

External Speaker Policy

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION..... 3

2 SCOPE..... 3

3 DEFINITIONS 3

4 POLICY STATEMENTS 4

5 PROCEDURE 4

6 NOTIFICATION OF AN INCIDENT AND COMPLAINTS 4

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY 5

1 Introduction

BCS is a charity, and as such, it is important to ensure that we comply with all requirements of the Charities Commission, legislative requirements, and that our Trustees correctly discharge their duties under charity law.

BCS's activities can only be in pursuit of our lawful charitable purposes. We must ensure we do not give platform to inappropriate views that would call into question whether what we are doing is lawful, supporting our purposes, and for the public benefit. Inappropriate views might include promoting violence or hatred on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation; encouraging people to adopt a violent ideology; or making claims to which violence is subsequently presented as the only solution. Even where certain views fall below the criminal threshold, for example, they are harmful to social cohesion such as denigrating those of a particular faith or no faith, these may also be inconsistent with the public benefit requirement, and with BCS's values.

This policy follows the Charities Commission recommendation that charities like BCS who hold events with External Speakers, either directly or through its member groups, put appropriate measures in place to prevent External Speakers from inappropriately taking advantage of our BCS's, reputation, facilities or assets.

2 Scope

BCS's member groups often hold Events that form an important part of our BCS community. They raise the profile of the Institute, garner the knowledge of our industry, and provide networking opportunities. BCS also organises and hosts Events directly.

This policy applies to all Events organised in the name of the BCS, including by our member groups, or that take place at BCS premises. This Policy applies to all staff, members and guests involved in the participation and delivery of Events including meetings, extra-curricular events, or related activities delivered online or away from our BCS's Swindon or London offices, but linked to the us by use of our name or funding.

3 Definitions

Event	An Event is a gathering in person or online organised either in the name of the BCS or at BCS premises, including by our member groups.
Event Organiser	A member of staff or BCS member group who is leading the organisation of an Event
External Speaker	An individual who is not a BCS employee who will be addressing a group including as part of a panel, workshop, a lecture or online, at an Event

4 Policy statements

It is expected that External Speakers will be chosen on the basis of their credibility, and that their topic of discussion is aligned with BCS's objectives, relevant to the objectives of the event, and compliant with UK laws.

Whilst BCS must safeguard the lawful exercise of freedom of speech, this must be balanced to ensure we protect both External Speakers and Event attendees from hate crimes, harassment, defamation, breach of human rights, unfair treatment, breach of the peace and behaviour likely to incite hatred or draw others into terrorism.

All External Speakers and attendees must be respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others.

These provisions do not establish a right not to be offended.

5 Procedure

BCS member groups organising an Event must ensure that they follow and act in accordance with the BCS guide to running a community event, which can be found here: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/member-communities/bcs-volunteer-hub/volunteer-resources/running-a-community-event/>

Event Organisers inviting External Speakers are required to undertake a risk assessment. A template risk assessment can be obtained by clicking on the above link. In completing the risk assessment, consideration must be given to the following points:

- a. Has the External Speaker previously spoken at a BCS Event?
- b. Is the subject matter likely to be controversial or not compatible with BCS values?
- c. Who is chairing the event? Is it considered they are sufficiently experienced to provide balance and challenge during the event?
- d. Who is attending the event?
- e. Are there any other concerns regarding the External Speaker or the content matter that should be documented in the risk assessment?

It is also encouraged that where there is more than one speaker at the event, you consider whether BCS's expectations on gender diversity are met, and whether any panel may be considered diverse/inclusive considering other protected characteristics.

BCS reserves the right to cancel, postpone or request amendment to any proposed event should risks be identified. The Event Organiser is responsible for ensuring this policy is complied with.

BCS Member Groups must also act in accordance with the Member Group Rules, which can be found here: <https://www.bcs.org/media/e2elw2xj/member-group-rules.pdf> and also set out further information on organising and running member group events.

6 Notification of an Incident and Complaints

Any incidents or complaints should, in the first instance, be raised informally with the Event Organiser who will attempt to resolve the matter informally.

Formal complaints may be made to the Compliance manager at compliance@bcs.uk, who will review the complaint. Possible complaints requiring investigation may include: being prevented from arranging, speaking or attending an event involving an External Speaker; infringements of freedom of speech; or allegations that an Event Organiser or External Speaker has breached terms of this policy or has otherwise acted in a manner contrary to the legislative framework. The complaint should include relevant evidence.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days, letting you know who will be investigating the complaint. Your complaint will be investigated by someone who has no personal interest or involvement in the matter of the complaint. If your complaint is complex, it is possible that timescales may exceed 20 working days, but we will contact you to advise you if this is the case. At the end of the investigation, we will contact you to inform you of our decision.

BCS will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible and will not tolerate any retribution or retaliation taken against any individual who has, in good faith, sought advice or reported any questionable behaviour or a possible violation of this policy.

7 Monitoring and Review of this Policy

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. We will also consider feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, as well as changes in legislation. If you would like to feed back any views, please discuss with the owner of this document.



For further information please contact:

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