

Checklist for guest speaker background authentication

When inviting a guest speaker to an event or meeting, it is important to establish their credentials and professional reputation. Any guest speaker or individual involved in the delivery of a Royal Society of Biology (RSB) event is being given a platform to share their expertise or work and, as a by-product, the speaker's work or views may appear to be endorsed by the RSB. It is therefore important to be certain that their proficiency to do so is valid, and that they can match the [values of the RSB](#).

Please see below for a non-exhaustive checklist of things to consider when sourcing a guest speaker. This is to be used by the event organiser and/or RSB committee member, and is **not to be shared externally**.

- **Are they an RSB member or Fellow?**
 - Check the RSB [membership directory](#), or RSB Head Office can confirm
- **Are they a member of any other reputable membership/professional organisation?**
- **Institutional profile (ORCID, researchgate, university/organisation profile):**
 - Is it up to date?
 - Does it substantiate their email signature and/or the expertise they state?
 - Is it a recognised institution?
- **Do they have recent and relevant research relating to their role?**
 - Do they have a clear permanent position?
 - If they are long ago retired, a visiting professor or honorary scientist, this may suggest out-dated information
- **Check social media pages**
 - Is their profile professional looking and stating their affiliations?
 - Do any of their recent posts seem controversial or unusual for a professional to be posting?
- **Publications**
 - Look out for negative reviews from other academics of books or papers they have written
 - Are their publications mostly related to the area they work in, or do they write about various topics outside of their main interest?
- **Appearances in the media/online**
 - Have they been the subject of negative media coverage?
 - Are their comments in the media mostly related to the area they work in?
 - Do they write or comment on the same thing repeatedly? [A sign of an agenda or bias]
- **Are they associated with any other organisations?**
 - For example, activist groups or groups which might put their credibility, impartiality or objectivity in doubt
 - This can include giving talks to a certain conference or meeting
- **Affiliations with industry**
 - Do they have any associations that might put their credibility, neutrality or independence in doubt?
- **Check with committee members, and any other contacts you may feel relevant, for a second opinion on the suitability of the individual**