

NUS' No Platform Policy

Key information, background and FAQs

FAQs

What is NUS' 'No Platform Policy'?

The No Platform Policy is a very specific and narrow policy that NUS first introduced in 1974. It is democratically decided and voted on by National Conference every year. At present it lists just six fascist and racist organizations, and is there to enfranchise freedom of speech and keep students safe.

The policy prevents individuals or groups known to hold racist or fascist views from speaking at NUS events. It also ensures that NUS officers will not share a public platform with individuals or groups known to hold racist or fascist views.

Who are the six organisations?

The six organisations currently on the list are: Al-Muhajiroun; British National Party (BNP); English Defence League (EDL); Hizb-ut-Tahir; Muslim Public Affairs Committee; and National Action.

Do all students' unions have a No Platform Policy?

Some do and some don't. It is up to individual students' unions to decide if they want a No Platform Policy and how they manage external speakers.

Like NUS, those that do have a No Platform Policy will have the democratic backing of their members who have voted for one.

Why have a policy at all?

Universities and colleges are accustomed to debate and protest; and tensions can arise and sometimes erupt between different political, social and identity groups on campus.

Students' unions are private bodies, and have a right to refuse individuals and groups who threaten the safe environment students' unions provide for their members. No platform policies as well as equal opportunities policies are tools in which students' unions provide and maintain a safe environment for their members.

Creating an environment that promotes multiculturalism and equality is not just, therefore, for the sake of some students, but it is a tool for reducing potential conflict among the diverse communities that exist in campuses.

Do No Platform Policies prevent Free Speech?

Those who are opposed to the No Platform Policy use the argument that it restricts free speech and that the policy limits the freedom of individuals and organisations to engage in debate on campus. However, this is to ignore the fact there are many different freedoms that individuals have including the freedom to choose who to invite to events.

Therefore, students are collectively **free** to invite- or not invite- who they wish to their events. SUs are democratic membership organisations, they too have and should have the **freedom** to decide who they should and should not invite to speak.

NUS supports freedom of speech, thought and expression. But NUS opposes those who attempt to utilise this freedom in order to remove **freedoms of others**. Affording racists and fascists a platform helps them in their search for credibility to promote their message of hate, which in turn can lead to violence against those that they target.

Is 'No Platforming' illegal?

No. Universities have certain duties relating to freedom of speech, most notably in the Education Act No. 2 1986. However, No Platform Policies do not infringe on this legislation as the Act does not apply to students' unions. Moreover, even universities and colleges have to balance freedom of speech with a number of other legal duties, such as ensuring no incitement to violence.

Nor does such a policy contravene Article 10 of the Human Rights Act, as it in no way prevents anyone from holding ideas, speaking their mind in the street, holding meetings in any venue that will agree to their use of a room. No Platform is simply a students' union making a democratic decision about who it chooses to invite or not to its meetings.

Is this the only way speakers maybe prevented from speaking by students' unions'?

No. As with many organisations that frequently invite speakers to come and speak to its members, almost all students' unions will have an External Speakers Policy.

An External Speakers Policy will set out how SUs will meet their legal obligations as charities and mitigate any risks associated with external speakers. There are many ways to do so; refusing to allow a speaker to use SU premises is only one, rarely used, mechanism.

This may lead to a students' union preventing a speaker from attending if it feels that it cannot uphold its legal obligations or from keeping those in attendance or not attending safe from harm. However, to repeat: it is extremely rare for speakers to be banned.

Where can I find more information?

[NUS No Platform Policy document](#)

[Mitigating the Risk Associated with External Speakers – NUS Guidance on External Speaker Policies](#)