

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION POLICY



This document sets out the University's policy in relation to the rights of freedom of expression.

Version	1.1
Executive Sponsor	Deputy Vice Chancellor Engagement
Officer Responsible for Policy/ Procedures	Director of Student and Academic Services Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity General Counsel
Consultation Process	EEG
Date of Approval and Committee and/or Executive Officer	Executive
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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Aston University has a proud record of being a multicultural and diverse community in which staff and students learn from and work with each other in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration. The University promotes the search for knowledge and the questioning of ideas through open debate and investigation.

The freedom to challenge conventional wisdom is an essential part of being a University, even if that process is uncomfortable for those who are being challenged. The University welcomes those who wish to share these values and believes that such an approach provides an important counter to those who try to promote prejudice, hatred or incite violence.

The University is committed to protection freedom of expression within the law and upholding academic freedom in teaching and research.

This Policy and its associated procedures aim to assist the University in discharging its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote good relations within the University and under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent duty).

1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

1.1 What is covered by the Policy

This Policy sets out the duty to promote and safeguard freedom of expression for members of the University, visitors to the campus and for visiting speakers approved in accordance with the Safety Management Standard – On Campus Events.

1.2 Who is covered by the Policy

- All staff and those working on behalf of the University (including agency workers and contractors).
- All students of the University (whether full/part-time, including students enrolled on a distance learning programme) and including any students studying at the University under an agreement with a partner organisation.
- All other members of the University and including independent members of Council and its Committees
- The Students' Union and its affiliated clubs and societies.
- Any person, organisation or group not falling within any of the above categories who wishes to hold an event on University premises, at a venue off-campus or on-line.

1.3 Policy Ownership

The Executive and the Senate has approved this Policy, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Engagement is the Executive sponsor and the Director of Student and Academic Services, Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity and the General Counsel are the officers responsible for the Policy. Any questions about the operation of this Policy or any concerns that the Policy has not been followed should be referred in the first instance to the Director of Student and Academic Services or in their absence the Director of Health and Safety and Business Continuity.

2. THE POLICY STATEMENTS

2.1 Guiding Principles

The University is committed to maintaining the rights of freedom of expression and academic freedom within the law.

The University will ensure that the use of University premises is not denied on grounds connected with the beliefs, views, policies or objectives of an individual or body of individuals, as long as such use is within the law at all times.

Everyone to whom this Policy applies is expected to observe the principles of freedom of expression while on University premises or when engaged in off-campus University events, and to show respect and tolerance towards the expression of views, opinions and beliefs of others, even if they happen to be contrary to their own.

If a student or member of staff fails to show respect and tolerance towards the expression of views, opinions and beliefs of others this may result in disciplinary action.

2.2 Implementation

This Policy is implemented by the Safety Management Standard – On Campus Events.



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