

External / Invited Speaker Assessment

Australasian Gynaecological Endoscopy & Surgery Society

I. Introduction

This document outlines the assessment criteria for external speakers invited to our events. It is designed to ensure that our events are safe, inclusive, and respectful, and that they align with our organization's values and policies.

II. Terms of Reference

Speaker: The individual invited to deliver a talk, presentation, or participate in a panel or discussion at our event.

Audience: The individuals attending the event, either in person or virtually.

Host: The individual or organization responsible for organizing the event and inviting the speaker.

III. Assessment Criteria

Speaker's Reputation and Background: The speaker's public reputation, past statements, and behaviours should be thoroughly researched. Any history of misogynistic or extremist views, bullying, or harassment should be considered a red flag.

Audience Safety and Comfort: The speaker's potential impact on the audience should be assessed. This includes considering whether the speaker's views or behaviours could cause discomfort, distress, or harm to audience members.

Host's Reputation and Responsibility: The host's ability to manage the speaker and ensure a safe and respectful event environment should be evaluated.

IV. Guidelines for Speaker Behaviour

Respectful Communication: The speaker should communicate their views and ideas in a respectful and considerate manner. They should avoid any language or behaviour that could be perceived as offensive, discriminatory, or harmful.

No Bullying or Harassment: The speaker should not engage in any form of bullying or harassment, either during their presentation or in any interactions with audience members or event staff.

Adherence to Event Policies: The speaker should adhere to all event policies, including those related to respectful behaviour and non-discrimination.

V. Speaker Credibility

Expertise: The speaker's qualifications, experience, and knowledge in the topic area should be evaluated. This includes their professional background, academic credentials, and any publications or previous talks they have given on the topic.

Reputation: The speaker's reputation within their field should be considered. This includes feedback from previous events, peer reviews, and any awards or recognitions they have received.

Consistency: The speaker's consistency in their views and statements should be assessed. This includes whether they have changed their stance on key issues without clear explanation or justification.

Transparency: The speaker's transparency about their affiliations, biases, and sources of information should be evaluated. They should be open about any conflicts of interest that could potentially influence their presentation.

Respect for Diverse Perspectives: The speaker's respect for diverse perspectives and willingness to engage in constructive debate should be assessed. They should be open to questioning and should respond to differing viewpoints in a respectful and thoughtful manner.

VI. Risk Assessment

Previous Prohibitions: Has the speaker previously been prohibited from speaking at this or other institutions?

Extremist or Illegal Views: Does the speaker have a track record of extremist illegal views or support for proscribed terrorist organizations?

Topic: Is the topic likely to convey extremist/illegal views and/or support for proscribed organizations?

Informal Reports: Consider any informal reports or rumours about the speaker's behaviour. This could include comments on social media, personal anecdotes, or reports from people who have interacted with the speaker in the past.

Patterns of Behaviour: Look for patterns in the speaker's behaviour. Even if no official complaints have been made, consistent reports of misogyny, bullying, or harassment should be taken seriously.

Response to Accusations: Consider how the speaker has responded to accusations of inappropriate behaviour. Have they denied the accusations, ignored them, or taken steps to address the issue?

Impact on Event: Consider how the speaker's reputation could impact the event. Could it make attendees uncomfortable? Could it damage the reputation of the host organization?

Other Risks: Are there any other risks associated with the speaker or the event?

VII. Managing Actions

If a risk has been identified with an external speaker, every effort will be made to ensure that the event can go ahead, providing that it is within the law. Managing actions should be put in place to mitigate the risk. Examples are:

Balanced Debate: The speaker has been invited to explore different perspectives and will form part of a balanced debate.

Experienced Chair: The event will be chaired by an experienced member of the academic team, who will ensure that the discussion is relevant and does not breach any of the Society's legal or regulatory obligations.

Content Review: The speaker will submit the content of their presentation for review ahead of the event.

Pre-Event Meeting: A meeting will be held with the speaker prior to the event to establish the protocol for the event itself.

Code of Conduct: The speaker will not be allowed to speak until they have signed acceptance to the speaker's code of conduct.

VIII. Accountable Officer Review

The accountable officer should review the risk assessment and managing actions and confirm whether they successfully mitigate the risks. If extra controls are required, the matter should be escalated to the Board. At this stage, in accordance with the decision of the Board, the session may:

- a) Go ahead with no further conditions attached
- b) Go ahead with specific conditions attached
- c) Be declined – event/speaker may not go ahead

IX. Conclusion

This assessment is designed to ensure that our events are safe, respectful, and inclusive.