

EVENTS AND EXTERNAL SPEAKER GUIDANCE

Guidance on the development of a balanced programme of events

All Event Organisers should be familiar with the requirements of the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, which should be read alongside this guidance document. The Code applies to all events led, hosted or co-hosted by the University, irrespective of their locations, and all events held at premises used by Aberystwyth University Students' Union.

Whilst the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech relates to individual events and the general principal of ensuring freedom of speech within the law, the promotion and harbouring of academic debate and freedom of expression remain cornerstones of the role of higher education institutions within society.

As an example of best practice, Departments and Societies should consider the composition of the full programme of events for each academic year. All events held, and wider programme of events hosted, should promote a wide exchange of views to allow audiences to think critically, challenge and engage with different perspectives. For events relating to a significant or specific topic or subject matter, facilitating a full exchange of contrasting views as part of the same event may prove difficult, however this can be offset by the development of a balanced programme of events hosted by the Department or Society during each academic year.

A balanced programme of events can be achieved through consideration of aspects which may include, but will not be limited to:

- Varied balance of speakers with contrasting views on similar topics.
- Hosting of separate events across the academic year involving speakers who present contrasting viewpoints on the same topic.
- Promotion of audience engagements and exchange of views through means such as opportunities for audience members to ask questions to speakers.
- Consideration for a range of different events focusing on different aspects of a particular subject area.
- Acceptance of feedback from Department or Society members in respect of topics or speakers of interest.
- Consultation with academic colleagues with expertise in the subject area on possible speakers or topics for events.

Failure to provide and host a balanced programme of events may lead to accusations of the Department or Society purporting to support a particular view or cause, which goes against the role of higher education institutions to widen and challenge, rather than narrow, debate.

All Society or Club events that involve someone who isn't an Aberystwyth student or an Aberystwyth staff member should complete a Students' Union speaker form (available on the [Tim Aber Resources Hub](#)). The Students' Union Opportunities Team will then decide on whether the University would consider it 'Notifiable'. All events considered to be 'Notifiable' in accordance with the definition provided in the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, must also follow the process described in the Code.

PROCESS FOR SU EVENT NOTIFICATION:

1. Explore your event idea and create a risk assessment
2. Fill in the online form available from the 'General Forms and Information' dropdown [here](#)
3. The Opportunities team meet each week on Monday to review all submitted forms
4. They will respond to your form as soon as possible, usually within 7 days of submission, to let you know if any further action or consideration is needed.
5. Once all is approved promote your event – don't forget to add it to the [SU Website](#)

Any questions please email Tom (Societies Development Coordinator) – tth35@aber.ac.uk

