



CODE OF PRACTICE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS AND OTHER FUNCTIONS HELD ON UCL PREMISES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 UCL has a long tradition of seeking to safeguard freedom of speech. UCL is committed to upholding academic freedom of enquiry in its teaching and research and to ensuring that free and open discussion can take place in an atmosphere of tolerance.
- 2 This Code of Practice in respect of premises owned or managed by UCL is issued in accordance with Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986. The document was approved by the UCL Council on 16 June 1987 and has subsequently been updated.
- 3 The Code of Practice applies to all staff and students of UCL (hereinafter called “members”) and to any other person in attendance at any meeting or other function which has been duly authorised to take place on UCL premises.
- 4 The object of the procedures outlined below is:
 - (a) To specify arrangements for the management of meetings and other functions on UCL premises which are not an integral part of normal academic and/or administrative business of UCL.
 - (b) To identify reasonably practicable steps that must be taken to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members of UCL and for visiting speakers.
- 5 Accommodation on UCL premises may be booked by members of UCL for meetings which form an integral part of UCL’s normal and administrative business, subject to availability and to compliance, where appropriate, with the normal rules and conditions of hiring and to the provisions of this Code of Practice.

So far as is reasonably practicable, the use of the premises will not be denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with:

- (a) the beliefs or views of that individual or of any member of that body; or
- (b) the policy or objectives of that body.

- 6 Academic activities and internal organisations will take priority over other usage but, at the discretion of the UCL Director of Estates and Facilities, permission may also be given for accommodation to be hired by outside persons or organisations and in some circumstances permission may be given for meetings to be attended by members of the public subject to availability and purposes in accord with the Charter of UCL.
- 7 It is essential to the purposes of UCL that opportunities for free and open discussion within the law should be safeguarded. Members of UCL and all other persons attending meetings held on the premises must behave in a lawful manner and avoid taking any action or using any language which is offensive or provocative.
- 8 In the case of meetings or functions deemed by UCL to come within the provisions of this Code of Practice, the names of visiting speakers must be approved by UCL prior to invitation.
- 9 Visiting speakers at meetings or functions organised by students must come at the invitation of a club or society recognised by UCL Union (UCLU) or the Council and Committees of UCLU. Speakers may not be invited by a student or students individually.

ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

- 10 When a member of UCL wishes to hold a meeting or function which is not directly related to UCL's academic or administrative business on UCL's premises, a written request must be made to Room and Conference Bookings, Estates and Facilities Division. Such requests must be made as far as possible in advance of the projected meeting date and specify the information set out in paragraph (11) below.
- 11 In accordance with paragraph (10), booking requests must be in writing and specify the following information:
- (a) Date, time and exact place of meeting or function.
 - (b) Name of any speaker(s) or likely alternative speaker(s).
 - (c) Precise timing of expected arrival and departure of any speaker(s).
 - (d) Subject of the meeting or nature of the function.

- (e) Draft copy of any proposed notice, leaflet or other material announcing or advertising the meeting or function, if requested by the Room and Conference Bookings Office.
 - (f) Name, address, email address and telephone number of a member of UCL or other person responsible for organising the meeting or function.
 - (g) Whether the audience may include persons who are not members of UCL.
 - (h) Whether it is intended that the meeting should be open to the public.
 - (i) Details of any circumstances which give rise to concern about possible disturbance which could be caused at the meeting or which might give rise to difficulty in a speaker entering or leaving the premises or being able properly to deliver his or her speech.
 - (j) Arrangements for the chairing of the meeting or function.
 - (k) Name, appointment and/or designation of the person appointed as principal organiser who will be responsible for communication and liaison with UCL.
- 12 If the Room and Conference Bookings Office receives a request by a member of UCL to book a room for an event which appears might not be in connection with official UCL business, the requestor shall be asked for such information as is reasonably required to establish that the purpose of the booking is to accommodate a *bona fide* UCL meeting or function. Bookings will not be confirmed until such information has been obtained.
- 13 Any person making an accommodation booking request who has grounds for believing that a breach of the peace or a criminal offence might occur at a meeting must give notification to the UCL Head of Facilities & Security Services of such likelihood at the time of making the booking request or as soon as possible after such likelihood becomes apparent. Under these circumstances, accommodation bookings may be confirmed only by the UCL Director of Estates and Facilities or an officer authorised to act on his behalf. Any member of staff who receives a request for a booking for a meeting which, in his or her opinion, could give rise to difficulties in ensuring freedom of speech or the safety of a speaker must make a prompt notification to the Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer. The notification should give as far as possible the information specified in paragraph (11) above. To the extent that information is not available, details must be sought urgently from the organiser of the proposed meeting or the person submitting the request. It is the responsibility both of those making the booking requests and those receiving booking requests to make appropriate notification as specified above. If there is any doubt about whether a meeting is likely to give rise to difficulties, the Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer must be consulted.

- 14 On receipt at any time of notification that difficulties might arise at a meeting or other function, no further arrangements may be made by the organiser without the express permission in writing of the Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer. In particular in such cases if the meeting has not by that time been advertised, no advertisement of, or promotion of, the meeting or function shall be made without appropriate authorisation from UCL.
- 15 A decision by the Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer may require the organisers to amend or withdraw any advertisements or notices or to comply with specified instructions about the conduct of the meeting. A meeting, after due consultation, may be ordered to be cancelled, but this order will be given only in exceptional circumstances.
- 16 The organisers may be required, after due consultation, to comply with any or any combination of the following conditions if the Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer considers that difficulties may be encountered:
- (a) Only members of staff of UCL and/or registered students of UCL and/or members of the UCL Union may attend.
 - (b) The public either may, or may not, be invited or admitted.
 - (c) If guests are to be allowed to attend, only those whose identity is known to the organisers shall be admitted.
 - (d) Admission shall be restricted and controlled by ticket, identity card or both.
 - (e) Special arrangements for the checking of admission shall be instituted.
 - (f) Where appropriate a specified number of stewards shall be provided by the organisers and required to be present throughout the meeting and also whilst the audience is assembling or dispersing.
 - (g) Where appropriate the names and addresses of stewards (including a chief steward) shall be supplied in advance by the organisers for approval by the UCL Head of Facilities & Security Services or other designated officer of UCL.
 - (h) The cost of these stewards or other services shall be met by the organisers.
 - (i) Certain members of UCL shall be present in order to assist in the maintenance of good order.
 - (j) Any speaker shall enter and leave by specified routes and shall be escorted under specified arrangements.

- (k) No food or drink, alcoholic or otherwise, or any other items which could be used as/or contain missiles shall be taken into a meeting and UCL security staff and/or stewards will be instructed to remove any such items prior to entry to the meeting or function.
 - (l) No banners, flags, placards or similar items shall be brought into the building or used anywhere on the premises in circumstances likely to lead to injury or damage or cause a breach of the peace.
 - (m) The admission of representatives of the press, radio or television shall be subject to prior approval by the UCL Director of Estates and Facilities or be subject to any restrictions which may be specified.
 - (n) The chair and/or organiser shall be made aware of a personal duty to ensure that no speaker or other person present at a meeting or function should infringe the law and, if in the opinion of the chair, such conduct continues after a warning, the chair has a duty to close the meeting.
 - (o) The chair shall be instructed in advance by the organisers about his or her duty to decide whether a meeting or function should be terminated, and about procedures for requesting the police to be summoned in case of breach of the peace or a criminal act, or threat of either occurrence.
 - (p) Stewards provided by the organisers shall be briefed by the organisers about their duties and responsibilities including being made familiar with local fire and emergency procedures.
 - (q) Such other instructions as may be given about the conduct of a meeting or function or the conditions in which it may be held.
- 17 Organisers may be required to pay any costs necessarily incurred by UCL to ensure compliance with this Code of Practice or to make good any loss or damage caused as the direct result of a meeting or function being held.
- 18 A person or body which has made a request to book accommodation on the premises, if aggrieved by a decision made in respect of the booking, may make an appeal to the Provost. Such an appeal will be heard by the Provost or his nominee as soon as reasonably practicable. The Provost's ruling shall be final.
- 19 Infringements of or departures from this Code of Practice in whatever respect by members of UCL will render those responsible subject to disciplinary proceedings as laid down by the UCL authorities. Additionally, if any such actions involve breaches of the law, UCL will be ready to assist the prosecuting authorities to implement the processes of law.
- 20 Failure by a registered student of UCL to comply with Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 and with the provisions of this Code will constitute

an offence against the UCL Disciplinary Code and Disciplinary Procedure in respect of Students.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 21 Nothing in this Code of Practice shall detract from the responsibility and duty of a chair or organiser to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that the provisions of Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 are complied with.
- 22 Nothing in this Code of Practice shall prevent the UCL Director of Estates and Facilities or other designated officer from taking such steps as may be necessary at any time to ensure the safety of members of UCL or other persons, or to safeguard the premises and property of UCL.

DEFINITIONS

- 23 The term “premises” is deemed to mean all UCL property including buildings, grounds, gardens, courtyards and other open spaces including any designated for student use.
- 24 The term “meeting” is deemed to include any event, activity or gathering of people, formally convened.
- 25 The term “chair” is deemed to mean the person in the chair at a meeting or presiding officer.

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Vice-Provost (Operations)