

## **External Speakers Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the policy is to minimize risk and to fulfil statutory obligations on the basis of sound, evidenced judgements made in accordance with consistent practice. The policy applies to all staff, students, visiting fellows and associates responsible for organising events under the auspices of the Woolf Institute.

### **Freedom of Speech**

The Woolf Institute is committed to freedom of expression and speech, a basic human right that is protected by law. Because the Woolf Institute is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all staff, students and visitors the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn. A full statement on the Woolf Institute's commitment to *Freedom of Speech and Expression* can be found [here](#).

Freedom to debate does not, of course, mean that any individual may say whatever they wish under the auspices of the Woolf Institute. In order to minimise reputational damage or risk a contravention of the Woolf Institute's legal and safeguarding responsibilities, it reserves the right to cancel or amend speaker engagements that may violate the law, falsely defame a specific individual or group, or otherwise grievously undermine the values and ethos of the Woolf Institute. Such a cancellation will only take place as a last resort, following a clear and consistent process.

### **Process**

The event organiser will submit an External Speaker Form to the Senior Research Fellow, which will be considered with reference to the Cambridge Theological Federation's *Policy for Risk Management of External Events*.

### **Escalation**

If there are concerns, the Senior Research Fellow will refer the event to the Director of Strategy and Implementation for further consideration. The Director of Strategy and Implementation will consider the speaker in reference to the following:

- i) Woolf Institute Policy
- ii) The Cambridge Theological Federation Counter-Terrorism and Security Risk Assessment & Action Plan
- iii) The wider legal context

In consultation with the Director of Strategy and Implementation, the Founder Director will then decide whether it is possible and necessary to modify the event to mitigate identifiable risks. The Woolf Institute is obliged to record and report these additional steps to the Federation governing body.

### **Event refusal**

Only if all the above regulatory measures are considered insufficient will the booking of an external speaker be declined. This decision can be appealed.

### **Appeals Process**

Where the Woolf Institute has refused approval for an event, the Event Organiser may make an appeal against that decision to the Executive Director: [emw36@cam.ac.uk](mailto:emw36@cam.ac.uk). The Executive Director's decision will be final.

### **Transparency**

The Woolf Institute is committed to openness and fairness in its decision making process. The Woolf Institute, as with all Federation Houses and Associates, will make available information on all event requests, processes and decisions if requested.

### **External Objections**

Notwithstanding this policy, the Woolf Institute may receive external objections to external speaker events. If the objections are made in advance of an event, the Senior Research Fellow will confirm to the objector/s that the speaker has been considered under the terms of the above policy and confirm that any information provided by the objector/s will be considered by the Founder Director. If the objections are made subsequent to the event, the Woolf Institute, when it is considered to be appropriate and proportionate, will investigate objections and use these findings to inform future events.

Last reviewed: November 2020  
Next Review Due: November 2021