

Freedom of Speech Policy

Review Date: [1/1/2025]

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines iQualifyUK's commitment to upholding the principle of freedom of speech, ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of the institution. It applies to students, staff, visitors, and external speakers engaging with iQualifyUK's educational activities.

iQualifyUK acknowledges its duty to balance freedom of speech with the need to prevent harm, protect individuals from unlawful speech, and comply with legal obligations under UK law, including but not limited to the **Education (No. 2) Act 1986**, **Equality Act 2010**, and **Prevent Duty Guidance 2015**.

2. Principles of Freedom of Speech

iQualifyUK is committed to the following principles:

- Open Expression:** The right of individuals to express their views, challenge ideas, and engage in robust debate without fear of censorship or reprisal.
- Respect for Diversity:** While encouraging free expression, the institution fosters an environment of mutual respect, ensuring no individual or group feels threatened or marginalized.
- Legal Boundaries:** Freedom of speech does not include the right to:
 - Engage in hate speech or incitement to violence.
 - Promote terrorism or radicalization.
 - Discriminate, harass, or defame individuals or groups.
- Educational Purpose:** Freedom of speech must align with the academic mission of iQualifyUK, promoting knowledge exchange and critical thinking.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

- Students and Staff:**
 - Have the right to express their views within the limits of the law.
 - Must ensure that their expression respects the dignity and rights of others.
 - Are encouraged to engage in constructive dialogue and debate.
- External Speakers and Visitors:**
 - Must adhere to this policy when participating in events or activities on campus or organized by iQualifyUK.
 - Are required to comply with the institution's **External Speaker and Events Policy** to ensure their speech aligns with the principles outlined here.

4. External Speaker and Event Approval



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Head Office: 9 Hills Road, Cambridge, England, CB2 1GE

Campus: Queensgate Centre, Orsett Road, Grays, Thurrock, RM17 5DF

Registered in England and Wales. Company Registration Number: 8525590

All events involving external speakers must undergo an approval process to ensure compliance with legal and institutional guidelines. This includes:

1. A risk assessment to identify potential concerns, such as:
 - o Speech that could incite violence or hatred.
 - o Topics that may contravene UK law or institutional values.
2. Approval or rejection by designated authorities within iQualifyUK.
3. Monitoring of events, where necessary, to maintain a safe environment.

5. Balancing Free Speech with Legal and Ethical Obligations

While iQualifyUK promotes freedom of speech, it is obligated to act where expression:

- Breaches criminal law (e.g., hate speech, incitement to terrorism).
- Violates the rights of others under the Equality Act 2010.
- Conflicts with safeguarding responsibilities under the **Prevent Duty**.

The institution reserves the right to intervene, restrict, or cancel events or activities that pose a threat to these obligations.

6. Handling Complaints and Grievances

- Any individual who feels their freedom of speech has been unjustly restricted may submit a complaint through the institution's **Complaints Procedure**.
- Complaints will be handled promptly, fairly, and transparently.

7. Policy Enforcement

iQualifyUK may take disciplinary action against individuals or groups who violate this policy, as outlined in the institution's **Code of Conduct**. Serious breaches may result in referral to external authorities.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and compliant with UK laws and educational standards.

9. Related Policies and Documents

- Code of Conduct
- External Speaker and Events Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy


Approval

Policy Owner: iQualifyUK

Approved By: Board of Directors

Approval Date: 21/01/2025

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