



**UNIVERSITY
ACADEMY 92**
MANCHESTER

Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice

Implementation date:

30/09/2025

Version number:

2.1

Document Control:

Policy Owner:	Chief of Strategy and Student Life
Policy Author(s):	Chief of Strategy and Student Life
Effective Date:	30/09/2025
Approving Body:	TBD
Equality Impact Assessment Date:	TBD
Version Number:	2.1
Date of Next Review:	01/08/2026 (needs to be reviewed annually)

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
1.1	27 th April 2021	Updating of roles to reflect new UA92 structures.	Registrar
2.0	4 th July 2025	Updated in line with Higher Education (Freedom on Speech) Act 2023	Chief of Strategy and Student Life
2.1	30 th September 2025	Added Appendix for Events	Chief of Strategy and Student Life

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy and code of practice sets out UA92's commitment to upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom in accordance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. It outlines the principles and procedures that ensure lawful expression is protected and promoted across all UA92 activities.

1.2 This policy is underpinned by:

- The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- Higher Education and Research Act 2017
- Section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.
- The Human Rights Act 1998 (Article 10 – Freedom of Expression).
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty).
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Terrorism Act 2000

2. Scope

2.1 This Code of Practice applies to all members of the UA92 community, which includes staff, students and members of the Board of Directors at UA92.

2.2 It also applies to anyone visiting UA92 or engaging in Speaker Events being held at any UA92 Campus, those organised at another venue by UA92, or those held under UA92 branding including through online platforms e.g. Microsoft Teams.

3. Policy statements

UA92 is committed to;

3.1 Securing Freedom of Speech within the law for all staff, students and visiting speakers.

3.2 Ensuring that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test perceived wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions including some views that some students might find, shocking, disturbing or offensive.

3.3 Ensuring that staff and students are free to undertake any form of academic research or intellectual inquiry within the law.

3.4 Ensuring that policies do not restrict admission to UA92 because of an applicant's viewpoint.

3.5 Taking practical steps to ensure that appointments and promotions of academic staff do not adversely affect individuals who have exercised their freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, or to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions.

3.6 Taking practical steps to ensure no student is treated unfavourably, or less favourably on the grounds of their opinions or ideas.

3.7 As far as is practicable, providing adequate inductions and training for both staff and students pertaining to this free speech code of practice and how it applies in practice to their own free speech rights under Human Rights ACT (HRA), Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) and the Equality Act 2010; and the free speech rights of other students, staff and visiting speakers under the HRA and the Equality Act 2010.

3.8 Allowing peaceful protest as a legitimate expression of freedom of speech. However, this protest should not and must not shut down lawful debate.

4. Speaker Events

4.1 A "Speaker Event" is defined as any meeting, event or other activity due to take place at any UA92 Campus, or those events held under UA92 branding including through online platforms. E.g Microsoft Teams.

4.2 UA92 will not deny use of its premises to individuals or groups based on the lawful views they wish to express.

4.3 Speaker events may only be restricted or cancelled where there is a clear and lawful justification (e.g. incitement to violence, stirring up racial hatred, unlawful harassment, Holocaust denial, invites support for a proscribed organisation, or a breach of the Prevent Duty).

4.4 All internal bookings of rooms, spaces and/or facilities for event on UA92 campuses should be made in accordance with UA92's Room Booking Procedures.

4.5 UA92's working assumption is that events will not be in breach of section 4.3 above. However, where a staff member leading the event has a reasonable belief that a breach of law may be committed, or that the speaker event breach any or all of the following; the matter is to be referred to the Chief of Strategy and Student Life (or their nominee) by completing the form in Appendix A at least 10 working days before the event.

- Promote Terrorism;
- Incite Violence
- Incite Support for a proscribed organisation.

- Incite Racial hatred
- Constitute Unlawful Harassment.
- Promote or include Holocaust Denial
- Breach the Equality Act
- Breach requirements in relation to E6
- Breach requirements in relation to the Prevent Duty

4.6 The Chief of Student Life and Strategy (or their nominee) may, at their absolute discretion, decide if the event can proceed and any associated conditions.

4.7 The lawful expression of controversial or unpopular views will not in itself constitute reasonable grounds for withholding permission for the speaker event.

4.8 Staff or student organising an event that then breaches the law may face action under their respective disciplinary policies.

4.9 Security charges for events will typically be covered by UA92, with no more than £400 passed onto the event organiser in exceptional circumstances.

5 Complaints Process

5.1 Complaints by staff, visiting speakers and students with regard to freedom of speech should in the first instance seek to be resolved informally, this may include discussing the matter with the staff member or student responsible for the matters which are the subject of the complaint.

5.2 Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally the complaint should be made via the appropriate complaints procedure, the complaints procedure used will be that which is pertinent to the person complaining. E.g. Staff complaints procedure for staff, student complaints procedure for students.

5.3 The decision reached in relation to the complaint will also outline the right to complain to the OfS under their freedom of speech complaints scheme.

6. Review

6.1 This Policy and Code of Practice will be reviewed on an annual basis and report on its operation will be considered by Academic Committee and the UA92 Audit and Risk Committee.

UA92 Speaker Event Risk Assessment and Permissions Form

Event Details

Event Title: _____

Date & Time of Event: _____

Location (e.g. Which UA92 Campus or using an Online Platform):

Organiser Name & Role: _____

Organiser Contact Email: _____

Speaker Name(s): _____

Affiliation/Organisation: _____

Topic/Title of Talk: _____

Section 1: Event Overview

1. Brief Description of the Event (Include purpose, format, and expected audience size):

2. Is this event open to the public? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Will the event be recorded or streamed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Risk Assessment

Please tick if any of the following concerns apply to the speaker or content:

☐ Potential to promote terrorism

☐ Potential to incite violence

☐ Potential to support a proscribed organisation

☐ Potential to incite racial hatred

☐ Potential to constitute unlawful harassment

☐ Includes or promotes Holocaust denial

☐ Potential to Breach the Equality Act 2010

☐ Potential to Breach the Prevent Duty

☐ Potential to Breach UA92's E6 requirements

☐ Other concerns (please specify):

If any boxes are ticked, the organiser must refer the event to the Chief of Strategy and Student Life (or nominee) at least 10 working days before the event via email.

Section 3: Permissions & Conditions

To be completed by the Chief of Strategy and Student Life (or nominee):

☐ Approved without conditions

☐ Approved with conditions (please specify):

☐ Not approved (reason): _____

Security Requirements:

☐ UA92 to cover costs

☐ Organiser to contribute (up to £400 in exceptional cases)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 4: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate and that I understand UA92's Freedom of Speech Policy. I agree to comply with all relevant procedures and accept responsibility for ensuring lawful conduct during the event.

Organiser Signature: _____

Date: _____

Once sections 1 and 2 are complete this form should be emailed to Gareth.smith@ua92.ac.uk using the title Speaker Event at least 10 working days before the event.