

Approach to the Prevent Duty

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places an obligation on the University to, *“in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.”* This is known as the “Prevent Duty”.

Statutory guidance has been issued setting out how higher education institutions should meet the Prevent Duty. The [guidance](#) states that “*due regard*” means that Universities “*should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions*”.

[Compliance with the Prevent Duty](#) is monitored by the Office for Students.

The University also has a legal obligation to ensure freedom of speech and protect academic freedom. Equality and academic freedom are enshrined in our [Charter of Incorporation](#) as principles of the University and our [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#) sets out the University’s view that freedom of speech, within the law, is fundamental.

The University is committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of our community, encouraging debate and discussion, whilst seeking to safeguard those that are vulnerable. It is within this context that we seek to balance the legal obligations placed upon us.

Scope of the Approach

This statement sets out the University’s approach to the Prevent Duty and applies to all officers, students and staff of the University. It also applies to contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.

The University’s Council has overall responsibility for the University’s compliance with the Prevent Duty. The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary will discharge this obligation as the University Prevent Lead.

This Policy Statement will be reviewed from a legal and operational perspective every 3 years. The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary will ensure that appropriate training will be provided for all employees who may deal with concerns raised under the Policy Statement or otherwise be involved with the University’s response to the Prevent Duty.

University responsibilities

The University has taken a risk-based approach to balancing the Prevent Duty with its other legal obligations. It has sought to put in place appropriate measures to identify, understand and minimise the risk of its members being radicalised or drawn into terrorism.

The University has a long and rich history of regularly welcoming external speakers from around the world to its campuses. However, in common with the wider higher education sector, the University has identified external speakers as a small but potential risk to its staff and students. As such, it has an [External Speaker Policy](#) which must be followed in organising events involving external speakers.

Raising concerns

Any student or member of staff may become concerned that an individual within the University is at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Concerns can be about terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, or where individuals are at risk of moving from extremist (albeit legal) groups into terrorist-related activity.

Staff and students are encouraged to be mindful of conduct by individuals within the University that may indicate that they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to act appropriately to balance supporting those individuals with safeguarding others within the University and beyond.

In this context, staff or students with concerns of the nature described above should raise those concerns to the Student Welfare Team (if you are a student) or the Director of HR (if you are a member of staff), or contact prevent@reading.ac.uk.¹ All concerns made in this way will be treated sensitively, securely and, so far as possible, confidentially. If you are unsure whether to raise a concern under this policy, you are encouraged to speak to the Student Welfare Team or the Prevent Duty Compliance Officer (if you are a student) or your line manager, Head of School or Head of Directorate (if you are a member of staff), and consult the [Raising a Concern procedure](#).

If there is an immediate threat to any individual or property, you should notify the police by calling 999, as well as advising Security on 6300.

¹ The Prevent email address is monitored by Security Services (out of hours), the Student Welfare Team and the Prevent Duty Compliance Officer.

Otherwise, concerns will be considered by a relevant member of staff. Following this, internal action may be taken to provide appropriate support. Serious concerns, following discussion with the Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary as appropriate, may be subject to an external referral to key Prevent partners. Concerns will only be shared externally where there is a clear and compelling requirement to do so.

A confidential record of action taken under this Policy Statement, including where it has been necessary to refer a concern externally, will be retained. All information will be held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/279 and Data Protection Act 2018, and the University's [Data Protection policy](#).

Version	Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date
1.0	The Vice-Chancellor	Annually	Council	21 March 2016
2.0	The University Secretary	Annually	Prevent Duty Implementation Group	16 June 2017
3.0	The University Secretary	Annually	Prevent Duty Implementation Group	15 June 2018
4.0	The University Secretary	Annually	Prevent Duty Group	19 December 2019
5.0	The University Secretary	Annually	Prevent Duty Group	5 January 2021
6.0	The University Secretary	Three-yearly	Prevent Duty Group	20 January 2022
7.0	The University Secretary	Three-yearly	Prevent Duty Group	24 March 2025