

Statement on Freedom of Speech and Expression

Context

1. As an associate member of the Cambridge Theological Federation the Institute is required by law to outline principles in relation to right to freedom of speech in the context of other legal responsibilities of the Institute. This Statement takes into account the specific legal responsibilities, as set out in Section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986, the Equality Act 2010 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
2. This Statement outlines the principles of free speech which apply to all Institute staff, students and visitors, including visiting speakers.

Principles

3. The Woolf Institute is strongly committed to the principle of freedom of speech and expression. It fosters an environment where all of its staff, students and visitors can participate fully in the life of the Institute, and where each person feels confident and able to research, question and test received wisdom, and to express new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without fear of isolation, marginalisation or discrimination. Equally, the Institute expects its staff, students and visitors to receive and respond to intellectual and ideological challenges in a constructive and peaceable way. As an associate member of the Cambridge Theological Federation, the Institute acknowledges its statutory duties in protecting its staff, students, visitors and other people from “radicalization”, in terms of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

* See Appendix 1 for the ethos of freedom of speech and expression which the Institute embraces.

4. Subject to paragraph 3 above, no premises of the Institute will be denied to any staff member, student or visitor or body of such people by reason of the beliefs or views of that individual or of that body or the policy or objectives of that body.
5. In holding to these key principles, the Institute will take into accounts its obligations regarding freedom of speech, the management of the health and safety of its staff, students, visitors and the general public, the promotion of equal opportunities and prevention of discrimination on the grounds of belief, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation or other legally-protected characteristics, and its duties associated with preventing people from being drawn into terrorism or the promotion of terrorist activities.

As an example of this, the Institute reserves the right to refuse access to its premises if it is of the opinion that a visitor or the purpose of a meeting is likely to give rise to the incitement

As an example of this, the Institute reserves the right to refuse access to its premises if it is of the opinion that a visitor or the purpose of a meeting is likely to give rise to the incitement of crime and/or is likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Policies and procedures

6. In determining the likelihood of risk of harm to its staff, students or visitors and/or the general public, or of them being drawn into terrorism, or otherwise promoting any violent or illegal action, the Institute or the Federation as a whole publishes policies and/or procedures to set out and manage:

- a) The behavioural expectations of students
- b) The management of events within the Federation at which controversial views may be expressed (whether or not they are held within the Federation); and
- c) the management and conduct of visiting speakers at meetings held within the Federation (see Federation policy).

The Woolf Institute

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