Balliol College Prevent policy

1. Fellows, students and staff of Balliol College are committed to academic freedom, debate, and contestation.

   The academic topics studied and researched at Balliol are often politically, ethically, and socially sensitive, and wide-ranging in geographical and political scope. Our choices of topics for study are influenced by our ethical and political convictions as well as by our community. Balliol is deeply committed to fostering an academic culture of openness and inclusivity, in which members of our community engage with each other in debate and discussion, and remain open to both intellectual challenge and change.

   Scientific and philosophical analysis often has political implications. Criticizing government policy, expressing support for specific groups, identifying causal relations between policies, processes and events, subjecting public arguments to evaluation and critique – these are all legitimate aspects of academic work. They also contribute to public and political debate.

   Academic discourse in College is conducted in such a way as to promote the values of truth, reliability, validity, and good scholarship. No single approach or settled belief can be privileged. Fellows, students, and staff are open to having their views challenged, and develop critical ways of thinking about their own positions. Exchange of views must be respectful, and is subject always to standards of civility.

   Balliol actively encourages its Fellows and students to convene discussions and debates, organize seminars, invite external speakers to the College, and engage fully in its intellectual life.

2. The Master and Scholars of Balliol College note *and aver* that they have important duties to protect free academic enquiry and free speech.

3. The Master and Scholars of Balliol College further note that Universities' duties with respect to free speech are reflected in the Education Act 1986; the Education Reform Act 1988; the Human Rights Act 1998; the Equality Act 2010 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. These all explicitly note that Universities have a duty to uphold freedom of expression and academic freedom.

4. The Master and Scholars of Balliol College note that in virtue of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, s. 15 they have a further obligation to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' in pursuance of their 'functions'.

5. In consideration of these duties the College has adopted the following policies.

Appointment of a 'Prevent' lead individual and identification of key individuals

6. The College shall appoint annually a Fellow to be Prevent Lead for the College and shall identify key individuals.

7. Key individuals will include the Prevent Lead, the Dean, the Praefectus, the Conference and Catering Manager, Holywell Administrator, and the Head Porter.

8. Key Individuals shall be made aware of and shall consistently have in mind the Universities' and the College's duties with respect to free speech and academic freedom, as reflected in the following UK legislation: the Education Act 1986; the Education Reform Act 1988; the Human Rights Act 1998; the Equality Act 2010 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. These all explicitly note that Universities have a duty to uphold freedom of expression and academic freedom. Key Individuals shall also be made aware that in virtue of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, s. 15 the College has a further obligation to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' in pursuance of its 'functions'.

Communication and co-operation with other bodies

9. The Prevent Lead will establish and maintain communication with local Prevent co-ordinators, the Police and local authorities. The Dean and Domestic Bursar will continue to maintain communication with the security services of Oxford University.

Public and semi-public meetings in College or in connection with College events

10. Students, and student clubs or societies wishing to hold meetings on College premises, in connection with College events, or using the College name or IT facilities, must have the permission of the Dean or Praefectus for any outside speakers.

11. The Dean and Praefectus apply various criteria in giving or withholding such permission. In considering whether the Prevent duty creates a reason to withhold such permission, the Dean or Praefectus will follow the procedures specified in sections 12 to 14.

12. In giving or withholding permission, the Dean or Praefectus shall have in mind the considerations identified in paragraphs 2-3 above, and their importance.

13. Before reaching a decision the Dean or Praefectus may request information about the speaker and event. Any such requests shall be limited and proportionate to the strict requirements of the Prevent duty. He or she shall be given such information.

14. The Dean or Praefectus may give or withhold permission, or give permission subject to conditions. Permission shall be withheld on grounds arising from the Prevent duty only when this is absolutely necessary; all possible options for mitigating any perceived risk have been fully explored; and the importance of maintaining academic freedom, free speech, and respecting the rights of individuals have been given full weight. Any conditions imposed as a result of the Prevent duty shall be necessary and proportionate. If either permission is withheld or conditions are imposed because of the Prevent duty, the Dean or Praefectus shall give a clear statement of reasons.

15. If the Dean or Praefectus refuses permission or imposes conditions on grounds arising from the Prevent duty, the student organizers of the meeting may appeal to the Master. The Master shall determine the question on the bases described in section 14 and may then substitute for that of the Dean or Praefectus his or her decision, including as to conditions. If the Master imposes conditions different from those imposed by the Dean or Praefectus, he or she shall give a clear statement of reasons for the imposition of the conditions.

16. There is no appeal from the decision of the Master, but if the student organizers are dissatisfied with it, they may request and be granted the earliest practicable opportunity for one of them, or the President of the JCR or MCR on their behalf, to address the College Meeting explaining their grievance.

17. If the Master, Research Associate of Holywell Manor, a Fellow or Lecturer intends to hold a meeting on College premises or in connection with College events at which there will be any outside speakers, and which is not part of the academic curriculum, he or she must consider whether there is a significant risk of a person being drawn into terrorism as a result of that meeting. If he or she feels there is such a risk, he or she shall seek the advice of the Dean or Praefectus, Prevent Lead or other appropriate person as to how the risk can be sufficiently mitigated so as to allow the event to proceed. If such mitigation is impossible, he or she shall refer to the Prevent Lead the question of whether the event should go ahead. The Prevent Lead shall decide that question having full regard to the obligations stated in sections 2 and 3 above.

18. Where facilities are booked through the Conference Office, other than by the Master, Fellows, Lecturers or Students of College, the Conference and Catering Manager shall make a risk assessment as required by the Prevent duty. If he or she feels the Prevent duty may give rise to a reason

not to host the event or to impose conditions on it, he or she shall refer the question to the Prevent Lead. The Prevent Lead shall decide what response is to be given in the light of the importance of free speech, equality, academic freedom, and lively debate, and having regard to the Prevent duty.

19. Any decision to prohibit an event on grounds arising from the Prevent duty shall be notified to the College Meeting immediately following the decision.

20. A register of events which are prohibited or those on which conditions are imposed because of the Prevent Duty shall be kept and shall be available for inspection by Fellows and the Presidents of the JCR and MCR.

College policies concerning student and employee welfare

21. The welfare team is overseen by a welfare lead. As such he or she exercises the same regard to the freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression, as governed by the college statutes and policies, and respects the confidentiality and privacy of all College members except where the law strictly requires otherwise.

Faith facilities

22. The management and use of the College's faith facilities is governed by a specific policy

Use of IT facilities

23. All those connecting to IT facilities of the College or Oxford University must abide by the University IT rules as a strict condition of use.

24. Neither the University nor College IT facilities may be used for any criminal activity. Those creating websites which do or purport to represent the College, its common rooms, or its activities must avoid discrimination, respect the rights to academic freedom and free speech, and be open at all times to debate and challenge, and have regard to the danger of individuals known or unknown being drawn into terrorism.

25. The Executive Committee has considered the possibility of filtering web access and concluded that it is impracticable for the College to filter web content whilst respecting the rights of College members and fulfilling its obligations noted in sections 2 and 3 above.

Policy on research in involving sensitive information

26. The College is aware that some researchers may fear that their legitimate academic activities could raise suspicion that they are involved in illegal

activity. The College wishes to give them full support and invites those researchers to make their concerns known to the Prevent Lead so that the College, perhaps in combination with the University, can assist in protecting their rights.

Monitoring of other College policies for 'Prevent' compliance

27. It is the policy of the College that where appropriate all College Policies incorporate recognition of the College's duties in respect of free expression and academic freedom, equality and privacy, and the 'Prevent' duty, and that they be regularly checked to ensure that they do.

28. In checking the operation of its policies the College will further ensure that no discrimination, suppression of debate, or compromise of academic freedom has or might occur.

Risk Register and Reporting

29. Risks concerning the 'Prevent' duty will be noted in a Prevent risk register. This register will include prominently the risk of academic freedom or individual rights being infringed. It will not include mention of individuals or groups within College.

30. The College will comply with reporting requirements.

Sharing of information

31. Where the College is in possession of information suggesting that a person may be drawn into Terrorism as defined by the Terrorism Act, the Prevent Lead or Master may consider sharing this information with the University or other authorities. Such information will be shared only when all proper consideration has been given to individual's rights to privacy and confidentiality, and:
    a. it is necessary to share it;
    b. it is proportionate to the intended outcome;
    c. sharing it is permitted under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998;
    d. every appropriate effort has been made to obtain the consent of the person about whom information is shared.

Training

32. The College will arrange and provide appropriate training for all Fellows, the Conference and Catering Manager, the Head Porter and other staff who should have it. The training will ensure that all concerned understand the importance of academic freedom, freedom of expression and human rights, and the significance of the Education Act 1986; the Education Reform Act 1988; the Human Rights Act 1998; the Equality

Act 2010 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 for the College's policy, and that the Prevent duty operates only within the context set by these.

Changes to this policy

33. This policy may be amended by the Governing Body only after consultation with the Junior and Middle Common Rooms.

June 2023