

## University of Bradford

### Freedom of Speech Policy

#### Introduction

The University of Bradford is committed to open debate and discussion, and freedom of speech and academic freedom are at the heart of the University's mission and values.

#### Legislative context

The duty of universities to ensure freedom of speech is set out in the following pieces of legislation:

Education Act 1986, states that:

'persons concerned in the government of any establishment....shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the establishment and for visiting speakers.

The duty imposed by subsection (1) above includes (in particular) the duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the use of any premises of the establishment is not denied to any individual or body or persons on any ground connected with –

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

Education Reform Act 1988

Higher Education and Research Act 2017

Equality Act 2010, which requires universities through the public sector equality duty to have due regard to the need to:

- 'Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.'

Human Rights Act 1998

In addition, the University is bound by the specific requirements of the Prevent agenda under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which states that the University:

‘must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, students, members of Council, visitors, external speakers and anyone operating on behalf of the University or on its campus.

## Principles

The University is committed to the implementation of this policy in accordance with the University values which are:

- We encourage participation and openness;
- We encourage creativity and innovation;
- We support academic freedom and respect the right to express diverse points of view;
- We provide equal opportunities for all staff and students to achieve their full potential;
- We apply the best ethical standards in everything we do.

## Policy

The University expects all people within the scope of this Policy to ensure freedom of speech within the law is assured. The University of Bradford is proud of the diversity of its staff and students and the different views and opinions held and as such encourages openness of debate and discussion, including opinions which may be difficult to hear. This must, however, be set alongside the University’s legal obligations to guard against actions which may incite to violence, hatred or breaches of the peace. Discussion and debate must therefore be conducted in a respectful and lawful manner.

The University has a duty to ensure the welfare of all of its staff and students and to ensure that the business of the University is transacted in a safe and tolerant environment. The University will ensure that its legal obligations are met to allow all staff and students to engage in their activities in a responsible manner and will ensure that its obligations are met regarding external speakers to the University.

## Related strategies and policies

The University’s commitment to freedom of speech is articulated in the following:

University Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/governance/university-charter-and-statutes/>

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/governance/ordinances-regulations/>

University Strategy and values:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/about/strategies-policies-mission-and-values/corporate-strategy/>

University Ethics Code:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/university-ethics-committee/>

University Events Policy:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/external-affairs/events-and-partnerships/event-support/>

University Dignity and Respect Policy and Practice:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/dignity-and-respect/>