

Creating safe spaces

In recognition of the diverse student community at UWS and the Student Union's commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment, this policy seeks to create an environment where every student feels valued and empowered, fostering open dialogue, and understanding.

Our Union, its events and spaces must be safe for all students at UWS to enjoy. Below you will find some guidelines that promote open dialogue, mutual respect, understanding and tolerance among students. Take the following aspects into account when planning society activities:

1. Diversity & Inclusion

- Our student body is incredibly diverse, representing various backgrounds, cultures, and identities. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that every student, regardless of their background, feels included and respected by your society.

2. Mental and Emotional Well-being

- A safe and supportive environment positively contributes to the mental and emotional well-being of our students, offering support for those who may face challenges.

3. Academic Success

- When students feel safe and supported in a positive environment, it contributes to a conducive learning experience and they are more likely to thrive academically.

4. Community Building

- To build a strong sense of community among UWS students, we encourage collaboration, understanding, and a shared commitment to creating a positive and inclusive campus culture.

Breaches of the Policy

If members or participants of your society feel unsafe, or you witness behaviour from another person or group that would be in violation of this policy you should alert the Union's staff or officer team immediately. They will then take appropriate action.

If you wish to report the matter formally, you may do so using the Union's complaints procedures on p.39. Any complaints submitted under this policy will be investigated and if necessary the Union's disciplinary procedures will be used to address behaviour that is not to the standard that this policy expects.

Basic Safe Space Principles

Below you will find the principles for your society activities:

1. No Discrimination or Harassment

- a. Nobody shall be discriminated against based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, disability, or any other characteristic. Any form of harassment, bullying, or discrimination is strictly prohibited.

2. Respectful Communication

- a. All members are encouraged to communicate respectfully, acknowledging diverse perspectives and experiences.
- b. Disagreements should be handled with civility, promoting constructive dialogue.

3. Inclusivity

- a. Events and activities organised by your society should be inclusive and welcoming to all students.

4. Confidentiality

- a. Personal information shared among members and participants, especially during discussions, should be treated with confidentiality.
- b. Respect the privacy of others, and avoid sharing sensitive information without consent.

5. Consent

- a. Obtain consent before sharing personal experiences or information.
- b. Respect the right of individuals to set their boundaries within discussions and activities.

6. Awareness

- a. **Raise awareness about the importance of safe space when introducing society activities.**

7. External Speakers / Guests

- a. External speakers / Guests who have been invited to the Union must be vetted in accordance with the Union's external speakers procedure.
- b. No external speaker or guest will be permitted to address or interact with our members if they have been found to have breached any part of this policy in their past interactions with the Union or other bodies.
- c. See [External Speakers Policy](#).

External Speakers Policy

The UWS Students' Union is an organisation committed to ensuring that its spaces are places where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where the diversity of our members and their opinions are promoted, valued and celebrated.

Given the diversity of our community and the guests that can be invited to join it, we understand that sometimes people will have different or opposing views, therefore we have policies in place to ensure that:

- The Union is able to maintain its safe space policy and ensure that no member feels unsafe in any of your events or our venues.
- The Union will screen any external speaker or guest that enters our spaces or premises to ensure that our safe space policy will be maintained.
- The Union will work collaboratively with our students and student groups to ensure that we will reach a sound, evidence based judgement about the individual or organisation that is being screened that allows the Union to meet its various legal and policy obligations.

Principles

Your responsibilities under this policy are:

- to inform the Union with a minimum of **two weeks notice**, of any external speaker or guest that is going to address your members or attendees.
- not to advertise an event that involves external speakers until they have been screened by the Union.

All external speakers or guests aware of their responsibility to abide by the law, the University's and the Union's various policies including:

1. They must not incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law, or have ever done so
2. They must not encourage, glorify or promote any acts of terrorism or have ever done so.
3. They must not spread hatred and intolerance in our community.
4. They must not deliberately insult other faiths or groups of people, or have ever done so.

The Union reserves the right to cancel or prohibit any event, if the procedures provided in this document are not followed or if the event means we are unable to meet our statutory obligations for health, safety and security.

Process of referring a speaker

The society committee must complete the external speaker request form with a minimum of **two weeks notice** for the event to which they will speak. This form must include the following information:

- Expected number of attendees
- Confirmation if the event is for UWS Students only, or is open to the public
- Confirmation of the external speakers affiliations – especially where they are political or religious
- Declaration of any knowledge of controversy attracted by the speaker or topic in the past.
- Confirmation if the event and/or the speaker are likely to attract media attention.
- Links to the speakers profiles on social media, and or their website.

The **external speakers request** form should be sent to societies@uwsunion.org.uk with the **subject** “**External speaker**”. This will then be reviewed by the Student Opportunities Coordinator who will inform you about the outcome of their screening. This may include imposing restrictions or adding safety measures.

Failure to provide this Information, or deliberately failing to disclose the full speaker details will result in the event being cancelled by the Union and the society may face disciplinary action from the Union and the University.

Appeal the outcome

It is possible to appeal the decision made from the investigation and such an appeal would be considered by the Union’s board of Trustees.

1. The Board will review the evidence and submission of the complaint and come to a decision.
2. This decision will be to either:
 - a. Uphold the original decision
 - b. Overturn the original decision and place no restrictions on the event
 - c. Overturn the original decision and add new restrictions.

As the Board has the final authority on all matters of health, safety and security in the Union, their decision will be final.