

# **Freedom of Speech & External Engagement Policy**

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH & EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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Reviewed by	President and Executive Board Member Head of Student Experience and Academic Registry Project and Compliance Lead		
Approved by	President and Executive Board Member		
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Custodian	Academic Registry		

### Revision History

Revision No.	Revision Date	Section No.	Remarks
1.0	August, 2022		New Document
2.0	August, 2025	All Sections	Updated

### Dissemination

Through OU Student Support Service Portal and website to all OU students and staff.

### Internal Control and Validation

To ensure compliance with this policy and procedure:

- The Dean, Academic Affairs is responsible for the implementation.
- The Academic Registry maintains control and compliance.

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## 1.1. Policy Objective

- 1.1.1. The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression for all members of the Oryx University (OU) community, including staff, students, and invited guests.
- 1.1.2. This policy establishes a framework to:
  - Foster an environment of open discourse, intellectual debate, and the respectful exchange of diverse ideas.
  - Facilitate meaningful and compliant external engagement and partnerships.
  - Protect the rights of individuals while ensuring all speech and activity is conducted within the laws of the State of Qatar and aligns with OU's institutional values.
  - Provide clear procedures for organizing events and inviting external speakers to mitigate risks related to security, safety, and reputation.
  - Define the sanctions for non-compliance with this policy.

## 1.2. Domain of Implementation

This policy applies to:

- 1.2.1. All OU staff members, members of the Board of Trustees, shareholders, and any individual officially representing OU.
- 1.2.2. All duly enrolled full or part-time OU students.
- 1.2.3. Approved student bodies, societies, clubs, and associations operating on OU premises.
- 1.2.4. Any individual or organization renting or using OU premises.
- 1.2.5. All invited external speakers, guests, and participants in events held under OU's name or patronage.
- 1.2.6. All activities, meetings, and events conducted on OU premises or that use OU's identity.

## 1.3. Definitions

<i>External Speaker</i>	Any individual who is not a current student or employee of OU invited to for an event.
<i>OU Premises</i>	Any physical location owned, leased, controlled by, or used by OU or its approved student bodies.
<i>Principal Organiser</i>	The individual who organises the event and approved by OU to be responsible for liaising and ensuring compliance with this policy.
<i>Responsible Officer</i>	The Head of Academic Registry, or their official nominee, vested with the authority to enforce this policy.

## 1.4. Abbreviations

OU	Oryx University
LJMU	Liverpool John Moores University

## 1.5. Freedom of Speech within the Law

- 1.5.1. OU is committed to upholding freedom of speech and expression within the legal framework of the State of Qatar. This right is not absolute and must be balanced with the duty to:
- Maintain order and security on OU premises.
  - Protect the safety of all individuals.
  - Safeguard the good name and reputation of OU.
  - Prevent unlawful speech, including hate speech, incitement to violence, and discrimination.
- 1.5.2. The Head of Academic Registry holds final decision-making authority to grant, refuse, or impose conditions on any activity to ensure these commitments are met. An activity may be refused if reasonably practicable steps cannot be implemented to secure lawful freedom of speech.

## 1.6. Procedures

- 1.6.1. **Application Requirement:** For any activity potentially falling under this policy, a Principal Organiser must be appointed. A formal application must be submitted to the Head of Academic Registry in writing at least 7 calendar days prior to the proposed event.
- 1.6.2. **Application Content:** The application must include:
- Nature of the activity.
  - Names and affiliations of any external speakers.
  - Proposed venue, date, and time.
  - Estimated arrival/departure times and access plans for speakers.
  - Any other relevant information.
- 1.6.3. **Approval Process:** The Head of Academic Registry will review the application and may:
- **Grant permission**, with or without designating the activity.
  - **Refuse permission**, providing written reasons if the activity poses an unacceptable risk.

- **Impose specific conditions** on the event (e.g., venue, timing, stewarding, ticketing, media access).

#### 1.6.4. **Key Obligations:**

- **No Pre-Approval Advertising:** The event must not be advertised internally or externally without the prior written approval of the Head of Academic Registry.
- **Compliance with Laws:** The Principal Organiser must ensure the activity does not infringe Qatari law.
- **EDI Commitment:** All external speakers must agree to abide by OU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion statement (Appendix 4). A signed copy must be retained.
- **Stewards:** A list of stewards must be provided to the Head of Academic Registry for approval. All staff will be briefed by OU Security.
- **Health & Safety:** The Principal Organiser is responsible for strict observance of all OU health, safety, and fire regulations.

### 1.7. **Conduct of Designated Activities**

- 1.7.1. **Chairperson:** The Head of Academic Registry may require a Chair to be appointed for a designated activity. The Chair is responsible for securing orderly conduct and compliance with the law during the event.
- 1.7.2. **Announcement:** At the commencement of the activity, it will be announced as a designated activity, and the audience will be informed that reasonable steps will be taken to ensure a fair hearing for the speaker.
- 1.7.3. **Disruption Management:** While sporadic interruption may be tolerated, continuous or organized disruption will not. The Chair has the authority to warn, and then remove, persistently disruptive individuals.
- 1.7.4. **Suspension or Closure:** The Chair, after consulting with the Head of Academic Registry where practicable, may suspend or close the meeting if it can no longer be conducted orderly or if safety is jeopardized.
- 1.7.5. **Security:** Security staff will operate on the instruction of the Chair or Head of Academic Registry, using minimum necessary force to remove individuals only as a last resort. Police assistance may be requested in severe cases.

## 1.8. Sanctions and Penalties

- 1.8.1. **Disciplinary Action:** Conduct in breach of this policy will render individuals subject to disciplinary proceedings under relevant OU staff or student regulations, without prejudice to any legal action that may be taken in the courts of Qatar.
- 1.8.2. **Police Involvement:** Where a breach of the law occurs at an event, OU will assist police in identifying offenders for appropriate legal action.

## 1.9. Roles and responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Principal Organiser	The individual responsible for submitting the application, liaising with the Head of Academic Registry, and ensuring the event complies with all conditions set forth in this policy.
Head of Academic Registry	Responsible for granting/refusing permission for events, designating activities, and ensuring overall compliance with this policy.
Dean of Student Wellbeing and Success	Responsible for providing support and guidance to students involved in or affected by a violation of this policy.
All Staff	Responsible for being aware of this policy, raising awareness, and reporting any potential violations.

## 1.10. Advice and Information

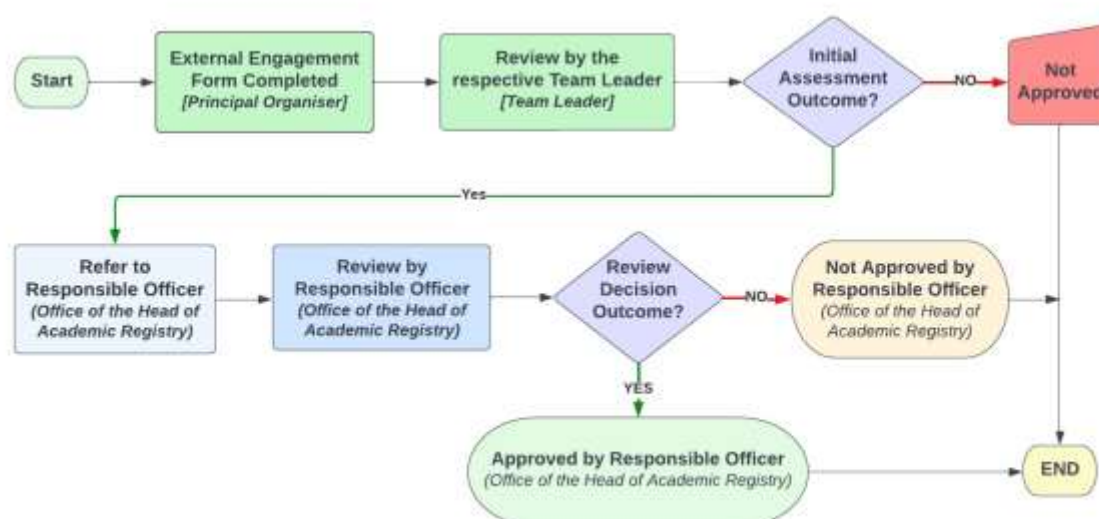
- 1.10.1. Students seeking advice on this policy should contact the Academic Registry at [registry@oryx.edu.qa](mailto:registry@oryx.edu.qa) or +974 4021 0000.
- 1.10.2. Staff should direct queries to the People and Culture department.
- 1.10.3. The full policy and related documents are available on the University website: <https://www.oryx.edu.qa/policies/>.
- 1.10.4. The External Engagement Approval Form is found in Appendix 3. OU Academic Registry Team can provide guidance, advice, and information about Tuition Fee, and details relating to the complete fee structure.

## 1.11. Appendices

### 1.11.1. Appendix 1 – Housekeeping

- No food or drink, alcoholic or otherwise, or any receptacles, containers or other implements which could be used as missiles may be taken into a designated activity unless it is pre-approved by the Head of Academic Registry or nominee. These will be confiscated and any person carrying them may be refused entry to the meeting.
- Similarly, loudhailers, horns, hooters, or any other implements that could be used to disrupt the meeting will not be permitted. Handheld banners and flags may only be displayed outside the meeting and if brought inside it must be furled up and left in the care of an official whilst the meeting is in progress.
- Smoking is not permitted in or immediately outside any buildings on OU campuses. Separate arrangements may apply in halls of residence in respect of individual study bedrooms designated as smoking rooms, or in any external smoking areas as provided.
- All rooms used for activities, whether designated or otherwise, should be left in a clean and tidy condition. Organisers will be charged for any additional clearing that is necessary as well as for any damage or breakages.

### 1.11.2. Appendix 2 – Sign offs for external speakers





### 1.11.3. Appendix 3 – External Engagement Approval Form

#### External Engagement Approval Form



Principal Organiser Information	
Name	
Contact Email	Telephone Number:
Nature of Event	
Names of Visiting speaker/s	
Reference ID	<input type="checkbox"/> Credentials <input type="checkbox"/> Card <input type="checkbox"/> CV <input type="checkbox"/> Qatar ID <input type="checkbox"/> Passport
Web link for additional information about the speaker/s:	

Event Information	
Name of Organisation	
Any known affiliations <i>(particularly religious or political)</i>	
Expected Number of Attendees	<b>Level of Study</b> <i>(if applicable)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> L3 <input type="checkbox"/> L4 <input type="checkbox"/> L5 <input type="checkbox"/> L6 <input type="checkbox"/> L7 <input type="checkbox"/> NA
Proposed Venue of Event	
Proposed Event Date	Proposed Time Slot
Type of Event: <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Debate <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Others <i>(please specify)</i>	Audience Access: <input type="checkbox"/> Ticket only <input type="checkbox"/> Invitation only <input type="checkbox"/> Campus only <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted/public

Visiting Speaker / Guest / Reporting External Person Information	
Any known previous controversy <i>(relating to the speaker/s)</i>	
Is this event and speakers likely to attract media interest? If so, why?	
Estimated times of arrival / departure of visiting speaker/s	
Transport Coordinator	Contact No.:

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## External Engagement Approval Form



Field Trip Information			
Anticipated route:		Alternate route:	
Pick-up point:		Drop-Off Point:	
Time:		Time:	
Participants Information	[Full List with contact numbers & liability forms attached]		<input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Students

Additional Requirement / Support Information		
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Designing	<input type="checkbox"/> IT / Technical Support <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/> Video Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Token of Appreciation
Details:		

Sign-Off / Verified Information			
Principal Organiser:		Signature:	
Programme Coordinator		Signature:	
Dean of Academic Affairs	Signature	Date sent to the Registry	
Approval / Refusal by Office of the Registry			

Office Use Only		<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused
<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Departments informed <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Other arrangements (if any)	<input type="checkbox"/> List of Participants <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance Collected <input type="checkbox"/> Liability Forms Filled		
Academic Registry Staff (Name & Signature)		Date:	
Head of Student Experience (Name & Signature)		Date:	
Approver Signature (President)		Date:	

#### **1.11.4. Appendix 4 – OU Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement**

##### **1.11.4.1. Consent Statement**

- OU is committed to promoting ethos that safeguard the dignity and wellbeing of everyone and encourages practices that take into account the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. It recognises that discrimination, harassment, and victimisation may be experienced by all in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with colleagues, peers, visitors, and staff.
- In alignment with the policies and laws of the state of Qatar, OU does not tolerate any form of discrimination which it recognises as unacceptable, discriminatory, and unlawful, and is proactive in ensuring that people are treated fairly. This commitment is consistent with the significant progress that OU has already made in this area.
- OU recognises the valuable contribution that can be made by staff and students in terms of qualities of experiences brought to learning, teaching, support services, research, consultancy, enterprise, widening participation, administration, and management.

##### **1.11.4.2. Zero Tolerance Statement**

- At OU, we promote an environment where everyone is treated equally and with dignity and respect. We operate a policy of zero tolerance towards any form of discrimination and work towards equality, human rights, and social justice. We have an equal opportunities sub-committee who contributes to policy development and raises awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion activities.
- In addition, we have the Associate Dean of Student Wellbeing and Success, who consult and assist with embedding equality and diversity across OU. Our Academic Registry and Student Experience department also works to ensure all students are treated with dignity and respect.
- Whilst OU recognises the valuable contribution that can be made by staff and students in terms of quality of experience brought to learning, teaching, support services, research, consultancy, enterprise, widening participation, administration, and management.
- OU expects these contributions to be made with due regard to equitable treatment regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity or other relevant distinction.
- In full adherence to the law of the state of Qatar, OU respects the legal obligations of OUs partners with respect to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and we will operate a zero-tolerance stance towards incidents involving equality, diversity, and inclusion related issues.

#### 1.11.4.3. Bullying and Harassment Statement

- OU is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that take into account the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. It recognises that discrimination, bullying and harassment may be experienced by all in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with colleagues, peers, visitors, and students.
- OU seeks to eliminate all forms of bullying and harassment as it recognises that such behaviour is unacceptable, discriminatory and, in certain circumstances, also unlawful.
- Individuals may be unaware of the effect of their behaviour on others and, therefore, everyone should take care to avoid giving unwanted offence.
- OU expects all staff, students, visitors, and contractors to support the establishment of a pleasant working and learning environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. If, however, bullying and harassment do occur, there are a number of actions that individuals, or anyone who is aware that bullying and harassment may be occurring, can take.
- Any incidents of bullying or harassment that do occur will be taken seriously and could provide grounds for disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal or expulsion from OU. Furthermore, individuals who harass or bully may be subject to criminal and/or civil prosecution.
- All line leaders in OU, as part of their leadership and managerial responsibilities, have a professional as well as legal obligation to eliminate bullying or harassment of which they are, or should be, aware. All individuals will be personally accountable for their behaviour, actions and/or lack of actions, in cases of complaints of harassment or bullying.

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For the duration of my event, activity or speaking commitment, I agree to abide by the OU Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion statement.

Signature:

Print name:

Date: