



## Centre for Alternative Technology

### Policy and Procedure for the Booking of Speakers and Events

#### 1. The scope of this policy: in what circumstances does it apply?

- 1.1 The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) is an Alternative Provider of higher education whose degrees are validated by the University of East London (UEL) and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). As such, the rules and regulations concerning the conduct of students, the maintenance of academic standards and the setting of teaching and learning activities are closely aligned to the policies and procedures UEL and LJMU. This Prevent policy concerning the booking of speakers and events is therefore directly compatible with those provided by UEL and LJMU.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all speaker meetings and events that:
  - are planned to be held on a site owned, managed or hired by CAT, delivered remotely over the internet by CAT using on-line video conferencing technologies, or badged with the CAT logo to which staff, students, or members of the general public will be invited, and;
  - form part of an event being hosted by a third party on our campuses, to which staff, students, or members of the general public will be invited.
- 1.3 The policy does not apply to lectures, seminars and other activities that involve academic (teaching related) talks and lectures that are integrated into and form part of the curriculum being delivered under our academic framework regulations.
- 1.4 If any member of staff, student or visitor has any concerns about anything that might fall under CAT's Prevent duty they should refer immediately to one of the Prevent leads at CAT, [adrian.watson@cat.org.uk](mailto:adrian.watson@cat.org.uk) or [amanda.smith@cat.org.uk](mailto:amanda.smith@cat.org.uk), or to one of the co-Chief Executives [paul.booth@cat.org.uk](mailto:paul.booth@cat.org.uk) or [eileen.kinsman@cat.org.uk](mailto:eileen.kinsman@cat.org.uk) who will actively respond to any information thus provided.
- 1.5 Wilful breach of this code will be dealt with under CAT disciplinary procedures and, if necessary, by recourse to law.

#### 2. Important guidance for booking speakers at CAT

- 2.1 CAT is committed to academic freedom and for all members of CAT community to have the opportunity to engage with a wide range of thought-provoking opinions and perspectives. Our commitment to discussion and critical thinking is a fundamental principle of our institution. We regularly invite a wide range of speakers to our site.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure has been drawn up to assist CAT staff and students when organising talks, seminars, lectures and events on the site, and to provide a checklist for successful planning. They also include important information to ensure that these events comply with our policy on freedom of speech, a copy of which can be found here: [\[https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech\]](https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech).

### **3. Planning checklist for lectures and events**

3.1 Individual members of staff and students across CAT will from time-to-time be responsible for organising events involving visiting speakers. In the context of Prevent, when planning for such events, organisers will need to consider the following:

- Booking of speakers (see the CAT's policy on freedom of speech)
- Subject of the talk/focus of the event
- Date and time
- Audience
- Any proposed segregation of a protected characteristic, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Invitations
- Advertising (whether externally, internally, or via the use of social media)
- Risk assessment
- Security
- Publicity and wider PR potential
- Any other relevant information

### **4. Events guidance for staff and students**

- 4.1 A named principal organiser must be identified for each event, who will be responsible for the booking and control arrangements, and for the conduct of the events including stewarding and moderating, chairing, monitoring and entry
- 4.2 When events are held on the CAT site our Accommodation and Venue Hire team are responsible for organising security, publicity, conducting a risk assessment of the event and issuing instructions to those attending events. They can provide support, advice and guidance for staff and students wishing to organise events on CAT premises.
- 4.3 The Accommodation and Venue Hire team will work with Marketing on publicity.
- 4.4 When CAT events are held at an external location, the venue owners are responsible for organising security, conducting a risk assessment of the event and issuing instructions to those attending events. CAT staff should cooperate fully with the event organisers instruction in this regard.
- 4.5 When CAT events are held online, and hosted by CAT, the principal organiser will be responsible for issuing instructions to attendees, and should work with Marketing who can provide support, advice and guidance for the event. Marketing will be responsible for publicity.

### **5. Our policy and procedure to secure freedom of speech within the law**

- 5.1 When booking talks, organisers are required to assess whether the event that they are organising might require special consideration under our policy on freedom of speech which is informed by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023:  
[\[https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech\]](https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech).
- 5.2 CAT believes in free and open discussion. For this to be achieved, it requires all concerned to display tolerance and to avoid needlessly offensive, or provocative, action and language.

- 5.3 Our aim is to make the process of compliance as straight forward as possible, to ensure that events can take place as planned. It is very rare that events cannot proceed. However, if insufficient notice is given of events that fall into the category of 'designated activities' (see para 6 below) under our policy on freedom of speech, there will be a strong likelihood that the event may have to be postponed, notwithstanding that this may entail additional costs to the organising Department, or Service concerned.

## **6. Key questions to consider when organising speaker or events**

6.1 In planning any speaker or event, organisers should consider the following key questions:

- is there any possibility of a situation arising in which people might experience harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse, or violence?
- is the speaker likely to express controversial views/likely to express views that may attract protest?
- is the speaker known to hold controversial views/known to hold views that may attract protest?
- is the speaker from an area where the geo-political situation may attract protest/
- is the subject matter relating to an area where the geo-political situation may attract protest?
- is the subject matter, topic, or title controversial, or likely to evoke a strong emotive response if advertised to the general public?

6.2 If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above questions, the organiser of the event should follow the guidelines in our policy on freedom of speech and apply for the event to be classified as a 'designated activity.' Responsibility for overseeing 'designated activities' rests with the "responsible officer", the Chief Executive or their nominee. The responsible officer may refer to the "'External speakers in higher education institutions'" provided by UniversitiesUK [<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2013/external-speakers-in-higher-education-institutions.pdf>] for further information about a speaker or event. The organiser should also consider what arrangements might need to be put in place to ensure the safety of participants and others in the general area, and to ensure that there is no threat to public order.

## **7. Procedure for adhering to the policy on freedom of speech and to this policy and procedure**

- check that you have read and understand the provisions of our policy on freedom of speech: [<https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech>];
- consider whether your event should be classed as a 'designated activity' under our policy on freedom of speech. If you are in any doubt, you should submit the form for assessment. You may be asked to provide information as to how your assessment was reached. Having your event classified as a 'designated event' will not necessarily mean that it will become more complicated;
- Designate a 'principal organiser,' who will be the person responsible for ensuring that the organisers comply with the policy on freedom of speech. Unless otherwise advised,

it will be assumed that the principal organiser of an event will be the individual making the room booking;

- make a request to the 'responsible officer' for consideration of a 'designated activity' by completing this form; [<https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=25:policy-and-procedure-for-the-booking-of-speakers-and-events>].
- submit a signed copy of the completed form to one of the co-CEO's. Forms must be submitted as far as possible in advance of the event, but in no circumstances any later than 15 working days prior to the date that the event is scheduled to take place;
- the principal organiser should provide the information listed on the form about the speaker and the nature of the activity, the venue and the preparations for the event.
- the responsible officer may ask for further arrangements to be made by the organising team to ensure compliance with our policy on freedom of speech and the law. As an example, these could include one or more of the following arrangements:
  - a) briefing CAT's Security/caretaking staff;
  - b) ensuring that additional security staff are on duty;
  - c) booking an alternative, more appropriate room;
  - d) changing the date, time and length of the activity;
  - e) appointing a chair and/or requiring that a debate takes place with speakers holding opposing views;
  - f) the event being ticket, or invitation only;
  - g) ensuring that an adequate number of stewards are available, in addition to any of CAT's Security/ caretaking staff that might be required to maintain safety and order, and;
  - h) the event being held online rather than onsite at CAT
  - i) briefing CAT's Media and Marketing Team, so that they are aware in advance of any possible press interest.

## **8. Timescales**

- 8.1 Please ensure that you brief relevant colleagues as soon as possible about future events.
- 8.2 Where designated events are concerned the responsible officer needs to be informed at least 15 working days before the event.
- 8.3 Security staff/caretakers should be alerted as soon as possible after the Responsible Officer has given approval.

## **9. Why adherence to the policy on freedom of speech and this policy and procedure is important**

- 9.1 The University of East London, Liverpool John Moores University and CAT have a duty in law to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members of our staff, students and visiting speakers. This includes a responsibility to ensure that the use of CAT's premises is not denied to any individual, or group, on the grounds of the belief, or views, of that individual, or any member of that group.
- 9.2 At the same time, the right of freedom of expression is subject to laws for the protection of national security and public safety, for the prevention of disorder, or crime, or for the protection of the rights of others.

- 9.3 These guidelines are designed to assist event organisers in making suitable arrangements to ensure that events take place as scheduled and in safety.
- 9.4 For further details consult the policy on freedom of speech:  
[\[https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech\]](https://gse.cat.org.uk/index.php/about-us/policies-and-information/category/8-student-policies-and-forms?download=24:policy-and-code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech)

This policy and contact details may be amended from time to time.

**Amendments to Policy and Procedure for the Booking of Speakers and Events v.2 dated March 2021**

Revision to section 5.1 to reference the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

Updates to named contacts

Date Document Approved: January 2024

By: Trustees Board

Version 2.0

To be Reviewed by: March 2028