



Policy on Political Campaigning & Activity

Policy Statement

As a registered charity regulated by the Charity Commission, the College is required to comply with defined legal requirements for charities relating to political campaigning.

The College is committed to ensuring that in meeting these requirements, it maintains its commitment to the principles of free speech.

This policy is designed to provide a framework within which the College can comply with its legal obligations in this area whilst continuing to encourage appropriate discourse and free speech among its members.

Application & Scope

This policy applies to all College activities and all College members when acting for or on behalf of the College, but excludes campaigning, where relevant, that relates to elections for internal College positions, including but not limited to Statutory and Non-Statutory College Offices, and CR Committee roles.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the Charity Commission's published definitions¹ of "campaigning" and "political activity" are adopted.

Legal Principles

The following key, relevant legal principles apply to the College, and inform the requirements set out in this Policy:-

1. The College's charitable purposes must at all times be for the public benefit; if the College's purposes become, or are seen to become, inherently political, the College will be in breach of this requirement.
2. Political campaigning or political activity is permitted only in circumstances where such activity supports the delivery of the College's charitable objectives in advancing Education, Religion, Learning and Research in the University of Cambridge.
3. Circumstances in which political activity may be permitted include:-
 - Campaigning for a relevant change in law, policy or decisions, where such change would support the College's purposes.
 - Supporting specific policies advocated by political parties if doing so would help achieve the College's charitable purposes.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities>

4. The College must stress its political independence and ensure that any involvement it has with political parties is balanced. The College must not give support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician.

Political Activity by the College

The College, and its members when acting for or on behalf of the College, will only undertake political activity (as defined) when such activity is directly and demonstrably in support of the delivery of its charitable purposes. Such activities may include:-

- Activity which is aimed at securing, or opposing, any change in the law or in the policy or decisions of central government, local authorities or other public bodies, whether in this country or abroad.
- Activity to preserve an existing piece of legislation, where for reasons connected to the performance of its objectives, the College opposes it being repealed or amended.

Support for Political Parties

1. The College, and its members when acting for or on behalf of the College, will not demonstrate support, whether financial or otherwise, for any political party nor ideology, nor any individual politician nor candidate.
2. The College's provisions on freedom of speech permit individual members from expressing their own personal, political views or support for individual policies when not acting for or on behalf of the College, other than when to do so would be in breach of other College policies and procedures, including the terms of accommodation licences or the provisions of any communications / social media policies.
3. The College's provisions on freedom of speech permit the commercial use of College conferencing facilities by those with political interests, subject to any arrangements being made in accordance with the College's processes for the acceptance of bookings and the requirements of the Prevent duty.

Electoral Communications & Canvassing

1. Electoral communications received by post will be dealt with in the same way as any other post received by the College and addressed to its resident members.
2. The door-to-door delivery of political material to College buildings is not permitted, either by College members or those external to the College.
3. Door-to-door political canvassing involving College buildings is not permitted, either by College members or those external to the College.