UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

EVENTS AND SPEAKER MANAGEMENT

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF REVIEWING EVENTS AND SPEAKER REQUESTS

1.   BACKGROUND

1.1   The introduction of an Events and Speaker Policy and an associated form is to ensure that the University fulfils its legal obligations with regard to speakers and events, while maintaining at all times its commitment to freedom of thought and expression. At all times the approach in implementing this Policy should be to work with Event Organisers to find ways to address safety and security concerns so that events may proceed.

1.2   Staff reviewing events and speaker forms should read and understand the Events and Speaker Management Policy which outlines when a form is required and the process which should be followed. The Policy is available on the StaffNet Policy Zone.

2.   RECEIVING ROOM BOOKING REQUESTS

2.1   Forms must be completed for any event or speaker that:
- is organized by students or staff at the University *and*
- That is held under the auspices of the University (including e.g. a student society), regardless of location *and*
- That is not directly related to the University's normal academic or administrative business.

2.2   Family celebrations such as weddings, dinners, parties etc., and corporate bookings such as training events, away days etc. or those made with University partners, such as NHS Grampian, will automatically be deemed to be low risk, and will continue to use existing booking procedures.

2.3   Centrally organised conferences, CPD courses, events and festivals are likewise able to continue to use existing procedures. Such events are not required to adhere to the booking arrangements outlined below.

2.4   External parties wishing to book University facilities should contact the Conference & Events Team or managers of locally owned space, as appropriate.

2.5   Events that are to be held off campus but which are held under the auspices of the University should be made known locally to line managers, Heads of School, and/or to CEO of AUSA. Staff may request further information, such as that listed above, to consider whether or not there are any concerns associated with the event. A record of any decision made about such events, including any mitigating action to be taken to allow the event to go ahead safely, should be made following guidance outlined below.

2.6   Some local room managers may have other questions, in addition to those listed on the standard event and speaker form, which they ask of room bookers. Staff may continue to do so provided that all questions in the standard form are completed.

3.   APPROVING REQUESTS

3.1   Responsibility for approving low-risk requests lies with the local room manager or Central Timetabling Team. If, after reviewing the form, the manager is happy for the event or speaker to proceed as planned, (s)he should approve the form, and ensure that a copy of the form and decision is archived centrally. This can be done by emailing the form to buscontinuity@abdn.ac.uk, or by uploading this to the nominated Sharepoint site. Low-risk forms will be retained for a minimum period of one year following the end of the event.

3.2   If the manager/Central Timetabling Team has concerns about an event or speaker, OR if event organisers answer 'YES' to any of the questions below, the room manager/Central Timetabling Team should liaise with the Head of Security (and any other member of staff or relevant external agency, as appropriate) to discuss the request further:

- Is the event open to external attendees? (and tickets have NOT been issued)
- Is there any known or likely media interest?
- Is the event likely to impact upon the University's or Student Union's reputation?
- Is there any known or likely impact on the safety of students, staff or the wider community attending the event?
- Does the event have the potential to affect, either positively or negatively, relations between different community groups or between the equality protected characteristics? (Where it is possible that there might be a negative impact)

3.3   The room manager/Central Timetabling Team should also seek advice, as appropriate, from the Head of Security around the number of attendees anticipated to ensure that the venue requested is suitable.

3.4   Where forms have identified possible concerns, the room manager/Central Timetabling Team and Head of Security should consider, for example, the following points:

- Does the proposed speaker have links to or represent an extreme right wing or white supremacist group or a proscribed terror group or organisation as designated by the UK Government?
- What is the focus of the event and might the subject matter or title cause discrimination or distress? Will both sides of the argument be represented?
- Have there been any recent incidents, particularly at an HE institution, linked to the speaker where there have been concerns about the impact of the event on the audience?
- What security provisions are proposed, and are they considered to be sufficient?
- Will hosting the event pose a reputational risk for the university?

3.5   Staff may also wish to consult the Universities UK Guidance on External Speakers. The Room manager and/or Head of Security may seek additional information from the event organiser at any time to assist with reviewing the request, and should seek advice from other staff and relevant external agencies, as appropriate, to gather necessary information to support them in considering the request.

3.6   If the Head of Security and local room manager or Central Timetabling Team are able to recommend appropriate mitigating actions to ease any of the concerns raised, these should be communicated to the event organiser. Any conditions required should be clearly stated along with a requirement for written agreement before the event will be allowed to take place on campus. A copy of the form will be retained for a minimum period of one year after the event.

4.   REFERAL TO SAFEGUARDING PANEL

4.1   Should any of the issues noted in Section 3.4 arise, the event should be referred to the University Secretary, as Chair of the University's Safeguarding Panel. She will raise the matter with the Panel, which will consider what practical steps should then be taken to: allow and securely manage; postpone; or cancel the event.

4.2   A copy of the decision will be archived in the central database. For all requests referred to the Panel, the minimum retention period will be three years from the end of the event.