



Freedom of Speech Policy

The Norland College policy on freedom of speech in relation to meetings and events held on College premises is set out below. Please note that if inviting a speaker onto campus or to events held in the name of Norland, the speakers and events policy must be followed. These have been developed to provide support to allow events to go ahead wherever possible, with appropriate controls in place to protect Norland, the organiser of the event and those who attend.

Fundamental principles

The Education Act, 1986, requires all higher education establishments to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for its students, staff and visiting speakers. This includes ensuring that when relevant and where it is reasonably practicable, the use of Norland's premises will not be denied to any individual or organisation based on their beliefs, views, policies or values.

As a higher education provider, Norland must also comply with the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of assembly and association of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR is incorporated into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 states that all providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS) must uphold the existing laws around freedom of speech. Providers must follow the OfS regulatory framework and taking steps that are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured within the provider.

The Equality Act 2010 covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Board of Directors is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Norland is an academic community of staff and students. Central to the concept of academic community is the ability of all its members to freely challenge prevailing orthodoxies, query the positions and views of others, and put forward views that may be understood by others as radical.

To ensure that these duties are fulfilled, Norland College has a Code of Practice which provides guidance and set procedures for all members of the Norland community including, staff, students, NQNs and directors, to adhere to when arranging meetings, events or activities and which fall within the remit of the code. The Strategic Leadership Team are required to ensure compliance of the code using disciplinary procedures when necessary.

Norland believes that an atmosphere of free and open discussion is essential to its life and work. This can only be achieved if all parties involved behave with necessary tolerance and avoid offensive or provocative action or language.

Due to the limited space and size of the premises and the way the college operates, Norland does not admit members of the public to meetings and/or events held on campus unless specifically invited. Furthermore, Norland College does not hire out its facilities to third parties unless the event involves staff or students.

Raising a concern about free speech

If a member of staff or a student has a concern about freedom of speech, please raise this under the Cause for Concern procedure as soon as possible.

Staff and students can also contact the OfS under the notifications process if they wish for the OfS to know about a matter concerning regulatory compliance.

Code of Practice

Norland College has developed the following Code of Practice which must be followed by its staff, students, NQNs and directors.

- The Principal has overall responsibility to ensure that this code is fully complied with and will determine whether a particular event will take place should there be any concerns raised with regards to the speaker and/ or content. No invitations to the event are permitted to be sent out until a decision is reached on its compliance with this Code of Practice.
- In general, all events, meetings and activities (a specified event) which take place at any Norland designated site are arranged by a member of staff. Occasionally, students request the use of the premises for a specific event. For all such occasions, a member of staff must be assigned to take the lead in the organisation of the event.
- Norland College also hosts key events at external venues. Therefore, this code will apply to the organisation of these events too.
- The organisers of any specified event will ensure a single person is appointed as Principal Organiser for the event. This person will be responsible for the booking and control arrangements and conduct of the events including stewarding, monitoring and entry.
- The Principal Organiser must ensure an event booking form is completed prior to the event taking place. The completed event booking form (available on the Hub) must be returned to Head of HR, Resources and Compliance (H&S & Prevent Lead) who will decide on whether the event complies with Norland's Code of Practice. The organisers may be required to put in place safeguards, such as extra security or a strong and well-informed chair with the power to intervene or close the event down if there is a breach of the code. They will also require the organisers to record the event, so there is no dispute afterwards about what is said by whom.

- Should any concern be raised with the event this must be brought to the attention of the Principal immediately. The Principal may decide to consult with students, staff or other groups before coming to decision, or take legal advice. The Principal's decision will be final and will not be subject to appeal.
- The expression of views that may be controversial, but do not breach the law, will not constitute reasonable grounds for refusal. Reasonable grounds for refusal would include: incitement to commit a criminal act; unlawful expression of views; support for an organisation whose aims are illegal; the creation of an environment likely to give rise to a breach of the peace.
- Certain conditions may be required which are considered reasonably necessary in order to secure fulfilment of Norland's responsibilities with regards to the protection of free speech within the law. These conditions must be met prior to any decision being made as to whether a specified event can take place. These conditions will be communicated to the Principal Organiser who will need to liaise with the speaker and/or others involved with the event to ensure these conditions are met. It is the responsibility of the Principal Organiser to report back to the Head of HR, Resources and Compliance to show compliance under the provisions of this code. Such conditions may include clarity on the following points (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Method of advertising the event; will the press be present?
 - Issue of tickets; how is this to be managed?
 - Admittance or non-admittance of parents, members of the public
 - Provision to identify those attending
 - Provision of specified number of suitable stewards (staff);
 - Presence of senior members of Norland, including directors;
 - If external venue being used, has a risk assessment for the venue been received?
- With reference to Norland events held at external venues, Norland staff may be required to be responsible for security arrangements connected to the event eg: covering the entrances to check tickets. In such cases, a recommendation may be made by the Head of HR, Resources and Compliance to appoint a member of staff to act as 'Controlling Officer' for the event.
- Organisers have a duty to see that nothing in the preparation for or conduct of a specified event infringes the law
- Staff attending or involved with the organisation of a specified event have a duty as far as is possible, to ensure that both the speaker and audience act in accordance with the law during the event. In cases of inappropriate behaviour, staff in attendance have the authority to give appropriate warnings and where behaviour does not improve or worsens, ask them to leave or request assistance from the Controlling Officer.
- Where a specified event has been held at an external venue, the area must be left in a clean and tidy condition

- Failure by any member of staff, student, NQN or director to comply with this Code of Practice may be subject to appropriate disciplinary proceedings and, if necessary, by recourse to law

If you are proposing to run an event and are concerned that it may constitute a breach of the Code of Practice, please contact the Head of HR, Resources and Compliance, in the first instance.

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