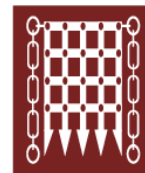


Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:

Freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education - practice, regulation and next steps

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 19th January 2027

Taking Place Online



WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
- 9.05 **Sector priorities for protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom**
Megan Haskins, Policy Adviser, Universities UK
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Implementation of freedom of speech duties - considerations for governance, compliance and institutional practice**
early experience of the OfS free speech complaints scheme alongside internal complaints processes / preparing for conditions E11 and E12 and future OfS requirements / implications for providers, staff, visiting speakers and applicants for academic posts / access to and signposting of the complaints scheme / governance arrangements, codes of practice and institutional policies / evidencing compliance, proportionality and reasonably practicable decision-making / implications of the University of Sussex judgment for regulatory and institutional decisions / managing events, visiting speakers, protest and security considerations / freedom of speech duties alongside equality, harassment, safeguarding and Prevent responsibilities
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, students
Senior representative, legal
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 **Student complaints and freedom of speech - lessons from OIA cases**
Charlotte Corrish, Head, Public Policy, Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.50 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
- 10.55 Break
- 11.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
- 11.10 **Institutional culture and academic freedom in teaching, research and employment**
recruitment, promotion and career progression / EDI statements, expression and academic freedom / staff conduct, disciplinary and grievance procedures / protected beliefs and lawful but controversial expression / academic freedom in teaching and supervision / research independence, publication and institutional reputation / international collaboration, foreign interference and research security / external pressure, transnational repression and institutional autonomy
Senior representative, legal
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, union
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.55 **Developing the new national community cohesion framework and supporting inclusive campus culture**
Senior commentator
- 12.05 **Supporting a culture of free speech and open debate on campus**
student perspectives on freedom of expression and academic freedom / students' unions, representative bodies and implications of planned changes to their statutory duties / protest, activism and disruption on campus / supporting open debate and avoiding unnecessary restriction of lawful speech, while acting on unlawful conduct / online expression, social media and university responsibility / confidence in institutional processes and concerns around self-censorship / community cohesion, belonging and respectful disagreement / institutional culture, complaints procedures and public confidence in higher education
Senior representative, students
Senior representative, university
Senior commentator
- 12.20 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.45 **Policy priorities for freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education moving forward**
Johanna Liddle, Senior Policy Lead, Freedom of Speech, Office for Students
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.10 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum