

Policy on Electoral Campaigning on Campus

As an institution with charitable status, the University follows the guidance issued by the Charity Commission in its documents *Speaking out: Guidance on Campaigning and Political Activity by Charities (CC9)* and *Guidance: Charities, Elections and Referendums*.

Following this guidance, the University has adopted the following Policy:

During general, local government, European elections and referenda campaigns, the University, as an institution with charitable status, is obliged by charity and electoral law to conduct itself in a fair and transparent manner concerning the conduct of any political activities on campus. The University will therefore treat all political parties, their members and candidates equally.

The University is politically neutral and will not support or oppose a political party or candidate, neither will it make donations in cash or in kind to political parties, their members or candidates.

Candidates, political parties and their members may not come onto University property to promote party political activity without having sought and been granted permission, and will be required to leave if they have not acquired the necessary permission. For the avoidance of doubt, no political party, member or candidate may campaign on campus without the University's permission.

Candidates, political parties and their members may hire University premises for private or public meetings. Such hire shall be subject to the University's normal commercial rates and terms and conditions.

The University may refuse to hire premises to a candidate, political party or its members if it has good reason to believe that to hire the facilities would be deleterious to the best interests of the University, its students or staff or are advised by the police that to do so would create a risk of public disorder.

Candidates, political parties and their members may not request or cause to be distributed or displayed any promotional material on campus. Such promotional material includes: posters, flyers, notices, brochures, products, etc. Any such promotional material will be removed by University staff.

The University may publish the views of political parties and candidates in local and national elections or referenda where these views relate to the University's charitable purposes and publishing them will raise public interest and debate about the underlying issues.

The University may, at its discretion, issue a general invitation to all political parties and candidates involved in an election campaign or referendum to take part in hustings or canvassing, subject to any such reasonable limitations as the University may impose equally on all political parties or candidates.

Definitions

'Political party' means a party registered with the Electoral Commission.

'Candidate' means a person duly nominated and authorised to represent a political party in an election.

'Member' means a registered member of a political party.

'Equally' means that no political party or candidate will be treated more or less favourably than another.

'University property' means land and buildings held by the University under freehold, leasehold or licence or which is otherwise under its direct and immediate control.

Protocols

The University is a charitable institution established for educational purposes. While it is an open and welcoming environment it is not a public venue. The University therefore has the right to refuse to grant permission to any outside body wishing to use its premises. This includes occasions when staff or students wish to organise meetings or activities on University premises on behalf of, or in conjunction with, political parties or candidates.

Requests for the use of the University property by political parties or candidates must be made in the first instance to the Director of Communications, Development and Marketing.

The Director of Communications, Development and Marketing is responsible for:

- ensuring that the political party and candidate concerned is appraised of this policy and agrees to uphold it;
- confirming with the Events Office that the booking does not conflict with any other prior booked event, whether University or otherwise; and
- confirming the suitability of the event under this policy with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (TQSE).

If an event is likely to cause controversy, or has the potential to lead to public disorder or some other breach of the law, the organisers must give notice of this to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (TQSE) at the earliest opportunity, and no fewer than fifteen (15) working days before the date of the event.

Where the Deputy Vice Chancellor (TQSE) determines, on a balance of probabilities, that a meeting has the potential to lead to public disorder or some other breach of the law he may direct that the booking be refused.

In the absence of any such notice and in the light of further information, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (TQSE) acting *proprio motu* may determine that, on a balance of probabilities, a meeting has the potential to lead to public disorder or some other breach of the law and he may direct that the booking be cancelled.

Relationship with the Students' Union

The University of Lincoln Students' Union (SU) is an independent and autonomous charitable organisation which exercises control over its own buildings and determines its

own policies relating to their use, subject to approval by its Board of Trustees. The relationship between the University and the SU is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organisations.

Clause 9.5 of the MOU is material to this policy. It states:

‘The University and the Union will work together to enhance and protect each other’s reputations and standing in the wider community, taking all actions reasonably possible to ensure that their respective reputations are not brought into disrepute by the actions of the other, or their staff or members.’

The SU has its own policy for external speakers which is entitled, ‘Handling Events with External Speakers’. For further information on this, please contact the SU. The SU’s policy is consistent with this University policy, but for the avoidance of doubt it is agreed:

- Should the SU, as an entity, invite political parties or candidates to address its members, it shall ensure that all political parties and candidates shall be treated equally within the meaning of this policy.
- Where a club or society with a political affiliation or orientation invites a political party or candidate to address its members and seeks to use University property for such a meeting, the Activities Department shall inform the Events Manager, who will then invoke the University process.

Approved by the Senior Management Team
09/02/2015