



# Prevent Policy and Code of Practice (Events and External Speakers)

## Student Success

### Version 3.0

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## **Contents:**

<b>1. The Prevent Duty and Legal Framework .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Solent University Approach .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Designated Prevent Lead, Governance and Partnerships .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. The Prevent Code of Practice: Events and External Speakers .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Safeguarding, Prevent Referral and Channel Programme .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Appendices .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix A - Prevent Event and Speaker Process .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix B - Relevant Legislation, Policy and Guidance .....</b>	<b>8</b>

## **1. The Prevent Duty and Legal Framework**

- 1.1** Since 2015, the University has been required, as a statutory duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The government has issued statutory guidance for all public authorities and guidance specifically aimed at universities. This is known as the Prevent Duty.
- 1.2** The government’s Prevent Duty guidance states that relevant higher education institutions need to balance their legal duties in terms of freedom of speech and academic freedom, while also protecting student and staff welfare. Solent University and the Solent University Students’ Union are committed to preventing radicalisation and terrorism amongst the student body by providing information, advice and support to students.
- 1.3** Prevent is one of the four strands of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST. The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK and its citizens. The Prevent strategy aims to prevent people being radicalised (including online) into becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Universities must consider their Prevent duties, including the risk of radicalisation as part of their day-to-day safeguarding work.
- 1.4** As part of its Prevent Duty, the University will ensure it has the relevant policies and procedures in place to demonstrate it is meeting the requirements of the statutory duty and this includes the provision of appropriate staff training.
- 1.5** The Prevent policy applies to all staff and students of the University. The term ‘students’ includes apprentices and cadets from the Warsash Maritime School.
- 1.6** Compliance with the Prevent Duty is monitored by the Office for Students (OfS) and supported by the Department for Education (DfE). The University is committed to working closely with the OfS and DfE and alongside local partner agencies who also hold statutory responsibilities under the Prevent duty, including the Police and the Local Authority, to safeguard our staff and students.

## 2. Solent University Approach

2.1 Solent University has adopted a proportionate and risk-based approach to the Prevent Duty.

2.2 To ensure compliance with the Prevent Duty, the University is committed to the delivery of the regulatory requirements of the OfS framework. The University will:

- Have a clear, accessible and up to date Prevent Code of Practice.
- Have an [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#) .
- [Maintain the use of the Palo Alto](#) platform which includes advanced firewalls to identify websites being accessed that may be linked to extremism.
- Maintain strong partnership links with key agencies including the DfE, the Police and the Local Authority and work collaboratively with the Safe City Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Adult Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Have a proportionate and clear process for managing external speakers and events, both on campus and online, to enable an assessment of risk, which is available to all staff.
- Maintain a record of all external events and speakers to enable tracking, assessing and mitigating risks for any events and speakers who are assessed as medium or high risk, whilst maintaining the existing duty to promote freedom of speech and academic freedom.
- Engage proactively with the Solent University Students' Union to ensure compliance with the University's Prevent Duty.
- Ensure all new staff complete Prevent training when they join Solent University and refresh this training every two years.
- Submit the annual Accountability and Data Return to the OfS.
- Have in place a Safeguarding Policy which includes reference to the Prevent Duty.
- Ensure that Prevent is a standing item for the Safeguarding Committee with oversight from the relevant University governance processes.

### **3. Designated Prevent Lead, Governance and Partnerships**

- 3.1** The Head of Student Success is the University Designated Prevent lead and the Deputy Head of Student Success (Wellbeing) and the Safeguarding Manager are the named Prevent Officers. The Designated Prevent Lead and Prevent Officers are responsible for oversight of the Prevent Policy and Code of Practice. The Prevent Officers will manage any safeguarding cases which may be Prevent related.
- 3.2** Governance for Prevent sits within the remit of the University Safeguarding Committee with subsequent reporting into the Equality and Wellbeing Committee and Board of Governors. In addition, the University is represented on the Southampton Prevent Partnership Board and the Counter Terrorism Policing South East group.

### **4. The Prevent Code of Practice: Events and External Speakers**

- 4.1 [The Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023](#) creates a new (updated) duty on universities to promote freedom of speech and academic freedom, to be regulated by the [Office for Students](#) (OfS).
- 4.2 Freedom of speech means everyone has the right to express lawful views and opinions freely, in speech or in writing, without interference. Academic freedom means protecting the independence of academics to question and test received views and wisdom and the right for academics to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions.
- 4.3 The Prevent Policy and Code of Practice [Prevent | Students \(solent.ac.uk\)](#) outlines how the University plans for and manages events where there is a risk that freedom of speech or academic freedom are compromised, such as a protest or disruption.
- 4.4 At the same time, the University is aware that it has a duty to provide a healthy and safe environment and must consider its legal obligations regarding activities on its premises which might lead to incitement of violence, racial or religious hatred or a breach of the peace, or otherwise transgress the bounds of lawful speech.
- 4.5 The University recognises that approved external speakers may represent views with which staff and students disagree. The University supports the right to peaceful protest and freedom of speech and the expectations set out above do not seek to restrict that right.

- 4.6 The University will work in partnership with the Solent University Students' Union to ensure Freedom of Speech is upheld across both organisations and follow guidance as outlined by the OfS to ensure mandatory conditions are met.
- 4.7 The Prevent code of practice applies to any externally organised meeting or other activity involving a visiting speaker which is to be held on University premises or within the University's online provision e.g. speakers hosted virtually by the University. In addition, this Code applies to off-campus branded events where the University is the lead organiser, for example, recruitment events and networks, and forums hosted in an external venue.
- 4.8 For all such events and speakers, the event organiser must adhere to the Events and Speakers Process Pathway. A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine the level of risk, and any mitigations needed. A record of all events and speakers assessed as medium or high risk will be maintained by the Prevent Officers for audit and statutory reporting purposes.
- 4.9 It is the responsibility of all Departments to ensure their staff are up to date with this process and policy and understand that failing to provide full information in a timely manner renders a risk that the event will not be able to proceed.
- 4.10 The University will communicate the Prevent Policy and Code of Practice annually to staff and to students.
- 4.11 This Code of Practice will be subject to review on an annual or 'as needed' basis by the Safeguarding Committee with oversight from the Equality and Wellbeing Committee and Board of Governors.

## **5. Safeguarding, Prevent Referral and Channel Programme**

- 5.1 Unless there is an immediate and identifiable risk or explicit threat of terrorism, the University will adopt a safeguarding and wellbeing approach to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism. This approach will include a Prevent referral and further support from the Channel programme where it is deemed necessary. The channel programme is an early intervention multi-safeguarding programme to protect vulnerable children and adults.
- 5.2 The University has a [Safeguarding Policy](#) in place. The policy sets out the University's approach to safeguarding children, adults with care and support needs, and students who may be, or become, an adult at risk. It is supported by operational guidance which

provides relevant detail in relation to the safeguarding measures available to mitigate potential areas of perceived risk including how to report and manage a safeguarding matter or cause for concern. This Prevent Policy will operate in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

- 5.3** If a student is identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation, extremism or terrorism, the Prevent process puts in place support and the relevant safeguards to help. If the Solent University safeguarding team identify safeguarding concerns that require an external Prevent referral, wherever possible, this will be done with the student's consent, unless there is an immediate or ongoing risk of significant harm.

## **6. Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Prevent Events and Speaker Process**

The Events and Speakers Process Pathway and risk assessments are available on the [Prevent Portal](#).

The Designated Prevent Lead and Prevent Officers hold responsibility for authorising events determined to be medium and high risk, there will also be additional oversight from the University Research Ethics and Integrity Committee (UREIC) Chair and/or the Pro-Vice Chancellor Students & Governance where there is high risk or exceptional circumstances to enable these issues to be independently considered.

The University Designated Prevent Lead and Prevent Officers will require any assessment resulting in a medium or high- risk determination to be emailed to them at [safeguarding@solent.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@solent.ac.uk) 10 working days in advance of the event. This enables the required quality assurance, final risk assessment and timely decision making to take place.

The designated staff reserve the right to put in place conditions or undertake action to mitigate any identified risk or deny an event taking place where the risk is exceptionally high, or where a breach of law may occur on the premises. Where this occurs and raises dispute this can be appealed by the event organiser via the Prevent Lead or Officers to the Pro-Vice Chancellor Students & Governance who will act as an independent arbiter.

Example conditions may be, but not limited to:

- The public is not permitted to attend the event.
- Admission may be restricted and controlled by tickets or campus card (or

both).

- Escort arrangements for the speaker.
- The presence of stewards or University security staff (this has cost implications for the organiser).
- Restriction on admission of press, television, broadcasting personnel or social media publicity.
- Appointment of a member of staff as a 'controlling officer'.

The principal organiser, and where relevant the chairperson for the event, will have a duty to secure, as far as possible, both the audience and the speaker and ensure that they act in accordance with the law during the event. In cases where conduct is deemed to be in breach of the law, the principal organiser and/or chairperson is required to give appropriate warning and in cases where it continues, will be required to request the withdrawal or removal of the person concerned or to close the meeting. Security or Police may be called if required.

Any offence or misconduct arising from the event linked to a staff member or student may result in the use of the Staff Behaviour and Disciplinary Policies or the Student Disciplinary Procedure and may also result in a report being made to the relevant authority, for example the Police.

## **Appendix B - Relevant Legislation, Policy and Guidance**

- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42)
- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15)
- [Public Order Act 1986 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/50)
- [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/11)
- <https://students.solent.ac.uk/official-documents/policy-governance-and-information/code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech.pdf>
- [Counter-terrorism strategy \(CONTEST\) 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/contest-2023)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/26)
- [Online Safety Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/11)
- [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/prevent-duty-guidance)



- [Prevent duty guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales \(2015\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)