

FREE INTELLECTUAL ENQUIRY IN LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY

Approving authority	Academic Board
Purpose	To ensure that academic staff and students are able to pursue lines of enquiry and to express views relating to their area of academic expertise or academic studies without fear or favour.
Responsible Officer	Vice President
Next scheduled review	August 2021
Document Location	R:\Managers\OIHE\Policies
Associated documents	Academic Staff Professional Development

1. PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the following principles.

- 1.1 Intellectual and academic freedom of inquiry is central to the mission of all Australian higher education institutions and is internationally acknowledged as an essential and defining characteristic of university education.
- 1.2 Ozford Institute of Higher Education (hereafter referred to as “the Institute”) supports the principle of free academic and intellectual enquiry for its academic staff members in the area of their academic expertise and encourages its students to develop the capacity for critical independent judgment in the pursuit of discovering objectiveness in their studies.
- 1.3 The right to academic and intellectual freedom does not extend to academic staff members expressing views on areas other than those within their field of expertise. On these occasions academic staff members must make it clear that they are expressing these views as private citizens and not in the capacity of an academic employed by the Institute.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and academic staff of the Institute.

3. DEFINITION

Academic freedom is the principle that staff and students should be free to conduct research, undertake learning and teaching, communicate, and publish, subject to the standards of scholarship and within legislative requirements without unreasonable interference and restriction.

4. POLICY

It is policy that:

- 4.1 the Institute encourages and supports academic staff members in engaging in academic and intellectual enquiry and to express personal views, both within the Institute and publicly, in their area of academic expertise. However, an academic staff member's special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educator, an academic staff member must be cognisant that the public may judge the profession and/or the Institute by what has been said or written;
- 4.2 academic staff must make every effort to indicate that when expressing views within their area of expertise that they do so as an academic expert and that their views are not necessarily the views of the Institute;
- 4.3 members of academic staff will not identify themselves as a staff member of the Institute when speaking, writing or otherwise communicating on matters not within the province of their academic expertise;
- 4.4 academic staff members have the right to undertake scholarship that informs their teaching and conduct research that leads to the creation of new knowledge; and participate in determining the treatment of intellectual and practical issues in the subject and units they teach, to provide a balanced presentation that enhances student learning;
- 4.5 as members of the Institute's academic community and broader community of scholars, students are

encouraged to develop a capacity for critical judgment and sustained and independent search for objectiveness in the subject areas they study;

- 4.6 the Institute through its approach to learning and teaching will ensure appropriate opportunities are provided to students to develop their capacity for critical judgment and academic enquiry;
- 4.7 not disadvantage or subject its staff and students to less favourable treatment for exercising their right to academic freedom, including no threats to the security of employment for its staff, regardless of the nature of that employment.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that this policy is fit for purpose and meet the requirements of the HES Threshold Standards the policy will be;

- 5.1 internally endorsed by the Executive Management Team on development or review, prior to approval by Governing Board, or the Academic Board or other delegated authority;
- 5.2 externally reviewed as part of any independent review of the HES Threshold Standards approved by the Governing Board;
- 5.3 internally reviewed by the Responsible Officer every three years from the date of approval (if not earlier);
- 5.4 referenced to the applicable HES threshold Standard and/or other legislation/regulation.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback or comments on this policy is welcomed by the listed Responsible officers of the Institute.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy has initially been developed with reference to the following institutions' policies:
 Australian Institute of Business, *Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy*, December 2013
 Curtin University, *Academic Freedom Policy*, December 2013
 Macquarie University *Academic freedom statement* July 2016

8. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Description	Approved by
1.0	18 March 2014	Initial issue	AB
2.0	August 2018	Internal review	AB
Related legislation/ regulation/standard			