

Visiting and External Speakers and Events Policy FAQs

1. I am organising an event – what do I need to do?
 - Plan the event well in advance, taking into account all University policy implications and associated practicalities (e.g. Health & Safety issues, Equality & Diversity issues etc)
 - With regards the Visiting and External Speakers and Events Policy, ask yourself the four key questions and if you have answered ‘Yes’ to any of the questions you should:
 - i. Complete Section A of the Event and Speaker Approval Form, which asks about the nature of the event including the speaker’s background and the nature of the proposed content
 - ii. Send to your Local Assessing Officer, for discussion and review, so they can complete Section B and – if required – escalate to the Head of Governance to consider whether the event or speaker is authorised.
2. Who, exactly, is the Organiser?
 - The Organiser is the “lead” person responsible for managing the event, and not an administrator who is helping to organise the event on behalf of the Organiser. For example, the Organiser may be an academic member of staff arranging an event or a speaker to attend as part of a curricular or extra-curricular activity, or a member of Professional Services who is arranging a staff development event at a local level.
3. Does every event or invitation of speaker need a form?
 - The Form needs to be completed only for those events where you have answered ‘Yes’ to any of the key questions. The questions must be considered for all events and speakers.
4. What if the event is off-campus?
 - Again, the same considerations must apply to all events that we organise, including those that are off-campus.
5. I am organising a performance event without “speakers” – do I have to follow the Policy?
 - Yes, as the same considerations must apply to all events, even those without official speakers. Some performances could be controversial or attract protest and could raise concerns that warrant escalation and review to ensure freedom of speech principles are balanced against any wider concerns.
6. Our event includes a speaker who will be using Skype to join us - do I have to follow the Policy?
 - Yes, the same considerations must apply to all events.
7. Our speaker has been a regular visiting speaker for several years and we’ve never had any concerns about them – do I have to follow to Policy?
 - Yes, the Organiser’s role is to consider the background of the speaker AND the nature of the content of the speech. In many cases, like this scenario, no concerns will be raised. However, as we change our curriculum and research material to adapt to changing times, the content of certain teaching or research may become more controversial and may require escalation.
8. I am a Local Assessing Officer and am unsure of whether formal escalation is required.
 - If you are still uncertain, please complete Section B and send to Adam Dawkins on adam.dawkins@northumbria.ac.uk
9. Is the Policy intended to restrict the number of events on campus and restrict freedom of speech?
 - Not at all – quite the opposite. Events are encouraged as they form a crucial part of the University’s activities and enhance the overall student experience. The Policy will help us ensure the University fulfils its legal obligations around freedom of speech while giving due regard to the Prevent duty obligations.