as is possible and convey that to the group in writing.

This is the only accepted procedure for external groups to come onto what is private property. Those that do not follow the procedure and nevertheless come onto campus will be asked to leave the premises immediately by Protection Services.

(2) Summary

- There is no automatic right of access to University buildings by external groups for proselytising purposes (see footnote 1 for definition).
- The University sees the SFC as the first port of contact for external groups regarding the advertising of services, events and sharing of literature.
- Student faith societies, affiliated to the SU and agreeing to its codes and policies, are recognised as the public expression of organised student faith activity. External speakers may be invited by these societies, as they desire, subject to completing the SU external speaker form.
- External faith groups are invited to record their particulars with the Chaplains who will endeavour to make sure that such information is available to all students upon request. They will also seek to inform, and where applicable, involve them in public SFC lectures and events.

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<sup>1</sup> Within the context of this policy, proselytising is taken to mean 'the practice of an external third party by preaching, agitating or cajoling to persuading an individual into accepting a particular way of thinking and acting, whilst in some way insinuating that they are a part of the university'.

- The overall decision about faith activities by external groups on campus and in university premises resides with the Director of Student Services of the University in consultation with the SU and Chaplains in the SFC.
- Unauthorised groups which are on the University campus will be asked to leave immediately by Protection Services and given a letter (attached) explaining briefly the relevant University policy and procedures.
- **This policy is to be applied equally to all external religious groups, without distinction or favour.**

<b>Responsibility of</b>	<i>Chaplaincy</i>
<b>Approval date</b>	
<b>Date of commencement</b>	September 2014
<b>Approved by</b>	
<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates</b>	<a href="http://www.cusu.org/opportunities/societies/setting-up-a-new-society/">http://www.cusu.org/opportunities/societies/setting-up-a-new-society/</a>

## **Appendix 1(to the University paper 'Faith on campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy)**

### **Code of Conduct for all appointed Chaplains**

1. Respect other people's freedom to hold and express their beliefs and convictions, providing they are not in contravention of University policies about harassment, equality and diversity or contrary to the law of the land.
2. Respect the convictions of others about dress, diet and social interaction and not behave in ways which cause needless offence.
3. Facilitate the creation of a learning environment, thus enriching the 'student experience', where all may understand what others actually believe and think, by allowing them to express this in their own words.
4. Work to prevent disagreement leading to hurt and conflict.
5. Create an environment where no one is intimidated or feels threatened because of what they believe or observe.
6. Facilitate in the SFC and across the University conversations about faith and culture that are sensitive, honest and open.
7. That all newly appointed chaplains will be asked to sign a statement of intent to work in accordance with these principles alongside their other colleagues in the SFC (see attached example from Bristol University).

8. Appointment of additional chaplains to the team shall be initiated in response to identified emerging needs within the student body (by the University and Students' Union) and not solely as a result of a request from an external religious group/body.

Working closely with the Student Union, it is to be hoped that the essence of these values would also be encouraged across the student faith societies of the University.

## **Appendix 2 (to the University paper 'Faith on campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy)**

### **Sample of letter to be handed to groups functioning on campus without permission (printed on headed university paper)**

On behalf of the University, this communication is to confirm that the University's buildings are private and that access to the campus and to particular spaces on campus, including the Spirituality and Faith Centre (hereafter SFC), can only be sought by prior agreement with the University, via the Director of Student Services.

Presently, no prior agreement has been reached with the University for representatives of the NAME OF RELIGIOUS GROUP to come to the campus and therefore, you are being asked to leave campus until such a request is formally made, considered and approved.

I would like to confirm that a number of Chaplains work at the University and serve the spiritual needs of staff and students from particular religious groups. At the same time, however, all Chaplains have a working relationship with the University and with one another, formalised through a Multi-Faith agreement, which sets an expectation that they will serve all of the University's students. The Chaplains uphold the principle of the SFC as a space on the campus for those of 'all religions and none' and therefore are seen by students to provide a University-wide service. It is an expectation of students that religious representatives in the SFC fulfil this function and therefore the University does not allow access to this space for third-party religious representatives without prior approval.

Requests for religious representatives or speakers to come into University buildings or on to campus will be considered by the University/Students' Union where there is evidence of student (or staff) need or demand. The usual way for this need to be expressed is through the formation of a student society via the University's Students' Union. This route is important because there is an established relationship between the University and the Students' Union as well as established protocols for the ways in which societies conduct their affairs and the rules by which they are bound. The University will not permit any third party organisation to visit the campus without explicitly agreeing on the purpose and protocol for the visit; the relationship of the visit(s) to the identifiable needs of students must be clear. A student society is the clearest way for like-minded students to express their shared interest and needs. At all times, the University operates within established legal frameworks.

The University would like to confirm that proselytising by any group is not allowed on campus. In summary, unless and until there is evidence of a clear student (or staff) need, that is articulated to the University by the student body and which can be considered by the University, you are requested neither to come to campus nor to use the Spirituality and Faith Centre.

Advice about the forming of a student faith society by enrolled Coventry students can be obtained from the Coventry Students' Union website. <http://www.cusu.org/opportunities/societies/setting-up-a-new-society/>



## Appendix 3(to the University paper 'Faith on campus: A Statement of Principle and Policy)



### EXTERNAL SPEAKER REQUEST FORM

This form must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to your event taking place. You must not confirm anything with your guest speaker until this form has been authorised by the Student Activities Officer.

It is important that you complete all of the sections on this form. If you are unsure about information for any of the sections please check with the Societies Coordinator.

#### **Society details:**

NAME OF SOCIETY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF ORGANISER: \_\_\_\_\_

This must be a member of the exec

CONTACT EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Event details:**

TITLE OF EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONTROVERSY ATTRACTED BY THE SPEAKER OR TOPIC IN THE PAST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(It will not necessarily mean that your event will be cancelled but the information is important for our risk assessment)

DATE OF EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

VENUE/LOCATION OF EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

HAS A BOOKING BEEN MADE WITH THE STUDENTS' UNION/UNIVERSITY: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPECTED NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THE EVENT BE:

- Member only
- By invitation/ticket only
- Open to the general public
- Under 18s

PLEASE PROVIDE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT:

#### **Information about your guest speaker:**

(Failure to disclose full speaker details may result in your event being cancelled)

NAME OF GUEST SPEAKER: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISATION OR BACKGROUND: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT THAT THEY WILL BE DISCUSSING: \_\_\_\_\_

DO THEY HAVE THEIR OWN WEBSITE OR WRITTEN BOOKS: \_\_\_\_\_

DO THEY HAVE ANY AFFILIATIONS (religious/political) \_\_\_\_\_

HOW WILL THEY TRAVEL TO CAMPUS: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT TIME WILL THEY ARRIVE AND DEPART: \_\_\_\_\_

DO THEY HAVE ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS e.g. Security: \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THEY BE ACCOMPANIED BY ANYONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remember:**

You have a responsibility to your members and your guest speaker(s) to ensure that your event takes place in a safe space. Similarly, views must abide by the principles outlined below in order to maintain a productive and safe environment for debate and discussion. If attendees violate these safe space principles they will be asked to leave the event.

Your guest speaker(s) must be made aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, the University and Students' Union's various policies which include:

- They must not incite hatred, violence or call for breaking of the law
- they are not permitted to encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts
- they must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony
- within a framework of positive debate and challenge they must seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups
- they are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the trustees
- no event involving any external speakers may be publicised until the speaker has been approved and your event has been passed by the Event Planning Committee.

The Students' Union reserves the right to cancel or prohibit any event with an external speaker if the procedures provided herein are not followed or if the relevant health, safety and security procedures are not met.

Please sign declaring that you have read and understood all of the points above

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_