



Rhode Island School of Design  
**The Division of Liberal Arts**

## CLASSROOM SPEAKER GUIDELINES

### **Definition**

There are two kinds of guest speakers that receive funding in Liberal Arts:

1. Classroom Speaker: an expert visitor invited to lecture or participate in a single class meeting;
2. Campus Speaker: a high-profile visitor invited to lecture, present, converse, or perform at an event that is divisional or public. This document is about classroom speakers only.

Protocols and funding for campus speakers are determined by the Dean, in consultation with the Humanities Fund Committee, and funded according to the Fund's established application process. More information on College-wide policies on guest speakers can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#), p. 75.

### **Function of Classroom Speakers**

The practice of inviting guests to lecture or lead discussions in courses is a recognized enrichment of the curriculum. Students benefit from such opportunities to hear new voices and to learn from experts whose knowledge or approach might complement those of their professor.

However, faculty should be careful not to have so many classroom speakers that the students' exposure to the primary faculty member is diminished. For any visit, a classroom speaker cannot serve as a replacement of the instructor of record, and therefore the instructor should be present during any visit.

A visit by a particular classroom speaker is a one-time special event intended to enhance or enrich a course. The same speaker should not be built into a course every time it is offered.

### **Funding for Classroom Speakers**

A classroom speaker may be supported on a one-time basis by a modest honorarium, paid for from the budget for classroom speakers associated with the department of the sponsoring faculty member. Not all desired classroom speakers are guaranteed funding support, however. It may be possible to invite a speaker to visit a class as a matter of professional courtesy, without any payment.

In general, an honorarium is an ex gratia payment made to a person for their services in a volunteer capacity or for services for which fees are not traditionally required. An honorarium differs from a stipend, which is a fixed sum of money paid periodically for services. Reoccurring events that have presenters expecting payment for services would receive a stipend, not an honorarium.

The departments cannot fund travel, hotel, or food expenses for a classroom visitor. Such costs are supported only in the case of a campus speaker. Because of the absence of travel or entertainment funding, an instructor who wishes to invite a guest speaker to a class should try to find "local talent" if possible.

If travel, hotel, or food expenses are necessary for a speaker's visit, it may be possible to recalibrate the visit so that the event is cross-departmental or public (a campus speaker event), supported by the Humanities Fund or other RISD funding sources.

While each department establishes its own guidelines for classroom speaker funding, standard honoraria for classroom speakers in the Division are:

	Zoom	In-person
1 Hour visit	\$100	\$150
2 Hour visit	\$150	\$200
3 Hour visit	\$200	\$250

### **Processes of Approval and Payment**

Each department has its own process for determining the types and numbers of speakers it can support in a semester or year. An instructor should contact his/her department head as part of the course proposal process, if possible, to learn how to apply for speaker funding. Classroom speakers cannot be funded retroactively.

After department head approval for an honorarium for a classroom speaker, the sponsoring faculty member will arrange the payment details with the Division Administrator (Gail). A completed W9 form must be received before payment can be processed.

All domestic guest speakers and visiting critics receiving payment from RISD for even a single day's services must complete a W9. International guest speakers can only be invited after consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs. International guest speakers pose particular logistical problems since they must enter the country with the appropriate visa in order to receive payment, travel or accommodations. International visitors who enter the country on a tourist visa may not be paid.