

 <p>Farnborough College of Technology</p>	<p>Freedom of Speech – Code of Practice</p>
<p>Owner</p>	<p>Vice Principal - Teaching, Learning, Completion, and Higher Education</p>
<p>Approval by Corporation</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Date reviewed:</p>	<p>July 2025</p>
<p>Date for next review:</p>	<p>July 2026</p>

Introduction

University Centre Farnborough is committed to upholding the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom as fundamental to the ethos of education. This Code of Practice outlines the institution’s approach to ensuring that lawful freedom of speech is protected and promoted across all areas of university life.

This Code applies to all students, staff, governors, and visitors, and covers all activities conducted on campus, online, or under the institution’s name. It is designed to comply with the legal duties set out in the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.

The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance on the responsibilities of individuals and the institution in relation to freedom of speech, and to establish procedures for managing events, external speakers, and any disputes that may arise.

Principles and Values

University Centre believe that freedom of speech is essential to the pursuit of knowledge, the development of critical thinking, and the fostering of a vibrant academic community. All members of the institution have the right to express their views freely, provided that such expression remains within the boundaries of the law.

Academic freedom is equally protected, allowing staff to teach, research, and publish without fear of institutional censorship or disciplinary action, provided their conduct is lawful and professional.

While the institution supports the right to express controversial or unpopular opinions, it does not tolerate speech that incites violence, promotes hatred, harasses individuals or groups, or breaches legal obligations such as defamation or data protection.

The University Centre maintain a position of institutional neutrality. This means that while individuals may use institutional platforms to express their views, the institution itself does

not endorse those views and remains impartial in matters of political, religious, or ideological debate.

Procedures and responsibilities

The institution holds responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal duties related to freedom of speech. The senior management team are responsible for implementing this Code and ensuring that staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

All members of the institution are expected to uphold the principles of this Code in their academic, professional, and social conduct. Event organisers must ensure that any planned activities involving external speakers are registered in advance and subject to appropriate risk assessment.

Events that are likely to attract significant public attention, controversy, or security concerns must be reviewed by a member of the senior management team. The institution may impose conditions on such events to ensure safety and legality, including requirements for security, moderation, or changes to format or venue.

In cases where risks cannot be adequately mitigated, the institution reserves the right to cancel events. Disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who unlawfully disrupt events, prevent others from exercising their right to free speech or fail to follow the Code of Practice / Freedom of Speech act.

Monitoring and Review

This Code of Practice will be reviewed annually by the senior management team, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance from the Office for Students. Records of events, speaker approvals, and any restrictions imposed will be maintained for monitoring and audit purposes.

Any individual who believes that their right to freedom of speech has been infringed may raise a complaint through the institution's formal complaints procedure. Complaints will be investigated promptly and fairly, and individuals will have the right to appeal decisions internally. Where appropriate, complaints may be escalated to the Office for Students or the Office for the Independent Adjudicator.

To support the implementation of this Code, the institution will provide guidance and training to staff and students during induction and via information sharing platforms such as the higher education working group and learner tutorials. This will include clarification of the code of practice and resources ([Regulatory advice 24: Guidance related to freedom](#)

[of speech - Office for Students](#)) to help individuals understand their rights and responsibilities under the law.

The University Centre remain committed to fostering an environment where freedom of speech and academic freedom are respected, protected, and celebrated as core values of education.