

External Speaker Code of Practice

This process applies to all bookings of events involving the engagement of an external speaker to give a presentation, talk or lecture under the auspices of either the University of Bristol (UoB) or Bristol Students Union (Bristol SU), whether hosted on or off UoB or Bristol SU premises. The process is not normally expected to apply to the engagement of visiting speakers to contribute to the delivery of approved academic programmes or to take part in research seminars at UoB.

1 When to use this procedure

This procedure should be followed whenever an event involving an external speaker is organised and should be commenced at the earliest opportunity. No booking of the speaker or venue should be confirmed until a decision has been made under this procedure that the event can go ahead.

All those involved in this procedure should consult the recent guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on [Freedom of Expression in Universities](#) (February 2019) (the EHRC Code) and the University's [Free Speech Policy](#) which underpins this Code.

2 The Event Organiser

2.1 The Event Organiser is the person responsible for the event.

The Event Organiser may be:

- A student(s), including a member(s) of
 - A Bristol SU affiliated group
 - An Independent/informal student group
 - A JCRs
 - An Academic (school, faculty or programme-based group)
- A staff member
 - UoB
 - Bristol SU
- An external user

2.2 Event Organiser: Students and Bristol SU members of Staff

If the Event Organiser is a student or a Bristol SU member of staff they **must** undertake a self-assessment by completing the [Self-Assessment Form](#) to determine whether further scrutiny is required. Once the self-assessment form has been submitted it will be reviewed by the Bristol SU Assessor (or their nominee) who will decide whether the event can be approved at this stage or requires referral to the Decision Maker (see paragraph 4 below).

Event Organisers must:

- Comply with any mitigation required by either the Assessor or the Decision Maker and respond to requests from the Assessor in relation to the event.
- Submit the self-assessment form at least three weeks in advance of the proposed event date. **If submitted later than this a response cannot be guaranteed and the event may not be permitted to go ahead.**

Event Organisers should remember that:

- that there are a number of ways in which they are able to book a room for an event and that booking a room does not mean that they have permission to host the event; and
- the venue that they have proposed for the event may change if the risk assessment process finds that the proposed venue is not suitable for their event e.g. for security reasons.

2.3 Event Organiser: University Staff or External Users

If the Event Organiser is a member of University staff or an external user they **must**:

- complete the [Event Organiser \(Staff or External User\) Self-Assessment Form](#) to determine whether there are any matters which may require further scrutiny under this procedure. External users must complete this assessment with a member of staff.
 - If they decide that the risks identified in the self-assessment are low and the answer to question 19 is “No” the event can go ahead and the venue can be booked. **It is anticipated that the vast majority of events organised will fall into this category.**
 - In all other cases the Event Organiser must refer the event to an Assessor for a decision and must send the Assessor their completed self-assessment form.
- In all cases, irrespective of whether the matter has been referred to an Assessor, send the completed self-assessment form to external-speakers@bristol.ac.uk to ensure that there is a formal written record of this stage of the self-assessment process.
- give the Assessor at least three weeks’ notice of the event. **If less than three weeks’ notice is given, a response cannot be guaranteed and the event may not be permitted to go ahead.**
- Comply with any mitigation required by either the Assessor or the Decision Maker and respond to requests from the Assessor in relation to the event.

If the Event Organiser is unsure about the answers to any of the questions in the self-assessment form please refer the matter to an Assessor who can direct them to sources of support/advice to assist them to complete the assessment.

On referral to an Assessor the Event Organiser may *provisionally* book the proposed venue.

Event Organisers should remember that:

- that there are a number of ways in which they are able to book a room for an event and that booking a room does not mean that they have permission to host the event; and
- the venue that they have proposed for the event may change if the risk assessment process finds that the proposed venue is not suitable for their event e.g. for health and safety or security reasons.

3. The Assessor

3.1 The Assessors are:

- **The Bristol SU Director of Student Opportunities and Community (or Deputy)** where the Event Organiser is a student or Bristol SU member of staff, (This will happen automatically when a student or Bristol SU staff member submits the online self-assessment form).
- **Heads of School** where the Event Organiser is a member of academic staff or an external user has completed the self-assessment with an academic member of staff,
- **Divisional Heads** where the Event Organiser is a member of professional services staff or an external user has completed the self-assessment with a professional services member of staff

3.2 The Assessor must:

- consider the self-assessments passed to them by Event Organisers and complete their assessment in line with the [Assessors Risk Assessment Guidance](#).
- not impose any mitigation that requires Event Organisers to pay for the security costs of an

event but may consider requiring the Event Organiser to change the proposed date for their event or proposed venue for the event on the basis of advice from the University's Security Services.

- when this assessment is complete, complete the [Assessors Summary Assessment Form](#) and either:
 - If they agree the event can go ahead inform the Event Organiser of any mitigations that are required and ensure that they are put in place; or
 - If they decide that the matter should be referred to the Decision-maker send the Decision Maker their assessment of the risk including suggested mitigations.
- where Assessor is a Head of School or Divisional Head send their completed Assessors Summary Assessment and a copy of their confirmation to the Event Organiser (including any mitigations they have put in place) to external-speakers@bristol.ac.uk to ensure that there is a formal written record of this stage of the assessment process.
- where the Assessor is the Bristol SU Student Opportunities Manager keep a record of all assessments made.
- Liaise with the Event Organiser to ensure that all mitigations put in place either by the Assessor or the Decision Maker are complied with.
- refer the matter to the Decision Maker if the Event Organiser does not comply with the any mitigations put in place.

4. The Decision Maker

4.1 The University Decision Maker is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost (or nominee) for events in:

- a UoB venue other than BristolSU venues (see below)
- external venues being organised by a UoB member of staff or individual students

The Bristol SU Decision Maker is the Bristol SU Chief Executive (or nominee) for events in

- Bristol SU venues
- external venues being organised by a Bristol SU affiliated student group or Bristol SU member of staff

4.2 The Decision Maker will:

- consider what mitigation could be arranged in accordance with the EHRC Code in order to make it possible for the event to take place.
- Decide whether the event can go ahead. Their decision is final. They may give conditional approval, subject to the Event Organiser putting mitigating measures in place.
- Require the Assessor to ensure the Event Organiser's compliance with any approval conditions/mitigations and may inform the Event Organiser that the event cannot go ahead if the conditions/mitigations are not met.
- If they are not available in the 48 hours prior to the event or on the day of the event refer the matter to their nominee.
- Not charge Event Organisers for the security costs of an event but may consider requiring the Event Organiser to change the proposed date for their event or proposed venue for the event on the basis of advice from the University's Security Services.

4.3 The Decision Makers' aim will be to allow events to go ahead in line with the University's firm commitment to Freedom of Speech, with due regard to its public sector equality duty and in line

with the EHRC Code's core ideas, in particular that the University "should always work to widen debate and challenge, never to narrow it".

5. Reporting

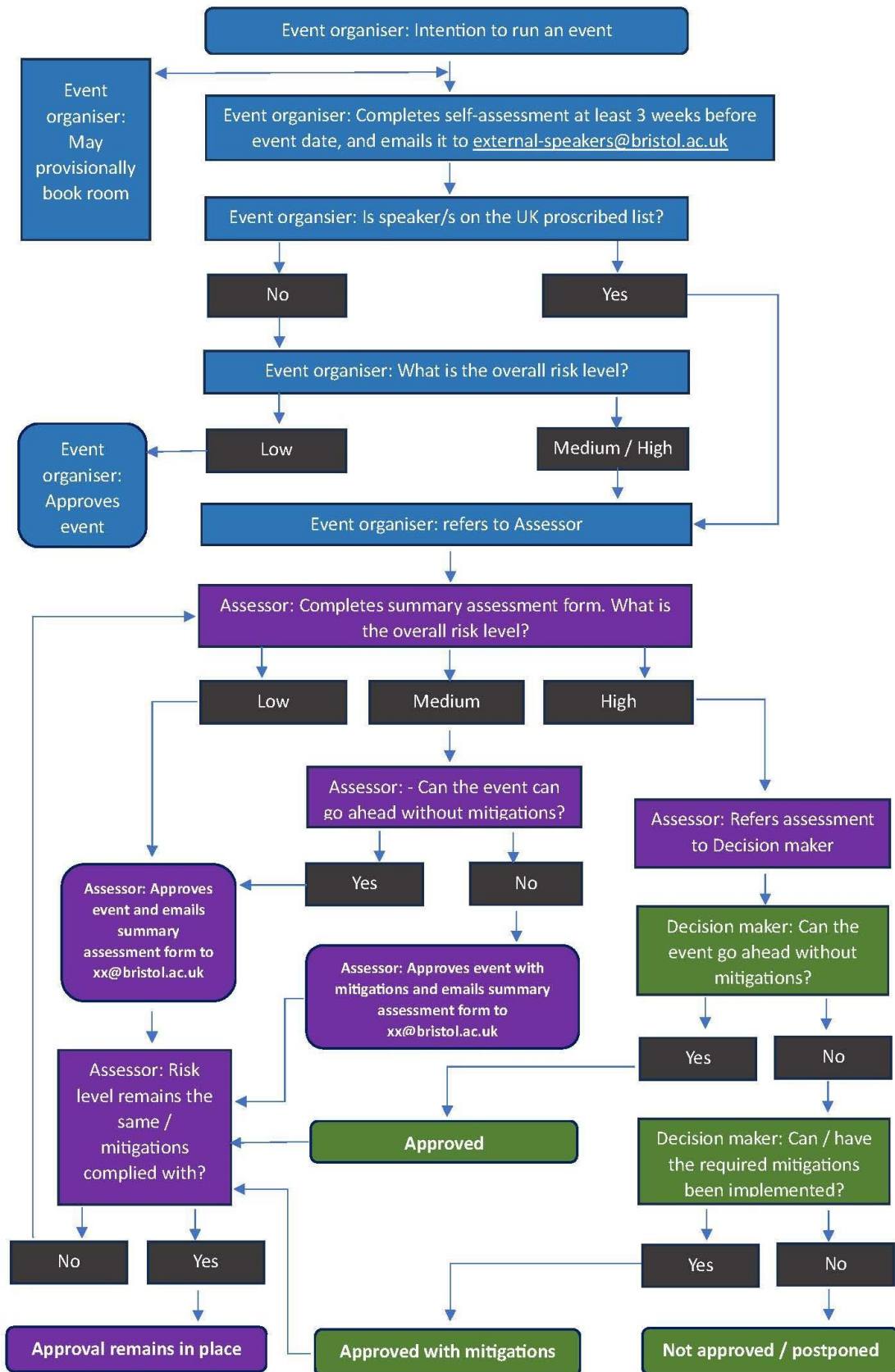
Board of Trustees will receive an annual report on the operation of the External Speaker Code of Practice.

6. Conduct of those attending and organising events.

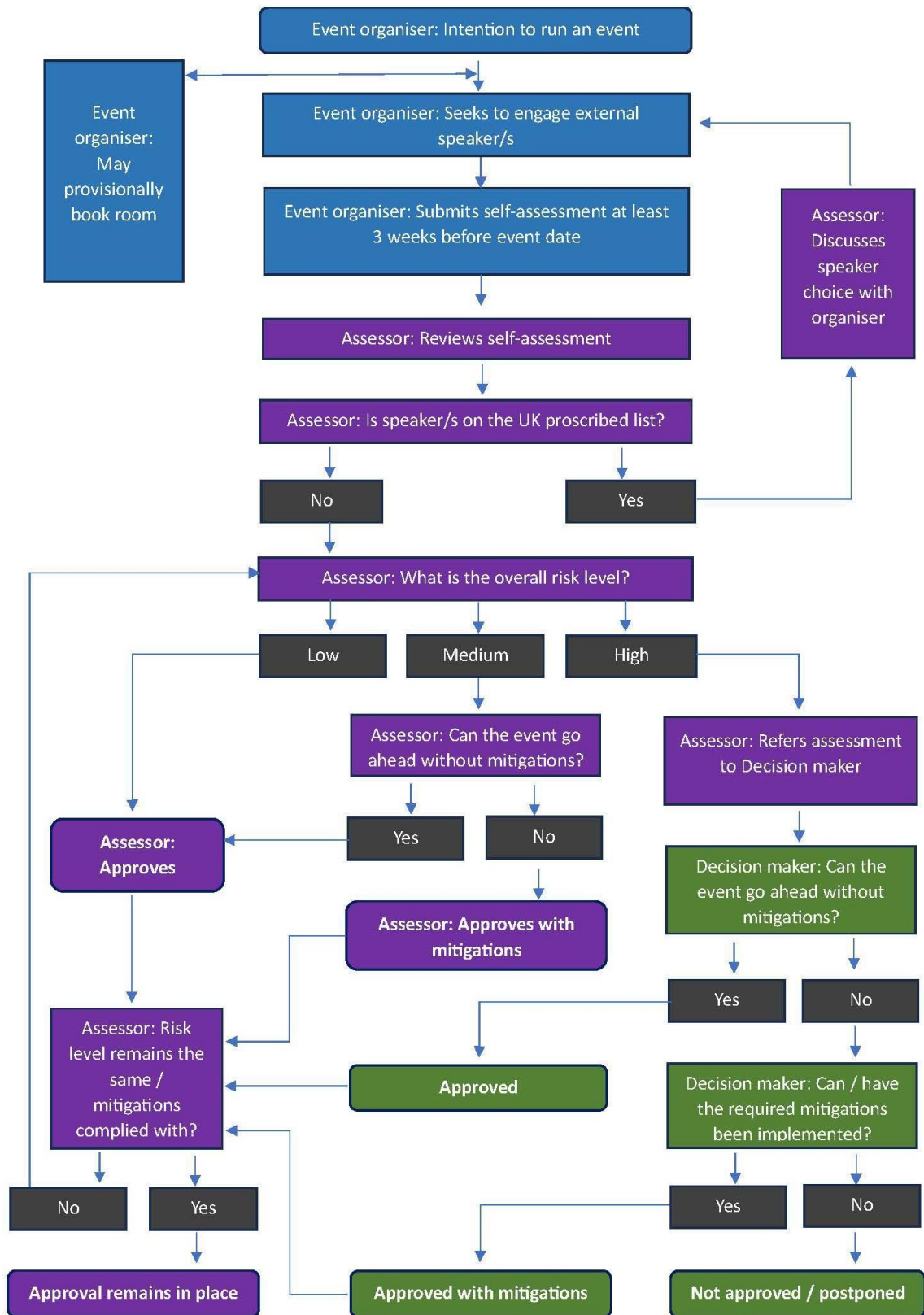
6.1 In relation to any event organised under this Code all members of the University are reminded of their obligations under the [University's Acceptable Behaviour Policy](#), the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#) and Staff [Conduct Procedure \(Ordinance 10.4 Code of Conduct\)](#), including their obligation to respect the rights of others to freedom of speech. Bristol SU members are expected to comply with the Bristol SU Code of Conduct.

6.2 If a member of University staff or a student wishes to make a complaint about a matter related to Free Speech and/or academic freedom they may do so under the Procedure for considering complaints raised by staff and students relating to [Free Speech and Academic Freedom](#).

Appendix 1: Process where the Event organiser is a university staff member or external user



Appendix 2: Process where the Event organiser is a student or Bristol SU staff member



N.B. Please note that this policy will be reviewed during the 2024-2025 academic year.