

THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
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Professor Craig Calhoun
Director

21 August 2015

Dear Home Secretary,

I write to express LSE's sincere thanks for the considerable efforts you and your Department have made to address the concerns of the higher education sector in respect of the new statutory duties placed on it by the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The revised draft guidance published on 16 July is a significant improvement. But secondly, if I may, I should be most grateful if you could kindly consider two remaining concerns before the guidance is finalised. These are set out in the attached short note. We expect that they will be shared widely in the HE sector and in Parliament, but could be addressed by some very minor changes.

I am copying this letter to Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Craig Calhoun
Director, LSE

Lord Paul Myners
LSE Chair of Governors

cc: Nicola Dandridge, Universities UK

**PREVENT DUTY GUIDANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES,
PUBLISHED 16 JULY 2015**

RESPONSE FROM LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (LSE)

This draft guidance is considerably improved from the first version published in December 2014. In particular, LSE welcomes:

- The recognition that a Relevant Higher Education Body (RHEB) must “balance its legal duties in terms of both ensuring freedom of speech and academic freedom, and also protecting student and staff welfare”.
- The acceptance that certain events may be allowed to proceed as long as an RHEB is “entirely convinced that [terrorism-related risk] can be fully mitigated without cancellation of the event”. This acknowledges the value of open debate in challenging terrorism-related views.
- The use at one point of the phrase “extremist views that could draw people into terrorism”. Although not used on every occasion, if used consistently this formulation could go a long way towards ameliorating the HE sector’s concerns over the perception that certain views deemed extremist, whilst legal under current legislation, should nevertheless be curbed.

LSE is accordingly grateful for the goodwill shown in the attempt to meet concerns widely expressed in the HE sector and in Parliament.

Nevertheless, LSE has remaining concerns on two fronts:

- The phrase in the third tier above used to describe extremism is not used consistently. At another point, the phrase “non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit” appears. That wording suggests that all forms of non-violent extremism can support terrorism, when this is not the case and when in many instances such non-violent extremism is legal under current legislation. Simply removing the comma from the phrase would improve it.
- The insertion of paragraph 13 relating to gender segregation in a document dealing with counter-terrorism is extremely unfortunate. LSE policy is to follow the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance referenced. However gender segregation has no link to terrorism, and the reference in this document risks reinforcing the perceptions of some in the Muslim community that Prevent is a coercive programme aimed at them.



Home Office

Rt Hon John Hayes MP
Minister of State for Security

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Prof Craig Calhoun
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CTS Reference: M11697/15

Dear Prof Calhoun,

2/11/15

Thank you for your letter of 21 August to the Home Secretary about the new Prevent duty in the higher education sector. I am replying as the Minister of State for Security. I am sorry for the delay.

Universities have a key role to play in Prevent work, which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. They represent one of the most important arenas for challenging extremist views and ideologies.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which contains the Prevent duty, will support universities in tackling the risk of radicalisation on campus. I appreciate your comments on the improvements made to the duty guidance.

The duty commenced on 18 September 2015 for higher and further education bodies. Specific guidance for these institutions has now been published on www.gov.uk - Prevent Duty Guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales.

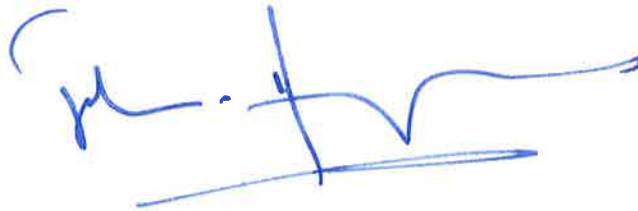
You raised two concerns about the guidance: the description of non-violent extremism and the reference to gender segregation, and the risk that this might reinforce perceptions by some that Prevent is a coercive programme aimed at the Muslim community.

On your first point, it is clear that many of those convicted of terrorist offences were influenced by non-violent extremists. Terrorist organisations draw on extremist ideas. It is therefore important that we confront these warped extremist narratives. Extremism has no place in our society and will not be tolerated. It is for these reasons that non-violent extremism can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit, and this reflects the language of the Prevent Strategy. Specifically in relation to your point about this wording, please note that it purposefully states "can" create and popularise rather than "will" or "does".

Regarding the reference to gender segregation, non-violent extremism can encourage segregation and the issue of gender segregation has been prevalent in the university sector. It is because of this that it is important the duty guidance for higher education references the existing Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on this issue.

Prevent is not about targeting any single community. Prevent tackles all forms of terrorism and intervenes only when there are genuine concerns that a person may be susceptible to recruitment or the propaganda of extremism, to stop them being drawn into terrorism. Prevent aims to protect all communities.

I hope this letter assures you that we take your concerns very seriously and are taking robust action to counter extremism and radicalisation in universities.



Rt Hon John Hayes MP