

University of Cambridge

Guidance for booking University meetings and events

This guidance is subsidiary to, and should be read alongside, the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, which is available at

<https://www.governanceandcompliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/governance-and-strategy/university-code-practice-freedom-speech>

Meetings and events which are routine University business, including those related to curricular matters, are not normally subject to the below process.

Meetings and events which are purely commercial in nature (e.g. the hire of premises by a third party for its own purposes that is unconnected to University activity) are not subject to the below process. Commercial booking procedures and contracts may be put in place by the venue in question.

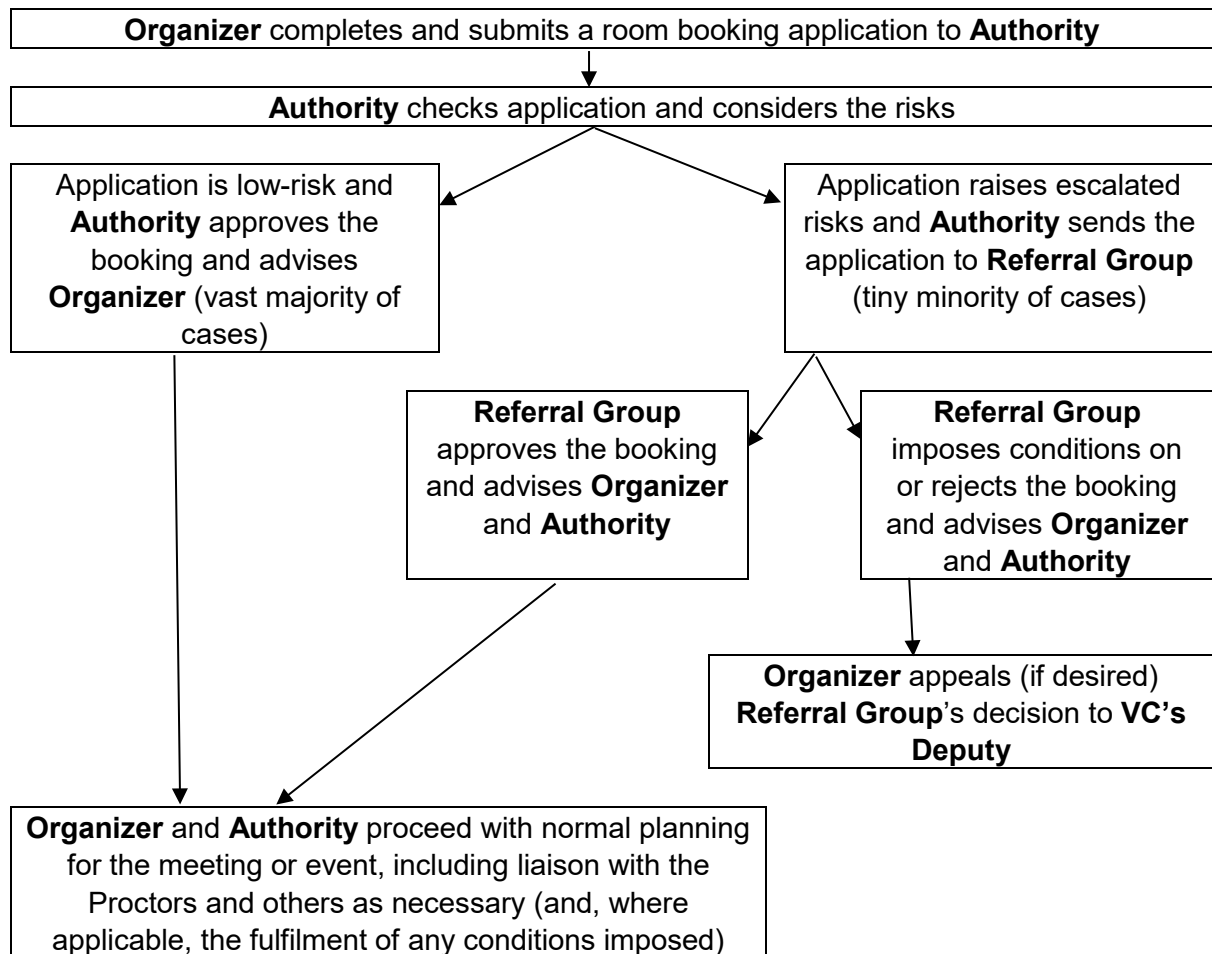
The flowchart on the next page summarises the process and is followed by guidance for meeting/event organizers and guidance for those authorities responsible for approving room booking and other meeting/event applications.

The procedures outlined in this document refer to the booking of physical, in-person meetings and events 'on University premises'. However, the same risk assessment considerations and escalation procedures should be applied when authorities are approving the holding of online or 'blended' University meetings and events, especially those involving external speakers.

This guidance is overseen by the Committee on Prevent and Freedom of Speech and was last updated substantively by the Committee in November 2019. Editorial changes and updates were implemented in December 2020 and in August 2024 by the Committee's Secretary.

Summary of the process

- Organizer = the meeting or event organizer submitting the room booking application
- Authority = the authority (whether central or in a Faculty or Department) responsible for approving the room booking application
- Referral Group = the Referral Group, whose role and membership are outlined in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech
- VC's Deputy = the individual appointed by the Vice-Chancellor to consider appeals by an Organizer against a decision of the Referral Group



Guidance for meeting or event organizers

1. Complete and submit a room booking application

Requests to hold a meeting or event on University premises should be made by the organizers using the room booking application procedure applicable to the venue in question, such as the sample Room Booking Application Form at Appendix A. (The questions on this sample form are integrated as appropriate into the University's Booker system.) Event organizers should ensure that the information provided about their booking is complete and accurate.

For a request to hold a meeting or event within a Faculty or Department, the booking application should be submitted to the Faculty or Department in question using whatever procedure they have in place (e.g. via the Booker system or using a locally managed offline form). For a request to hold a meeting or event in centrally managed accommodation, the booking application should be submitted via the Booker system or to studentregistryroombookings@admin.cam.ac.uk (in term) or to facilities.management@admin.cam.ac.uk (out of term).

It is important to submit the booking application as far in advance of the meeting or event as possible, in order to allow time for it to be properly considered. There should be no publicity for a meeting or event unless and until the booking is approved. The expectation is that a booking application should be received at least fourteen working days in advance.

2. Abide by booking conditions

Once a booking is approved, the meeting or event organizers must abide by the general expectations set out in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech together with any additional conditions imposed by the authorising authority (whether central or in a Faculty or Department) and/or the Referral Group.

Where applicable, if the meeting or event organizers are unhappy with any conditions imposed by the Referral Group (or its refusal of permission), they have the right of appeal to the Vice-Chancellor's deputy appointed for this purpose.

As well as making a room booking application, organizers who think that their meeting or event might attract significant protest, and at which lawful free speech might be compromised, should consult the Proctors at the earliest opportunity and ideally at least seven working days in advance via contact@proctors.cam.ac.uk.

Guidance for those authorities responsible for approving room booking applications

1. Approve straightforward bookings as normal business

As set out in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, it is expected that the **vast majority** of requests to hold a meeting or event will be straightforwardly considered and approved as part of normal business. In these cases, this should simply be recorded as part of the relevant room booking application procedure. The person approving the booking should check that the meeting or event has at least one organizer who is a member, student, or employee of the University.

2. Consider the risks for bookings that raise concerns

If the person who is authorised to approve a booking has a concern about a proposed meeting or event (including concerns about any external speaker), they should consider the likelihood and severity of the risks. If the risks are minimal, they should consider whether the risks can be mitigated through their normal room booking application procedure. The types of risks are listed in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech. A consideration of these sorts of risks will be necessary only in a **tiny minority** of cases.

3. If the risks are not minimal, make contact with the Referral Group

If the consideration of the risks suggests that they are not minimal and/or that they cannot be mitigated through the normal room booking application procedure, the person who is authorised to approve a booking should make contact with the University's Referral Group at referralconfidential@admin.cam.ac.uk. Contact **should be made at least seven working days in advance** of the proposed meeting or event.

The Referral Group will consider the request to hold a meeting or event using the bases set out in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech. The Referral Group will advise the meeting or event organizer directly of its decision, copied to the person authorised to approve the booking.

4. Retain paperwork

Those authorised to approve bookings should retain room booking applications, any considerations by them of the risks, and associated paperwork.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

SAMPLE ROOM BOOKING APPLICATION FORM

To be completed by individuals, societies or organizations wanting to book a room/facility on University premises.
The form must be signed to confirm understanding and acceptance of the terms and conditions overleaf.

Name of event						
Date of event	Is this an external event? YES / NO	Is there an external speaker? YES / NO	Start time of event	Finish time of event	Preferred location	Is this a repeat booking? YES / NO
Name and contact details for person requesting the booking (i.e. the meeting or event organizer, including the society, organization or group they represent)						
Event type (e.g. lecture, conference, social gathering, colloquium)			Approximate number of people attending			
Is the event open to members of the public (open invitation)?	YES / NO		Will the event be ticketed/pre-booked		YES / NO	
How is the event being advertised (word of mouth, social media, flyers, website etc.)?			Will the media be present?		YES / NO	
Name(s) of the main speaker(s) (including the society, organization or group they represent)						

I accept the below conditions. I acknowledge the right of the University to terminate the booking without notice if any of the conditions set out below are not adequately complied with or if further information comes to light that gives rise to a reasonable belief that the meeting or event should not take place as set out in the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech:

1. to read and adhere to the Guidance for booking meetings and events (available online at <https://www.em.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us-what-we-do/estate-operations/facilities-services/room-bookings>), including the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech referred to therein;
2. to read and adhere to any applicable Proctorial notices (for example, those relating to meetings and public gatherings, public performances, discipline, and clubs and societies; see <https://www.proctors.cam.ac.uk/notices>);
3. to ensure that the fire regulations for the particular room or building are observed and that there is no smoking (at the time of the meeting or event specific instructions on local fire emergency arrangements will be issued by the Facilities team);
4. to ensure that television cameras are not admitted, cinematography films shown, music performed or played, or refreshments consumed, unless the room or building has been hired for that purpose or is otherwise agreed;
5. to ensure access to the room or building at all times for the Facilities team, Fire Officers or any Officer of the University;
6. to ensure that a fee for entrance is not charged at the door of the room or building (tickets may be sold beforehand);
7. to ensure that good order is maintained in the room or building and that no damage is caused to its structure or contents, and to inform the Facilities team or other relevant Officer of the University immediately if disorder or damage occurs;
8. to leave the room or building in a clean, orderly condition with all property of the organizers removed and the room or building vacated;
9. to meet, if applicable and where permitted under the University Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, the costs of overtime incurred by custodial/technical/security or other University or contracted staff in support of this meeting or event;
10. to abide by any additional conditions imposed by the authority responsible for approving the booking and/or the Referral Group.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

To be completed by the authority responsible for considering and approving the booking	
Is wider research and consideration of risks required? (It is anticipated that this will be necessary only in a tiny minority of cases.)	YES / NO (If you have selected YES refer to the Guidance for booking meetings and events)
Name of decision-maker and date of decision	