

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

CODE OF PRACTICE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

For meetings or other activities on Academy premises

Introduction

- 1 The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (“the Academy”) is committed to upholding academic freedom of enquiry in its training, education and research and to freedom of artistic and creative expression in the work created, presented and studied at the Academy. This can only be achieved if all concerned behave with lawful tolerance and respect the Academy’s core values and anti-discriminatory practices.
- 2 Section 43 (amended) of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 places a duty on universities (and more particularly, every individual and body involved in the governance of such an institution) to:
 - 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
 - and in particular a duty
 - to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the use of any premises of the [university] is not denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with—
 - (a) the beliefs or views of that individual or of any member of that body; or
 - (b) the policy or objectives of that body.
- 3 Sub-section 43(3) further requires that
 - The governing body of every such [university] shall, with a view to facilitating the discharge of the duty [set out] above in relation to that [university], issue and keep up to date a code of practice setting out —
 - (a) the procedures to be followed by members, students and employees of the establishment in connection with the organisation —
 - (i) of meetings which are to be held on premises of the establishment and which fall within any class of meeting specified in the code of practice; and
 - (ii) of other activities which are to take place on those premises and which fall within any class of activity so specified; and
 - (b) the conduct required of such persons in connection with any such meeting or activity.
- 4 The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires that any universities and colleges registered with the Office for Students (OfS) must follow the OfS’s regulatory framework, which states that governing bodies should take ‘such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured within the provider.’
- 5 This Code of Practice is also issued to fulfil the Academy’s responsibilities in discharging its duties in relation to freedom of speech within the law.
- 6 The Director or his delegate will have oversight of the operation of this Code of Practice.

- 7 The Academy Council (its governing body) originally approved this Code of Practice at its meeting on 16 June 2016. A quorate number of members approved an updated and revised version following the cancellation of the scheduled Council meeting on 19 March 2020, owing to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Scope and purpose

- 8 The Code of Practice applies to all Academy staff and students, including visiting professionals (hereinafter called “members”), and to any other person in attendance at any meeting or other function which has been duly authorised to take place on Academy premises.
- 9 The procedures described below and attached in Appendix 1 exist to:
 - (a) specify arrangements for the management of meetings and other functions on Academy premises which are not an integral part of the normal artistic, academic and/or administrative business of the Academy;
 - (b) identify reasonably practicable steps that must be taken to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members of the Academy and for visiting speakers; and
 - (c) specify arrangements for Academy-branded events involving external speakers and taking place outside the campus.
- 10 Academy members may book accommodation for meetings, classes and events that form an integral part of the Academy’s normal artistic, academic and administrative business, subject to availability and to compliance with the usual rules and conditions of hiring and to the provisions of this Code of Practice. The Academy does not intend to deny use of its premises to any individual member or group seeking to host an event within the scope of the law on any ground connected with the belief or views of that individual or member of that body.
- 11 At the discretion of the Director of Finance and Operations, permission may be given for the Academy’s accommodation to be hired by outside persons or organisations, including permission for meetings or events to be attended by members of the public. Where such permission is granted, the outside person or body must provide the information outlined in Appendix 1 and, if required, complete an appropriate risk assessment prior to any booking being confirmed. The outside person or body must also meet any additional costs associated with managing any risks to the Academy represented by the booking.
- 12 Members of the Academy and other persons attending meetings or events on the premises must behave in a lawful manner and in accordance with the Academy’s codes of conduct for staff and students, and the terms of any agreement for hire.
- 13 In the case of meetings or functions that come within the provisions of this Code of Practice (see paragraph 8) and are organised by members of staff or students, the names of visiting speakers must be approved by the Academy prior to invitation.

Arrangements and procedures

- 14 **Staff.** When a member of Academy staff wishes to hold a meeting or function that is not directly related to the Academy’s normal artistic, academic or administrative business on the Academy’s premises, or is to be hosted in the Academy’s name off-site, a written request must be made to the Director of Communications and Marketing. Requests should be made as far as possible in advance of the projected meeting date, and not less than three weeks in advance. Requests should provide the information outlined in Appendix 1.
- 15 **Students.** When an Academy student (and this is restricted to students on full-time courses lasting at least two terms) wishes to host an event that is not directly related to the Academy’s normal artistic, academic or administrative business, a written request should be made to the Registrar. Requests should be made as far as possible in advance of the projected meeting date, and not less than three weeks in advance. Requests should provide the information

outlined in Appendix 1.

- 16 **RADA Festival.** The RADA Festival and any events arranged by the Festival Producer which are additional to the curriculum will be subject to the same process of review as any other events proposed by staff. The Director of Communications and Marketing is responsible for assessing, reviewing and approving these events in accordance with the information required and risk assessment prepared by the Festival Producer. The approval may be for individual events or groups of events/panels during the process of selecting material for the RADA Festival. The Festival Producer will design an appropriate and proportionate process in line with the information required by this policy.
- 17 A risk assessment of the event should accompany the request (using the guidance in Appendix 2) and this will be reviewed by the Director of Communications and Marketing or Registrar (as in paragraph 18 below). The staff member or student making the request should indicate whether, in their opinion, an event is likely to give rise to difficulties in relation to freedom of speech, or to the safety of the speaker or others within the audience. This will inform any judgment concerning whether permission to host an event is given.
- 18 The Director of Communications and Marketing or Registrar (as appropriate) will review the proposed request and risk assessment and reach a judgment. They may seek further information in relation to the request, including consulting other members of the senior leadership team and, where appropriate, referring to the Academy Director. In the light of the risk assessment the designated senior manager may determine to postpone or cancel an external event, or to set any other reasonable conditions (including but not limited to security arrangements necessary, restrictions on external attendance, and the time the event must end) in relation to any event which is permitted to take place.
- 19 Prior to receiving approval, events may not be advertised without the express permission, in writing, of the Academy Director or his nominee.
- 20 Any decision about whether the event may take place will be communicated to the organiser usually within a fortnight of receiving the request.
- 21 Where a staff or student member or body has made a request to book accommodation or host an event and wishes to challenge any decision taken, they may make an appeal to the Academy Director. Such an appeal will be heard by the Academy Director or his nominee as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Academy Director's ruling shall be final. External organisations have no right of appeal.
- 22 In considering appeals, the Academy Director may seek the advice of a freedom of speech panel which will normally comprise:
 - another member of the senior leadership team not involved in the operational assessment of this policy,
 - two members of teaching staff, normally to be members of Academic Board, a student member, usually one of the two Lead Students, or other student year group representative if neither Lead Student is available,and may conduct its business through a face-to-face meeting; through teleconference or video-conference; or by correspondence.
- 23 Members of the freedom of speech panel for each case should not include individuals who have been involved in determining whether or not an event may proceed before it reaches the appeal stage.

General Conditions

- 24 Infringements of or departures from this Code of Practice by members of the Academy will render those responsible subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with Academy

regulations and policies. Additionally, if any such actions involve breaches of the law, the Academy will be ready to assist the prosecuting authorities to implement the processes of law.

- 25 Any sharing of information with third parties relating to external speakers, speaker requests or the use of premises by groups and speakers, must be authorised by the Academy Director.
- 26 Nothing in this Code of Practice shall detract from the responsibility and duty of a chair or organiser to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that the provisions of section 43 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 are complied with.
- 27 Nothing in this Code of Practice shall prevent a senior officer of the Academy from taking such steps as may be necessary at any time to ensure the safety of members of the Academy or other persons, or to safeguard the premises and property of the Academy.

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