MetFilm School
Freedom of Speech Policy

Responsible Person	Jonny Persey, Director
Approving Body	Board
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Next Review Date	Every 4 Years
Queries	jonny@metfilm.co.uk

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of S.43 of the Education (no. 2) Act 1986 MetFilm makes the following regulations, governing the conduct of staff and students, and prescribing procedures to be followed in order to maintain freedom of speech within the law on MetFilm premises. They are to be read in conjunction with other MetFilm policy and procedure, including disciplinary procedures, which they supplement but do not supersede.

- MetFilm believes that the maintenance of freedom of thought and expression within institutions of learning is essential to their claim to be such. To prevent the articulation of certain viewpoints for no other reason than that they are not accepted by some groups, or even by the majority, is to prevent equally the full understanding, and due analysis and criticism, of those views; in consequence it protects those who hold such views from having to defend them against the arguments of those who do not.

- It is nevertheless recognised that the articulation of certain views or the use of certain expressions may also in themselves constitute incitement to riot, insurrection, racial hatred, sexual harassment, discrimination on such grounds as race or sex, or other criminal activities. Their mere utterance may itself be unlawful. On other occasions, the articulation of such views may make probable a breach of the peace. It is the clear duty of MetFilm management to attempt to prevent any breach of the law where it is in their judgement reasonable to assume that this might occur.

- There is an intermediate area where what those uttering them claim to be mere expressions of opinion are seen by others as abusive, threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, or as 'verbal violence', even though their utterance is not itself a breach of the law. It remains however, axiomatic that such expressions should be met not by violence but by rational analysis and argument. The suppression of points of view by violence or intimidation is contrary to the nature of institutions dedicated to learning, but so too is excessive insistence on expressing publicly views which are certain to cause offence or distress to others. Conflict of moral principles is never easy to resolve, even where one such principle is the right to freedom of lawful expression; self-restraint and consideration for the feelings of others are here the best guides.

- The remainder of these regulations addresses three types of event:
  - events on MetFilm premises arranged by MetFilm staff outside the normal teaching and events programmes
  - events arranged by the students of MetFilm
  - events outside the normal teaching programmes arranged by any person or group of persons not covered by these above but held on MetFilm premises.

Regulations

- The Leadership Team shall at all times do whatever is reasonably practicable to ensure that the use of MetFilm premises is not denied to any individual or body of persons on any ground connected with the beliefs or views of that individual or of any member of that body, or the policy or objectives of that body, subject only to the caveats below.

- Where, at any of the events listed in above, views may be publicly expressed, whether verbally or otherwise, adequate notice shall be given to the Leadership Team or the designated officer; a period of less than 14 days' notice shall be regarded as inadequate. Such notice shall include:
  - the date, time, and place of the event;
  - in the case of staff and student-organised events, the name of the individual or group responsible for them and, where it is a group, the name of the individual who will act as correspondent to the group;
  - in the case of other events, the name of the individual or group responsible and, where it is a group, the name of the individual who will act as correspondent to the group, plus where possible the name of at least one member of staff connected with the group and willing to act as co-sponsor of the event, who together with the correspondent or organising individual shall sign an undertaking to comply with all lawful instructions of MetFilm regarding the organisation of the event;
  - the arrangements proposed for security measures and for caretaking if these are necessary.

- The Leadership Team or designated officer shall within seven days of the receipt of such notice, where no objection is made to the arrangements proposed, signify

consent. Changes required to the arrangements shall similarly be notified within seven days.

- Where it seems to the individual or group organising the event that views may be expressed which are unlawful, or that other unlawful actions may take place, this must be notified to the Leadership Team or designated officer at the same time as the notice described above is delivered, or if suspicion that this may occur arises thereafter, immediately. When for this reason or otherwise the Leadership Team or designated officer reasonably believes that an unlawful act may be committed, he or she may refuse permission for the event to take place on MetFilm premises.

- In accordance with the same procedure, the organiser(s) of an event must notify the Leadership Team or designated officer if he/she/they judge that a breach of the peace may occur during/before/after the event. When for that reason or otherwise the Leadership Team or designated officer reasonably believes that there may be a breach of the peace during/before/after the event, he or she shall as soon as is practicable consult the Senior Police Officer (or his/her nominee) in the local Police Division within which the event is to take place. After such consultation, permission for the event may be refused. Where it is not, the Leadership Team or designated officer shall act in concert with the Senior Police Officer and the organiser(s) of the event to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained and that no breach of the peace occurs.

- Whenever an event falling within the provisions of these regulations is proposed, the Leadership Team or designated officer shall inform of his or her actions and decision the Chair of the Board.

- MetFilm will not unreasonably refuse permission for events to be held on its premises. To ensure this, the Leadership Team or designated officer shall, before refusing permission for an event to take place, inform themselves upon the following questions:
  - whether there is likely to be incitement of those attending the event to commit a criminal act;
  - the likelihood of the expression of views contrary to the criminal law;
  - whether the event is in direct support of an organisation whose aims and objectives are illegal;
  - whether the event could give rise to any breach of the peace (bearing in mind the advice of the Senior Police Officer of the appropriate Division of the local Police);
    the safety of persons attending the event and of persons in the vicinity who might foreseeably be put at risk;
  - the security of MetFilm premises;
  - the good name of the institution.

- Any breach of these regulations shall, in the case of a student or group of students, fall to be handled under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. A breach by a member of staff shall be handled in accordance with the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

- A student signing upon enrolment an undertaking to observe MetFilm regulations shall be deemed formally to have accepted both the letter and the spirit of these regulations.

Delegation

- The Board delegates its powers in respect of the matters dealt with in these regulations to the Leadership Team or the designated officers, except insofar as the latter may deem it desirable to seek advice or a decision from the Corporate Board or its Chair, where this is reasonably practicable.