

Boycott PREVENT - model motion

This Union Notes

1. The government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTS Act) 2015 places a statutory requirement on 'specified authorities' – including universities and colleges – to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism' and to implement the 'PREVENT' strategy.

2. The PREVENT strategy, as part of the Government's 'counter-extremism' agenda has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims.

3. Under PREVENT, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers.

4. The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.

5. The Act further criminalises Muslims and Black people, and comes amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government.

This Union Believes

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.

2. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.

3. That the Act could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas.

4. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance

5. The implementation of the PREVENT strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists.

6. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University and College Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their national conferences opposing the Act and PREVENT.

7. As a Charity, we as a Union are not legally bound to engage with PREVENT and should seek to boycott it as far as legally possible.

This Union Resolves

1. To mandate the Officers of this Union to not engage with the PREVENT strategy or implement any of the proposals of the Act to which they are not legally bound, and to boycott it as far as legally possible.

2. To release a statement expressing our opposition to PREVENT and the CTS Act for being racist and a threat to academic freedom and civil liberties.

3. To work with campus trade unions including UCU on combating the PREVENT strategy and its implementation on campus.

4. To educate students on the dangers of the CTS Act and the PREVENT strategy.

5. To lobby the college/university to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT and other similar initiatives.

This involves:

Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the university and Students' Union.

This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.

Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.

6. To lobby the college/university to publicly condemn PREVENT and the CTS Act and to call for its repeal.

**Model letter to your
institution's Registrar/Chief
Operating Officer (or
equivalent)**

INSERT UNION LOGO

DD/MM/YY

RE: Working on PREVENT

Dear XXX,

Following the passing of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act in February 2015 the government has been working with the higher and further education sectors to develop guidance – particularly in relation to the “Prevent duty” outlined in Section 26 of the Act.

As the [INSERT JOB TITLE] at [INSERT UNION], the PREVENT strategy falls under my remit, and I believe it would be very useful for us both to meet soon to discuss how the College/University [DELETE AS APPROPRIATE] is planning to respond to PREVENT and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act locally and engage with the discussions and developments nationally.

It would be helpful for our students to understand how, if at all, PREVENT is being used here; and if there is any information you could send ahead of us meeting it would be gratefully received.

The Act, and specifically the PREVENT duty, is of particular concern to me - especially with regards to how we, as an academic community, will ensure that

students' rights and freedom of expression are protected.

I look forward to you hearing from you and arranging a meeting. The best way to contact me is

[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]

or

[INSERT PHONE NUMBER].

Regards/Best Wishes/In unity,

[DELETE AS APPROPRIATE, OR INSERT YOUR OWN]

[INSERT NAME & JOB TITLE]