Prevent Duty Policy

Synopsis

This policy explains how the University ensures that it meets the requirements of the Prevent duty under the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 and the UK Government's associated Prevent strategy.

This is required as Education providers are specified authorities in the schedule of the act.

Approval

Approved by: Senior Management Team

Date: 29th August 2024.

Revision Record

Issue	Date	Reason for Review
1.0	July 2020	New Policy
2.0	August 2024	Revised Policy due to changes in the statutory guidance and availability of UK wide online training resources provided by the Home office. Changes are minor except: • Reworded aim in section 3 • Completely rewritten section 5 – Staff Training • Changes to the references • Use of a dedicated prevent mailbox throughout the policy.

Contents

1.0   Introduction and Policy Statement

The University is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its students and staff, and to meeting its duties under the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 and the UK Government's associated Prevent strategy.

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 and the UK Government's associated Prevent strategy require universities and public bodies to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' and places responsibility on them to ensure that measures are taken to meet these responsibilities.

The University has issued detailed guidance to researchers working in areas that are subject to counter terrorism legislation and Prevent measures (Prevent and Counter Terrorism Guidance).

The Prevent duty is explained in detail in the Statutory Guidance issued by the Scottish Government. This Policy has been updated due to the guidance which came into force in August 2024.

The risk of extremist activity at the University is kept under constant review as our duty of care to students and staff is of the utmost importance.

2.0   Scope of Policy

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 contains a number of parts which apply to various parts of the United Kingdom, including Scotland.

The legislation, and therefore this policy applies to all University of Aberdeen staff and students when in the UK.

3.0   Aims and Objectives

The Prevent strategy, published by the UK Government in 2011, is part of the UK's overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities, including education, to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism".

The Prevent strategy has 3 specific strategic objectives, to:
•   Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
•   Intervene to support people susceptible to radicalisation.
•   Enable people who have already been engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

The underpinning principle of the Prevent strategy is to safeguard individuals from harm, and for higher education institutions this presents a challenge – to balance the principles of academic freedom with their statutory duties, while safeguarding students and staff.

With this in mind, the University of Aberdeen has worked to ensure the adoption of measures under Prevent strikes an appropriate balance between academic freedom and student and staff welfare.

Our proportionate approach has included consultation with our student and staff community to ensure full consideration of all of the issues at hand, and reference to relevant guidance from sources including the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group and the UK Government's Prevent Duty Guidance for Scottish Higher Education Institutions.

4.0   Responsibilities

4.1   University Secretary

The University Secretary is the University Lead for Prevent and responsible for:
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the prevent duty.
- Convening the Prevent Safeguarding Panel as and when required.
- Sharing information, on concerns raised, with external agencies when appropriate.
- Representing, or ensuring representation, for the University at case conferences when these are necessary.
- Representing, or ensuring representation, for the University at the Scottish Higher Education Prevent Working Group and similar forums.

4.2   Director of People

The Director of People is the Principal Safeguarding Officer and responsible for:
- Ensuring the provision of guidance and support to those involved in the referral process at any stage via Human Resources and/or Student Support Services as appropriate.
- Acting as the single point of contact (SPOC), for the University, for all Prevent duty related requests for information, processing these as described in the Grampian Prevent Information Sharing protocol.

4.3   The Safeguarding Panel

The Safeguarding Panel is responsible for deciding whether concerns should be shared with relevant external agencies and acts as the final 'check' in the safeguarding process for serious concerns. This process includes multiple checks to ensure careful and detailed consideration of the matter at hand.

The Safeguarding Panel is convened by the University Secretary, supported by the University's Prevent Coordinator, and other members are co-opted on a case-by-case basis, depending on the matter being discussed.

4.4   Head of Security

The Head of Security is responsible for:
•   Evaluating the risks associated with speakers and events.
•   Advising on security arrangements.
•   Liaising with external agencies where appropriate.
•   Escalating issues of concern to the University Secretary where appropriate.
•   Assisting with the design and delivery of appropriate training for staff.

4.5   Prevent Coordinator

The Prevent Co-ordinator is responsible for:
•   Keeping this policy, and associated guidance, under review and updating and revising them as and when required.
•   Overseeing the training program.
•   Maintenance of Prevent related training records.
•   Collating and maintaining records of basic anonymised statistics of concerns raised and actions taken.
•   Preparing an annual report, for the Resilience Advisory Group on prevent related activities undertaken during the previous year.

4.6   Heads of School and Directors of Departments

The Heads of School and Directors of Departments are responsible for:
•   Implementing this policy in their area of responsibility including.
•   Identifying staff in key positions to undergo training relevant to their roles.
•   Ensuring that they consider concerns raised through their line managers and, where appropriate, pass these on to the University Secretary.

4.7   Line Managers

All line managers have a responsibility to make themselves aware of the content of this policy and ensure that they always act in accordance with it.

4.8   All Employees

All staff have a responsibility to make themselves aware of the content of this policy and to raise any concerns as described in section 7 of this policy.

Note: The above are not exhaustive lists so please check the "University of Aberdeen Policies and Guidance documents", in section 10, for more details.

5.0   Staff Training

The UK Home Office provides online training on the Prevent duty which is available as different versions for different sectors, such as Education, and the devolved nations including Scotland. Which staff should complete each is described below.

Course 1 – Awareness Course
All staff are encouraged complete this but especially line managers and those with front line teaching and service delivery roles, as they may need to raise a concern about a member of staff or student.

Course 2 – Referrals Course
Designated Safeguarding Officers are expected to complete this course, as they may need to make a Prevent referral.

Course 3 – Channel or Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP in Scotland)
The University's Lead Safeguarding Officer, Principal Safeguarding Officer, Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and Prevent Co-ordinator must complete this.

Course 4 – Refresher Awareness Course
This is available and recommended to be completed no longer than 3 years after completing course 1.

The above are considered adequate to be competent in these roles but additional, in person, training will become available and may be required for staff in specifically defined roles.

Staff are encouraged to complete the online training via the University of Aberdeen Training system so that the Prevent Co-ordinator can confirm staff have completed the appropriate course(s).

However, if they are done directly via the Home office .gov website a certificate will need to be downloaded to demonstrate completion.

An in-person version of the awareness course will also be available for those staff who are not able to complete this online.

Any queries about staff training can be raised in the first instance by emailing the Prevent Co-ordinator at prevent@abdn.ac.uk.

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6.0   Management of Speakers at Events

Any member of staff or student organising any event which is not directly related to the University's normal academic or administrative duties but is, in any way, is under the auspices of the University must abide by the Universities "Events and Speaker Policy". See section 10 for more details.

In addition to the "Event Organiser", the Central Timetabling Team, owners of locally bookable spaces, room bookers and AUSA all have responsibilities under this policy, of which they must be aware and comply with.

Note: It is imperative that all events are arranged in good time and those involving external speakers notified/booked in accordance with the procedures described in the policy at least 10 days before the event, to allow enough time for the arrangements to be reviewed. Failure to do so may risk the event being cancelled by the University.

7.0   Welfare, Pastoral Support and Raising a Concern

The University has a duty of care towards its students and is committed to providing an environment that promotes opportunities for them to learn and develop as individuals. Effective sources of advice and guidance are available for students should they require help or assistance of any kind.

Support services are provided by Student Support Services (including the Counselling Service, Multi-Faith Chaplaincy and Student Advice & Support team), Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing (including the Infohub and engagement teams), and others.

Staff or students should be aware that any concerns they might have over the safety and wellbeing of a student (regardless of what the issue may be) can be raised in confidence with a member of staff in Student Support Services. Should anyone have a concern over a member of staff then this should be raised in the first instance with a line manager and support will be offered from HR.

Staff who are engaged in the provision of advice to students and staff, who have serious concerns over the welfare of an individual that they think should be shared with a third party, should raise these with the University's Safeguarding Panel.

Appendix D is a form which should be used to record concerns and track decisions.
All communications should be via the prevent@abdn.ac.uk mailbox in order to ensure confidentiality and comply with data protection requirements.

8.0 Safety Online and Data Protection

The University has robust policies in place with regards to information security, which take account of our statutory Counter Terrorism duty, including the conditions for using IT facilities and a web-filtering tool to prevent staff and students accessing any websites considered to contain harmful material without the necessary permissions.

However, our aim is not to stop people looking at or learning about terrorism or extremism as part of legitimate academic study.

Research
The University is required to provide guidance on access to terrorist related material. See the Guidance for working on terrorism related material (see Section 10).

Any researcher who needs to access or store such material as part of their legitimate research should notify the University so that guidance can be issued and secure storage for research data and materials can be provided.

Researchers should notify their Business Development Officer in Research & Innovation if they are applying for external funding or an Ethics Officer if their research requires ethical approval. If neither of these routes apply, please notify the Prevent Co-ordinator at prevent@abdn.ac.uk.

Data Protection
Where someone is concerned about a student or staff member, they may wish to share personal information about this individual with relevant staff whose role it is to provide support in such circumstances.

Higher education staff can generally disclose information about a student to enable another member of staff to do their job, in line with the University Data Protection Policy. If in doubt, advice should be taken from the University's Data Protection Officer.

Decisions to share information with a third party should be taken by the University's Safeguarding Panel, in line with the institution's Data Protection Policy. Again, in this instance, advice will be sought from the University's Data Protection Officer.

9.0 Monitoring and Review

The Prevent Co-ordinator will keep this policy and the associated guidance under review. and

As and when necessary, this policy will be revised, and any changes agreed following consolation with the relevant stakeholders via the Resilience Advisory Group.

The Prevent Co-ordinator will monitor all prevent related activities, including training, decisions made regarding concerns raised and any actions taken and produce a summary report, annually, for the Advisory Group on Business Continuity and Resilience.

10.0 References

10.1 Internal References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following University of Aberdeen policies and guidance available on StaffNet, Including the appendices to this policy.

Document reference	Document Name
Appendix A	Prevent Student Concern Referral Process
Appendix B	Prevent Staff Concern Referral Process
Appendix C	Prevent Escalation Process Flowchart
Appendix D	Prevent Concerns, Record of Decisions Form
	Events and Speaker Policy;
	Safeguarding Policy
	Guidance for Researchers Working on Terrorism Related Material

10.2 External References

Further information is available in the following external documents, which were updated in 2024.

Document Name
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
Prevent Duty Statutory Guidance; for Scotland
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Good Practice Guide for Scottish Higher Education Institutions