



Council Statement on Freedom of Speech, Meetings and Events

Context

1. Cranfield University's Charter provides that "Academic Staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have' (Charter 6.2).
2. Advancing ideas and learning through debate is a critical part of what universities do. Freedom of speech is therefore essential to students and the wider Cranfield community. Upholding freedom of speech matters because it exposes students to new and challenging ideas, encourages robust but civil debate which respects and understands different viewpoints, and underpins diversity in the academic community. Cranfield University supports the Office for Students' adoption of the widest possible definition of freedom of speech: anything within the law.
3. Cranfield University is required by law to outline principles for its staff and students in relation to their right to freedom of speech and how meetings and other events may be conducted, in the context of being members of the University. This statement takes into account the University's legal responsibilities, as set out in Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
4. This Statement, approved by the Council of Cranfield University, outlines the principles of free speech which apply to all staff, students and visiting speakers, and how these are managed at the University.

Principles

5. So far as is reasonably practicable, no premises of the University will be denied to any individual or body of persons on any grounds connected with:
 - (a) the beliefs or views of that individual or of that body; or
 - (b) the policy or objectives of that body.
6. In holding to this key principle, the University will also take into account a number of other statutory duties, including the management of the health and safety of its members and the general public, and its duty in preventing people being drawn into terrorism or the promotion of terrorist activities.

As an example of this, the University reserves the right to prevent the holding of a meeting where an invited speaker has a reasonably likely intent of wanting to incite the audience to commit acts of violence, or if the content of his or her event is reasonably likely to cause a breach of the peace from attendees, other members of the University or the general public.

7. In determining the likelihood of risk of:
 - (a) harm to members of the University and/or the general public; or
 - (b) members of the University being drawn into terrorism; or
 - (c) otherwise promoting any violent or illegal action,

Senate has outlined a number of key risk-based procedures to manage the conduct of “events” run by staff or students of the University. These are outlined below and include:

- (i) the expected conduct of members of the University attending events;
- (ii) the prior approval of events, including the identification and management of risk;
- (iii) the management of incidents arising from events taking place.

8. In this context, “events” include any meeting or gathering held on University-owned premises, organised by staff and/or students and/or members of the public, which do not form part of an agreed course or programmes of study, or any event hosted online under the University’s name or brand. An “incident” is any conduct or activity which raises a concern about the behaviour of an individual which may threaten the health and safety of others, express extremist views, seek to radicalise or otherwise draw people into terrorism.

9. The use of external speakers as part of an agreed course or programme of study is overseen by the relevant Course Director and Module Leader.

Procedures

A. Expected conduct of members of the University

10. All members of the University are expected to familiarise themselves with the University’s Policy Statement on Dignity at Study. The Policy Statement (expanded in detail in the Senate Handbook: Student Welfare) outlines that:

Cranfield University is committed to a working and learning environment that is free of intimidation or discrimination, and recognises that the contribution of staff and students will be most effective in conditions which are free of unnecessary anxiety, stress and fear. These conditions are likely to flourish in an environment which respects the rights of individuals and is concerned with maintaining their dignity at work. Harassment can seriously worsen working and social conditions for staff and students of the university. Any incidents of harassment will be regarded extremely seriously and can be grounds for disciplinary action which may include dismissal or expulsion.

As part of its overall commitment to equality of opportunity, Cranfield University is committed to promoting a good and harmonious environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no-one feels threatened or intimidated.

11. Senate therefore expects all staff and students to act appropriately at other events, whether or not they are organised by the University, and at meetings or gatherings held outside of the University environs. Any concerns (or complaints) about the behaviour or conduct of learners at such events, gatherings and meetings would be addressed under the procedures outlined in the Senate Handbook: Student Complaints. This may include addressing those concerns through the University’s disciplinary procedures for staff and students, which makes specific reference to actions which may bring the University into disrepute, and which may involve penalties up to and including permanent exclusion from the University.

12. Attention is also drawn to the terms and conditions of use of the University’s information technology (IT) services, as outlined in the “IT Rules”: this provides guidance on the use of facilities (including browsers and servers) for study and personal use, and outlines what the University considers inappropriate use. Any breach of the IT Rules would also be addressed through the University’s disciplinary procedures for staff and students

13. In addition, if any actions involve breaches of the law the University will assist the police, security services and/or any prosecuting authorities to implement the processes of law.

See also: *Senate Student Handbook on Student Welfare*
Senate Student Handbook on Complaints (for students)
Senate Student Handbook on Disciplinary Procedures (for students)
Ordinance 22: Disciplinary (Conduct and Capability Procedures) (for staff)
Ordinance 29: Resolution of Grievances (for staff)
IT Rules

B. Approval and risk management of events

14. Activities considered inappropriate to be conducted on University premises, or at a branded event taking place off-campus or online, include:

- Internal or external speakers giving talks which directly or indirectly promote violence towards members of the University or the general public;
- Internal or external speakers where there is a reasonable likelihood that members of the University may have or develop legitimate concerns for their health or safety;
- Physical activities where there has not been due regard for the safety of participants and onlookers;
- Activities where the University has been advised by police or other security services represent a high risk at the specified time or location proposed.

15. Extra-curricular events at the University (hereafter referred to as “events”) may be organised by staff of the University, staff employed by the Cranfield Students’ Association (CSA), by students of the University (either as part of a formal student society or as individuals), or by persons external to the University.

Cranfield campus

16. All rooms and meeting places on the Cranfield campus of the University have a designated owner: most of these are managed either by Campus Services or by the CSA. In all cases, nominated members of staff have the responsibility to ensure that the rooms and meeting places are used appropriately, and may specify in writing particular terms and conditions relating to the use of that room or meeting place, which may include specific terms and conditions relating to that particular event, if appropriate. Primary contact details for all enquiries are:

Campus Services	Conference and Meeting Facilities
Cranfield Students’ Association	CSA General Office

17. No event can take place in a room or meeting place without prior approval by those nominated members of staff. Such decisions are made through the consideration of information provided by an event organiser (who must be a specific person, acting on their own behalf or on behalf of an organisation responsible for the event) on a form approved by the nominated members of staff. It is the event organiser’s responsibility to ensure the room owner is aware of all necessary information in order to come to a decision on the suitability of a planned event.

18. Requests for events must be provided in writing by the event organiser and ideally six weeks in advance of the event. (In any event, the organiser will need to take into account any lead time he or she may wish to have to publicise the event: an event should not be publicised before approval has been granted.) The University reserves the right to refuse outright any requests for the use of a room or meeting place if such a request is made within ten (10) working days of the proposed event.

19. The requested information should include, as a minimum:

- name and contact details of the event organiser
- title of the proposed event
- names and contact details of formal presenters or speakers at the event, if any

- brief description of proposed talks and/or activities
- dates, times and locations of the proposed event
- projected number of attendees, including:
 - registered students
 - staff of the University
 - people external to the University

20. The deliberate provision of false or incomplete information by the event organiser would be addressed under the disciplinary procedures of the University.

21. Nominated staff will use this information to assess the likelihood of risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the University and/or the general public, and may request further information or details from the event organiser to make that assessment. He or she may also outline specific requirements relating to health and safety to permit the event to proceed (e.g. the attendance of a first aider, fire marshal, or a specified number of stewards). The nominated staff may refuse permission to hold the event if they have concluded that there are reasonably likely risks to the health and safety of any people and/or the proper management of the University if the event takes place, or if they have not been provided with sufficient information from the event organiser to make that decision. The nominated staff may refuse permission to hold the event if they have concluded that the activities are inappropriate in line with paragraph 14.

22. Appeals against the decision of the nominated staff will be considered by the relevant line manager. (As such, an appeal by a student would be considered as an informal complaint (Stage 1) as outlined in the Senate Student Handbook on Complaints.)

23. The University acknowledges that the Cranfield Students' Association (CSA) (as a separate institution) has inherent duties to consider the safety and wellbeing of its members separately to the University. Wherever possible, the University and the CSA will seek through consultation to resolve independent concerns about an event or speaker raised by the other party in order to determine the suitability of any specific requirements (as outlined in paragraph 21): any final decision on an event or speaker will reside with the University, due to its statutory duties as outlined in paragraph 3.

Shrivenham facilities

24. All rooms and meeting places at the Shrivenham facility of the University are located on the Defence Academy site and accordingly have to comply with the MoD site rules. The University has concluded that these rules represent appropriate and proportionate management of events at that facility. Primary contact details for all enquiries are:

Cranfield University events/rooms	Teaching Facilities (for Cranfield University organised events)
Other Defence Academy events/rooms	Mess, Athletics Union, Social and Arts Clubs as appropriate

Information on Defence Academy events can be found at <http://dais/Pages/DAIS.aspx>

It is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure the room owner is aware of all necessary information in order to come to a decision on the suitability of a planned event.

Branded events off-campus and online

25. Nominated members of staff may specify in writing particular terms and conditions relating to the event. Primary contact details for all enquiries are:

Cranfield Students' Association off-campus or online events	CSA General Office
Alumni off-campus or online events	Alumni Office
Other University off-campus or online events	Events Office

26. No branded off-campus or online event can take place without prior approval by those nominated members of staff. Such decisions are made through the consideration of information provided by an event organiser (who must be a specific person, acting on their own behalf or on behalf of an organisation responsible for the event) on a form approved by the nominated members of staff.

27. Requests for events must be provided in writing by the event organiser and ideally six weeks in advance of the event. (In any event, the organiser will need to take into account any lead time he or she may wish to have to publicise the event: an event should not be publicised before approval has been granted.) The University reserves the right to refuse outright any requests for an off-campus or online branded event if such a request is made within ten (10) working days of the proposed event.

28. The requested information should include, as a minimum:

- name and contact details of the event organiser
- title of the proposed event
- names and contact details of formal presenters or speakers at the event, if any
- brief description of proposed talks and/or activities
- dates and times and location of the proposed event
- projected number of attendees, including:
 - registered students
 - staff of the University
 - people external to the University

29. The deliberate provision of false or incomplete information by the event organiser would be addressed under the disciplinary procedures of the University.

30. The event organiser is responsible for assessing the likelihood of risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the University and/or the general public. The nominated staff may refuse permission to hold the event if they have concluded that the activities are inappropriate in line with paragraph 14.

31. Appeals against the decision of the nominated staff will be considered by the relevant line manager. (As such, an appeal by a student would be considered as an informal complaint (Stage 1) as outlined in the Senate Student Handbook on Complaints.)

C. Management of incidents relating to events

32. The University reserves the right to nominate one or more members of staff acting on its behalf to attend any event, in the interests of transparency and to ensure the safe management of the event.

33. The named organiser of the event has a duty to see that nothing in the preparations for or conduct of the event infringes this statement, other Laws of the University, or public law e.g. conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace or incitement to illegal acts. He or she is required to liaise with the authorities outlined below in the event of an incident relating to the event.

Cranfield campus

34. Where an incident takes place on the Cranfield campus, the campus Security Services, as directed by the Site Security Manager, will attend the scene to oversee any actions that need to be taken, including the mobilisation of the police or other emergency services. Security Services can be contacted in emergencies on 2222 at any time.

35. Daily management reports of incidents are communicated to the Executive Office of the University.

Shrivenham facilities

36. Where an incident takes place at the Shrivenham facilities of the University, the Defence Academy Security will attend the scene to oversee any actions that need to be taken, including the mobilisation of the police or other emergency services. Defence Academy Security can be contacted in emergencies on 2222 at any time.

37. Daily management reports of incidents are communicated to the Executive Office of the University.

Online events

38. Where an incident takes place during on online event, the named organiser is responsible for managing any required immediate response. Such action may include the muting or removal of one or more persons from the event, and/or stopping the event. The named organiser is responsible for reporting any incident that has occurred to the relevant contact as given in paragraph 25.

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