



Academic Freedom Policy

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Contact Officer	Registrar
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Version	2017.1
Related Documents	Staff Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct Professional Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Purpose

This Policy seeks to address the commitment of the Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd ('the Institute') in its Mission and Goals to "advance knowledge and understanding through a commitment to free intellectual enquiry and scholarship", as well as the key function of the Academic Board to "facilitate free intellectual enquiry and ensure academic integrity".

2. Principles

The key principles informing this Policy and associated Procedure are:

- that academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry are the cornerstones of critical enquiry, and the Institute is committed to the promotion of these interlinking concepts;
- that academic freedom is recognized and practiced by the Institute as having a fundamental basis in the culture commonly found in Australian universities and other higher education providers; and
- that academic freedom carries associated responsibilities.

3. Context

This Policy has been developed to foster and encourage the pursuit of knowledge through intellectual enquiry, which is highly valued as a mark of institutional excellence. The Institute expects its academic staff to exhibit a strong commitment to scholarship and the professional expectations of their academic disciplines.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all students at the Institute and all academic staff, including sessional/casual staff.

5. Definitions

See the *AIH Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

6. Policy Details

6.1 Academic Freedom

Academic staff and students are entitled to full freedom in any scholarly activity they pursue within their academic discipline. Furthermore, academic staff are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the unit of study they are delivering, subject to the constraints of their professional responsibilities and within the context of academic integrity. Students and staff must have a reasonable expectation that their right to hold values of their own choosing will be respected even when those values are being questioned.

6.2 Academic Responsibilities

Academic freedom carries associated responsibilities to exercise professional care and competence in the conduct of teaching and research, to subject academic work to the critical scrutiny of others, to consider the impact that one's work may have on others, and not to impinge on the ability of others to engage freely in teaching and learning, research, and academic debate. Academic staff should also be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the unit. Note that abuse of academic freedoms and rights could result in investigation and penalty under the *Staff Code of Conduct*, *Student Code of Conduct* or the *Professional Academic Misconduct Policy*.

6.3 Engaging in public debate as private citizens

When speaking or writing as private citizens, academic staff should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, academic staff should keep in mind that as scholars the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Therefore, they should at all times demonstrate academic and scholarly rigor to ensure accuracy, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the Institute. Academic staff should refrain from using their academic titles when publicly expressing an opinion on topics outside their area of expertise and/or on contentious issues, where personal opinion may deviate from the Institute's rules and regulations.

7. Legislation

This Policy and the associated Procedure comply with Higher Education Standards Framework standard 6.1 (Corporate Governance), which states:

"4. The governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of intellectual inquiry is upheld and protected".

8. Version Control

This Policy has been endorsed by the Australia Institute of Higher Education Academic Board as at February 2017 and is reviewed every 3 years. The Policy is published and available on the Australian Institute of Higher Education website <http://www.aih.nsw.edu.au/> under 'Policies and Procedures'.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2016-2	Registrar	Updated template.	6 July 2016	6 August 2016
2017-1	Ms. McCoy	Revised and edited content Renamed policy Restructured document; added table at beginning Added section on consequences	22 February 2017	6 March 2017