DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
LEICESTER

Counter-Extremism Strategy

December 2016
Updated May 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 De Montfort University recognises its duty to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression, to uphold the integrity of the institution as a place for learning and teaching. In addition, the university is committed to ensuring that radicalisation and all forms of extremism are countered through the Prevent agenda, as required of all UK universities.

1.2 This strategy document outlines the approach taken by the university in regards to countering extremism and the wider Prevent agenda. Its introduction coincides with the implementation of the Prevent Duty and builds on the requirement under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism[1]. The Prevent Duty Guidance for higher education institutions in England and Wales came into effect on 18 September 2015.

1.3 The university recognises the benefit of making our approach to Prevent transparent and accessible to all members of the university. This document, therefore, aims to summarise the way in which we will continue to uphold freedom of expression and counter-extremism.

2. Scope

2.1 This Strategy and associated policies apply to all staff, (where relevant) students[2] and visitors of the university, unless stated otherwise.

3. Approach

3.1 The university implements Prevent in a risk-based, proportionate manner, integrating our legal responsibilities under the Prevent duty with our existing policies and procedures where possible, with the aim of ensuring that Prevent-related actions are seen as 'business as usual' activities, rather than an additional 'statutory led' activity.

3.2 The university has a duty of care towards its students and is committed to providing an environment which encourages students to succeed and gives them the freedom to do so.

3.3 Our responsibility to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and the wider community requires that we use appropriate measures to help prevent any member of the university from being radicalised. As an academic institution we also have an overt responsibility to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression, whilst also putting in place procedures to safeguard the welfare of students and staff.

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[1] Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1, 2) of that Act):
(1)In this Act "terrorism" means the use or threat of action where—
(a)the action falls within subsection (2),
(b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government [F1or an international governmental organisation] or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
(c)the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious [F2, racial] or ideological cause.

(2)Action falls within this subsection if it—
(a)involves serious violence against a person,
(b)involves serious damage to property,
(c)endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,
(d)creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
(e)is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.

[2] This includes learners and apprentices

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 All members of staff should ensure they are aware of the university's responsibilities under the Prevent duty and of the measures that support our compliance with it. Members of the university who are concerned about a student or staff member who they perceive has been/is being radicalised should report this to the Students at Risk Committee (students) or People and Organisational Development (staff). The university regards that it is the responsibility of all staff and students to report any concerns about individuals who they perceive have been/are being radicalised.

4.2 University leaders and managers have an important role in ensuring that they have oversight of activities and events in their areas. Communication forms an integral part of our Prevent Strategy. As such, the relevant leaders and managers are intrinsic to the processes we have established and must ensure everyone is aware of the correct procedures e.g. if there is concern regarding an event, speaker or a vulnerable student or staff member.

5. Leadership

5.1 The university takes seriously the need to prevent members of our community from being drawn into extremism. Our approach has been approved by the Executive Board and Board of Governors. The Board of Governors will continue to monitor and oversee the university's approach and policies to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. To assist the Board of Governors fulfilling this role, they will annually receive a report on Prevent compliance.

5.2 The Chief Operating Officer has been identified as the member of senior management responsible for ensuring that the university complies appropriately with the Prevent duty, liaising with the regional DfE Prevent Coordinator, the police and other key stakeholders.

6. Risk Assessment and Action Plan

6.1 As required by the Prevent Duty we have undertaken an assessment of the risk of individuals being drawn into extremist activity. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

7. External Speakers

7.1 The Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom policy has been updated to reflect the Prevent duty. The university has also developed an External Speakers Policy which addresses the balance to secure freedom of speech, with a need to maintain good campus relations which safeguard the safety of students, staff and visitors. The policy introduces measures that ensure this balance, as well as providing practical advice on the management of requests for external speakers.

7.2 In complying with the Prevent duty and wider responsibilities, the university will not:
   a. Provide a platform to any proscribed terrorist organisation or permit the encouragement of terrorism in any way;
   b. Allow gender segregation at any event it organises or at events held on its premises (unless an exemption applies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010).

7.3 In conjunction with the university's policy, the Students' Union has its own complementary procedures in place in relation to events organised by its societies where external speakers will be participating.

8. Sensitive Research

8.1 In certain circumstances, some staff members and students may require access to sensitive material as part of their academic work. In such circumstances, the university's Policy on Access and Handling Sensitive Materials for Teaching and Research will be followed to ensure the relevant approvals are granted and the impact on academic freedom is minimal. It is the responsibility of academic supervisors to ensure that students follow this procedure when relevant.

9. Staff Training

9.1 We will provide awareness training to all relevant staff and review the training on a regular basis. Prevent training will be framed within the wider issue of safeguarding 'students at risk' and duty of care to support vulnerable students.

9.2 Service providers are also required to provide Prevent training to their staff members and provide compliance reports to the university on a regular basis.

10. Pastoral Care

10.1 Pastoral care is a key way of safeguarding student and staff welfare, particularly those who may be vulnerable to being radicalised. Pastoral care is delivered through Personal Tutors, Student and Academic Services, Chaplaincy and the Students' Union.

10.2 Training is provided for all staff involved directly in student welfare, so that such staff are aware of their duties under Prevent and understand the processes by which they can support vulnerable students or fellow staff members. Advice and guidance are available for students should they require it from Chaplaincy, Student and Academic Services, Students' Union and the student's Personal Tutor. For staff members, support is available via line managers, their trade union, the university's confidential counselling support service or the chaplaincy team.

10.3 All staff and students should be aware that, if they have concerns regarding the wellbeing of a staff member or student, they should raise these with People and Organisational Development pod@dmu.ac.uk (staff) the relevant staff members such as a Personal Tutor or the Students at Risk committee sar@dmu.ac.uk (students).

11. IT Usage

11.1 We consider it unacceptable for our IT infrastructure to be used in any way that supports, promotes or facilitates extremism. Relevant IT policies and procedures will be kept under review to ensure they support the Prevent agenda.

11.2 The university reserves the right to monitor individual users' internet use and email/instant messages where it suspects that the person is in breach of the IT or any other university policy. Web filtering is also in place within the university which regulates access to websites containing offensive, obscene, extremist or violent material. Where access is required for approved research purposes, the provisions of the Policy on Access and Handling Sensitive Materials for Teaching and Research will apply.

12. Communications

12.1   We will not permit material supporting extremist views or ideologies to be displayed within university premises and will remove any such material if found. Likewise, we will seek to ensure that the university's printed and electronic communications (including the website) do not contain or support extremist material or material likely to encourage or draw people into terror- ism and will investigate immediately if any such instances are raised.

13. Students' Union

13.1   The university has worked collaboratively with the Students' Union in developing its approach to Prevent. The Students' Union has its own policies with reference to the establishment of societies and to external speakers.

14. Partnerships

14.1   The university develops and maintains partnerships locally, nationally and internationally. Where these partnerships involve students e.g. placements and volunteering, we aim to ensure that the organisations are aware of DMU's Prevent Duty. Whilst we accept some partners e.g. international partners, do not have an obligation to comply with the Prevent Duty, we will ensure that they understand our position and the importance of their cooperation in exercising the duty.

15. Related Policies and Procedures

15.1   The following policies and procedures are relevant to the Prevent duty:

- Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Policy on the use of email, internet and social media
- External Speakers Policy
- Student Union External Speakers Policy
- Students at Risk Committee (SAR) Policy
- Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance
- Policy on Access and Handling Sensitive Materials for Teaching and Research [3]
- Raising Serious Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Dignity at Work
- Religion or Belief Policy

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[3] This policy has been informed by UUK's Oversight of Security-Sensitive Research Material in the UK Universities guidance.