

Prevent Strategy: Raising Concerns

A Briefing Note for Students

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Background

The UK Government published the Prevent Strategy in 2011, one of four strands of the wider counter-terrorist strategy. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) introduced a package of further measures aimed at countering the risk of terrorism, and as part of this it is mandatory for all Higher Education Institutions "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". More information on the Prevent Strategy is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

The Prevent Strategy deals with all forms of terrorism, including non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism. The Strategy makes clear that preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism requires a challenge to extremist ideas, where they are used to legitimise terrorism, and appropriate interventions to stop people moving from extremist (legal) groups into terrorist –related activity.

Prevent and UCEM

UCEM has completed a risk assessment with regards the Prevent Strategy and our students and staff. At present the risks for UCEM are deemed to be low, due to the nature of our students and our provision. UCEM does not have a physical campus, which means that students are not using UCEM IT systems, and there is not a wide-range of physical events that occur. UCEM also does not currently have a Student's Union which invites a range of speakers to our campus (online or to a physical building).

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All events that are offered by UCEM are for the purposes of supporting the teaching on a programme; or Continuing Professional Development (CPD); and are focussed on the property and construction sector. Additionally events are held to promote our programmes; such as at Open Evenings or UCAS Fairs.

However, UCEM recognises and takes seriously its responsibility under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) and must ensure all staff and students are aware of the procedures if a concern is raised.

What would I raise as a concern?

Prevent concerning behaviour may include the following:

- *Being in possession of, or sharing, extremist literature/propaganda*
- *Celebrating violence- for instance, watching violent videos online and enjoying this*
- *Sharing the ideologies of extremist groups*
- *Behaving secretly*
- *Displaying sympathy for extremist causes*
- *Losing interest in old friends or hobbies*

(Tower Hamlets Council, n.d.¹)

For example, a concern could include messages that you consider inappropriate on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE); which may be due to the content of the message or language that is used. Alternatively, you may be concerned on content that is covered at a face to face, workshop or CPD event or a synchronous event such as a webinar, which you consider may be encouraging others to be drawn into terrorism.

Many of our students are also involved in 'What's App' Groups'; that are linked to their programme. Whilst these are run by students not by UCEM, if a message is posted in 'What's App' that you are uncomfortable with due to its content; or you feel the messages are creating an atmosphere that is conducive to terrorist activity you must raise this with UCEM.

Who should I raise my concern to?

All concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Mailbox at safeguarding@ucem.ac.uk The mailbox will be closely monitored and all concerns will be followed up as a matter of priority.

UCEM would rather that you refer concerns even if you are unsure whether there is an issue. All messages will be screened and prioritised.

What will UCEM do if you raise a concern?

UCEM will investigate the issue you have raised; which will involve speaking to other students or members of staff where appropriate to find out more information on what has occurred. If someone has raised a concern regarding your activity we will discuss this with you before any action is taken.

All students when they join UCEM agree to the Terms and Conditions of Contract; as well as Terms and Conditions to use the Virtual Learning Environment. Under these Terms all students agree to a certain code of behaviour. If a student has broken either the Terms and

¹ Tower Hamlets Council (n.d). *Keeping children and young people safe against radicalisation and extremism*. [online] Towerhamlets.gov.uk. Available at: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/health_social_care/children_and_family_care/keeping_children_safe.aspx [Accessed 30 May 2017].

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Conditions of the Virtual Learning Environment or the Terms and Conditions of Contract they may be subject to disciplinary procedure.

If a concern is valid regarding the Prevent Strategy UCEM will work close with representatives from the Department of Business and Skills; which may include recommending that someone is referred to the Channel Programme. Channel is an early intervention multi-agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into violent extremist or terrorist behaviour. Channel works in a similar way to existing safeguarding partnerships aimed at protecting vulnerable people. More information can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf