



→ [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) | Rules, guidance and support

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> [Role-specific guidance for higher education \(HE\) providers on implementing the Prevent duty](#)



Guidance

Implementing the Prevent duty in higher education (HE): chief security officers

Published 1 April 2021

- Contents
- [1. The role](#)
 - [2. Events](#)
 - [3. External speakers](#)
 - [4. Information sharing](#)
 - [5. Staff awareness and training](#)
 - [6. Resources](#)

[Print this page](#)

1. The role

Heads of security in higher education providers are integral to the safety and security of the institutions they serve. The [Prevent duty](#) has clear relevance to their role. In some cases, heads of security are the appointed leads on this agenda, although this depends on individual institutions. This page looks at four of their key responsibilities:

- events
- external speakers
- information sharing
- staff awareness

2. Events

Chiefs of Security are likely to be involved with the policies and procedures of university events. The government's Prevent duty guidance specifies that universities should have policies in place for the management of events on campus and the use of their premises.

These should apply to staff, students and visitors and set out what is required for any event to proceed. The guidance advises that there should be a system for assessing risks associated with planned events which should enable institutions to suggest whether an event should proceed, be cancelled or whether acts to mitigate risk are required. This should also be the case for off-campus events that are affiliated to, funded by or branded by the university.

3. External speakers

Events will often involve external speakers. The [Prevent duty guidance](#) specifies that higher education institutions must consider whether the views being expressed by speakers, or the views likely to be expressed, constitute extremist views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups. [Regional further and higher education Prevent coordinators](#) can provide training either directly to students intending to manage events, or to members of staff who intend to train students.

Higher education providers must be confident they can mitigate such a risk without the cancellation of the event. Higher education providers should develop a guest speaker or freedom of speech policy to deal specifically with external speaker events. External speaker policies should provide universities with a structure for assessing speaker related risks, guidance on which can be found in Universities UK's [External Speakers in Higher Education Institutions](#).

4. Information sharing

The [Prevent duty guidance](#) specifies that where legal and appropriate, universities should have procedures in place for the sharing of information about speakers with other institutions and partners. The [Association of University Chief Security Officers \(AUSCO\)](#) website contains a protocol that advises staff on how to engage in information sharing whilst also respecting their obligations under the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).

The Universities UK guidance '[Oversight of security-sensitive information for research purposes](#)' may also be useful. This gives providers advice on the accessing and storage of documents that may contain controversial or sensitive information for research purposes. It also provides a framework to help institutions manage the risks associated with the accessing of such information.

5. Staff awareness and training

The Prevent duty guidance requires that staff involved in the physical security of a university's estates have an awareness of Prevent, and that in many cases this can be achieved through [engagement with AUSCO](#).

The guidance also recommends that appropriate members of staff have training to recognise factors that make people support or engage in terrorist activity, how to recognise vulnerability to terrorism, and what action to take in response, such as Channel referrals.

[Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent \(WRAP\)](#) training can be accessed online through [JISC](#) and information about training can also be provided by the [Prevent Regional Coordinators](#).

6. Resources

Useful resources for chiefs security officers include:

- [Prevent training materials for higher education \(HE\)](#)
- [Prevent duty guidance](#)
- [Association of University Chief Security Officers \(AUSCO\)](#)
- University UK guidance on [External Speakers in Higher Education Institutions](#)
- [Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent \(WRAP\)](#)

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