**Oxford SU Freedom of Speech Policy**

**1 Scope and Background**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure Oxford SU is able to support events while managing risks, ensuring safety, and ensuring freedom of speech within the law.

1.2 Oxford SU is committed to its charitable objective of providing social, cultural, and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of Students[[1]](#footnote-1). This includes supporting its members to run events which deliver on this objective.

1.3 Oxford SU does not own or operate a premises and therefore will work with any additional policies of the premises owner hosting a given event.

**2 Legal Obligations**

2.1 Oxford University, and by extension Oxford SU, are bound by Section 43 of the Education Act 1986[[2]](#footnote-2) 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”.

2.2 Oxford University outlines its compliance with the Education Act 1986 in its Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech[[3]](#footnote-3).

2.3 Oxford SU is bound by The Human Rights Act 1998[[4]](#footnote-4), in particular, Articles 9, 10, and 11 which provide for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.

2.4 There are limitations within the law, such as the Equality Act 2010[[5]](#footnote-5), on the commitments outlined in 2.1 and 2.3 which require Oxford SU to protect individuals and groups from intimidation, discrimination, and the incitement of a crime.

2.5 In order to comply with its legal obligations and commitments Oxford SU will;

(a) do all that is reasonably practical to protect our members from unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,

(b) not allow communications which are threatening, abusive, or intended to harass, alarm, or distress, and

(c) reaffirm that it is a criminal offence to incite or encourage others to commit a crime, including acts of terrorism.

**3 Safety**

3.1 Oxford SU is committed to ensuring all guests at its events are safe and protected from harm including, but not limited to, overcrowding, physical violence, intimidation, and threats.

1. <https://www.oxfordsu.org/pageassets/your-union/governing-documents/Articles-of-Association_2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/61/section/43> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://gazette.web.ox.ac.uk/files/codeofpracticeonfreedomofspeech-1tono5092pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)