

Girton College

Code of Practice on Meetings and Public Gatherings on College Premises

Section 43 of the Education (No2) Act 1986, referring to freedom of speech in universities, polytechnics, and colleges, requires the Council to issue and keep up to date a code of practice to be followed by all members, students, and employees of the College for the organisation of meetings and other events which are to be held on College premises, and for the conduct required of members, students, and employees of the College in connection with such meetings and events.

This Code of Practice therefore applies to all members, students, and employees of the College, in respect of all College premises, whether indoors or outdoors. The Code should be read in conjunction with the College Statement on Freedom of Speech.

Members, students, and employees of the College are reminded that alleged breaches of the general regulations for discipline or of the rules of behaviour applicable to current registered students or of any relevant conditions of employment may be brought before the relevant disciplinary authority.

Authority and approval processes for meetings and events on College premises

Any meeting or event on College premises should have at least one organiser who is responsible for the meeting or event and is a member, student, or employee of the College. Where an external speaker is attending a College event, a senior member of College is required to be present. If a meeting or event is proposed by an external group or individual without such an organiser, it may only proceed on condition that an individual to whom this Code applies is identified or nominated as the organiser responsible for the meeting or event. Authority is required for meetings and events to be held on College premises, whether indoors or outdoors. Permission must be obtained from the College to host a meeting. If a room is to be reserved, a booking must be made through that authority at least fourteen working days in advance of the proposed event where there is an external speaker. Further details of who to contact and how to book are available in the Guidance notes for booking meetings and events (internal events <https://girtoncollege.wufoo.com/forms/internal-event-booking/>: external events conferences@girton.cam.ac.uk)

It is anticipated that, in the vast majority of cases, the request will be straightforward to consider as part of normal business by the Junior Bursar and the Head of Welfare and Wellbeing. However, in the exceptional circumstances that it is considered that the holding of the meeting or event might reasonably be refused because of the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism or for some other valid reason as indicated in the College Statement on Freedom of Speech, there is a process of escalation to a Referral Group*.

Only the Referral Group may refuse permission in this way and on these bases. The request should be forwarded to the Referral Group with a statement of the concerns. This referral should be made at least seven working days in advance of the proposed meeting or event. Members of the College who are concerned that a particular forthcoming meeting or event should be escalated to the Referral Group may do so directly. The Referral Group will, in consultation as necessary, determine whether the meeting or event can go ahead as

originally planned, or in alternative premises, at a later date, or in a different format. Only in exceptional circumstances, when there are risks which cannot be mitigated or the event organiser refuses to meet any conditions imposed, will permission be withheld.

Appeal

An organiser who is unhappy with the Referral Group's decision has the right of appeal to a nominated subgroup of Council**.

Any decision by the Referral Group (including one upheld on appeal) that a meeting or event should not take place, or may only take place subject to conditions, is binding and takes precedence over any other decision which may have been taken by any other body or officer in the College.

Organisation and management of meetings and events on College premises

Once approved, the organisers of meetings and events must comply with any conditions set by the College authorities concerned for the organisation of the meeting or event. Such conditions may include the requirement that tickets should be issued, that an adequate number of stewards or security staff should be available, that the Head Porter and/or University Security and/or the Police should be consulted, and their advice taken about the arrangements, and that the time and/or place of the meeting should be changed. The cost of meeting any conditions set for the event to proceed, and the responsibility for fulfilling them, rests with the organisers.

Notification to the College

In addition to seeking the permission referred to above, the organisers of all meetings and events to be held on College premises which are to be addressed or attended by persons who are not resident members of the University are required to give notice to the Senior Tutor and Junior Bursar via the Conference Office. This notice may be given separately or by using the form used to book College events, (internal events <https://girtoncollege.wufoo.com/forms/internal-event-booking/>: external events conferences@girton.cam.ac.uk)

The organisers may also, if they wish, communicate directly with the Junior Bursar to give further details. Information is required at least seven working days in advance (although the Junior Bursar may, at their discretion, agree to receive information closer to the time of the meeting or event). The information needed is the date and time of the meeting or event, the place, the names, addresses, and Colleges (if any) of the organisers, the name of the organisation making the arrangements, and the names of any expected speakers (whether or not members of the University). The organisers of any meeting must comply with instructions given by the Senior Tutor, Junior Bursar or other College officer, or by any other person authorised to act on behalf of the College, in the proper discharge of their duties.

The provisions of section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 apply also to the Colleges in respect of their own members, students, and employees, and in respect of visiting speakers. Colleges are also subject to the duties under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into

terrorism. Each College is requested by the University to designate a senior member who will be responsible for enforcing the provisions of both the above Acts in that College. (For us this is the Senior Tutor).

* The Referral Group (email: referralconfidential@girton.cam.ac.uk) has the following membership:

- the Chair of the Committee on Prevent and Freedom of Speech ,*ex officio* the Senior Tutor (Chair);
- the Dean of Discipline;
- a member of Augmented Council;
- the Deputy Senior Tutor for Teaching and Learning;
- the College Communications Officer;
- and either the JCR President (Undergraduate) or MCR President (Postgraduate) (for unreserved business).
- Its Secretary is the Secretary to the Committee on Prevent and Freedom of Speech.

** The nominated sub-group would be three Fellows drawn from the Governing Body, approved by Council.

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