

Purpose and Scope

This procedure defines the process for decision making in relation to events and speaking engagements that have the potential to include sensitive topics.

This procedure applies to all staff, students, and visitors of the University and to all events or speaking engagements held on the property or facilities of the University, or in the name of the University at an any location.

Overarching Policy

[Event Approval Policy](#)

Procedure

1. The following terms are defined in the [Event Approval Policy](#)
 - 1.1. Event or Speaking Engagement
 - 1.2. Duty to Foster the Wellbeing of Staff and Students
 - 1.3. Sensitive topics
2. The [Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Regulations](#) provides guidance in relation to the acceptable parameters to uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom without unreasonable interference or penalty.
3. When organising and/or seeking approval for sensitive Events or Speaking engagements, organisers must follow this procedure and the flow chart included in Attachment 1.
4. Any proposed sensitive Event or Speaking Engagement that is assessed as falling into the 'non-permitted' categories below, and therefore not to be allowed, must be presented to Senior Leadership Team (supported by a decision paper) for their review and decision:
 - 4.1. Unlawful.
 - 4.2. Compromise the University's duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students.

- 4.3. Fall below the University's scholarly standards to an extent that would be detrimental to the University.
5. Any proposed sensitive Event or Speaking engagement, which is assessed as not falling into the 'non-permitted' categories, must be subject to a risk assessment using the [Murdoch University Risk Management Framework](#), that considers the following elements at a minimum:
 - 5.1. Reputation
 - 5.2. Disruption to operations
 - 5.3. Law and order
 - 5.4. Hate speech
 - 5.5. Safety and wellbeing of staff and students
6. The appropriate authority to approve or reject a proposed sensitive Event or Speaking Engagement is based on the risk rating identified in the risk assessment and is stated below:
 - 6.1. **Very High / High:** The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for making the decision. A decision paper should be presented to the Senior Leadership Team that includes:
 - 6.1.1. Background and context
 - 6.1.2. Details of the speakers and participants
 - 6.1.3. Risk assessment
 - 6.1.4. Any mitigation plans to reduce identified key risks
 - 6.2. **Medium:** The relevant Senior Leadership Team Member is responsible for making the decision.
 - 6.3. **Minor / Low:** The Head of School is responsible for making the decision.
7. All decisions, inclusive of rationale and risk assessment should be documented and retained accordingly.
8. If the Event or Speaking Engagement is approved to progress, organisers are to engage with the University's Security, Events and Communications Teams.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Head of School / Business Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether an Event or Speaking engagement includes sensitive topics. • Determine whether an Event or Speaking Engagements falls under the non-permitted category, if unsure refer decision to the relevant Senior Leadership Team Member for determination.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Events or Speaking Engagements that include sensitive topics (not falling under non-permitted category) are subject to risk assessment in accordance with this Procedure. • Make decision on Minor or Low risk rated Events or Speaking Engagements that include sensitive topics. • Ensure that there is appropriate engagement with the University's Security, Events and Communications Teams if an Event or Speaking Engagement is approved to progress.
Senior Leadership Team Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether an Event or Speaking Engagement that includes sensitive topics falls under the non-permitted category on referral by the Head of School/Business Unit. • Make decision on Medium risk rated Events or Speaking Engagements that include sensitive topics.
Senior Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Event Approval Policy and Procedure. • Endorse the decision by the Head of School/Business Unit or the Senior Leadership Team member that an Event or Speaking Engagement, that includes sensitive topics, falls under the non-permitted category. • Make decision on Very High or High risk rated Events or Speaking Engagements.
Audit and Risk Management Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide independent advice and guidance on risk assessments for Events or Speaking Engagements that include sensitive topics.

Governance

Approval Authority	Senior Leadership Team
Owner	Vice Chancellor
Legislation mandating compliance	
Category	Primarily a function of management

Related University Legislation and Policy Documents	<u>Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Regulations</u> <u>Murdoch University Risk Appetite</u> <u>Murdoch University Risk Management Framework</u> <u>Event Approval Policy</u>
Date effective	17/06/2024
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Revision History

Approved/Amended	Date Approved	Resolution No. (if applicable)
Approved	17/06/2024	

Please refer to the electronic copy in the Policy and Procedure Manager to ensure you are referring to the latest version.

Attachment 1: Sensitive Event / Speaking Engagement Decision Flow Chart

