



LONDON 2026

IN-PERSON EVENT

JOINT CONFERENCE UNICA x KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Hosted by Global Observatory on Academic Freedom - School of Education, Communication & Society, King's College London

7-8 May 2026

Venue: TBD

TOPICS

At present, threats to academic freedom come from many directions, mainly from outside higher education institutions but, also, sometimes from within. In the last decade, we have witnessed a series of attempts to (re)codify and regulate academic freedom as part of efforts to protect and promote it under new and evolving circumstances, or, quite the contrary, to restrict or even repress it.

The concept of frameworks of reference for academic freedom has proven a useful tool in analysing and explaining this development and in suggesting new, and supporting continuing, ways of action in defense of academic freedom. This conference will bring together university leaders, researchers, and other key higher education stakeholders to take the pulse with regard to the emergence of new frameworks of reference.

Participation is free, but **registration is mandatory**.
Registration form and further details available at the event webpage

For any questions, please contact the UNICA Secretariat:

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and King's College representative:

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Programme

(all times are in BST – British Summer Time)

Day 1 | 7 May 2026

Venue: TBC

12:30-13:30	Registration & welcome lunch
13:30-14:00	Welcome & introductions
14:00-15:30	<p>Session 1 Beyond statements of principle: how frameworks of reference translate into practice</p> <p>Chair: TBC</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Ginger, Former Vice-Provost, Northeastern University London • Susana Peralta, Professor of Public Economics and Political Economy, NOVA Lisboa • Robert Post, Sterling Professor of Law, Yale Law School
15:30-17:00	<p>Session 2 It starts from within: institutional frameworks of reference for academic freedom</p> <p>Chair: TBC</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsten Busch Nielsen, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen • Rachel Mills, Senior Vice-President, King's College London • Naomi Waltham-Smith, Professor of Music, University of Oxford
19:00-21:00	<p>Dinner</p> <p>Venue: TBC</p>

Day 2 | 8 May 2026

Venue: TBC

9:00-9:30	Welcome Coffee
9:30-11:00	<p>Session 3 Advocating with public authorities for better regulations for academic freedom</p> <p>Chair: TBC</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan Palmowski, Secretary-General, The Guild • Jane Reichel, Vice-President, University of Stockholm • David Smith, Deputy Head of College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS), University of Edinburgh
11:00-11:30	Coffee break
11:30-13:00	<p>Session 4 Supra-national frameworks of reference for academic freedom</p> <p>Chair: TBC</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrence Karran, Professor of Higher Education, University of Lincoln • David Lock, Secretary General, Magna Charta Observatory • Robert Quinn, Founding Executive Director, Scholars at Risk Network
13:00-14:00	Farewell Lunch