

Academic Freedom Policy

Purpose	This Policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of Academic staff and students to express views and opinions and to investigate or research issues that relate to an academic staff member's area of academic expertise.
Location	The policy is maintained on owncloud
Responsible	Chair of Academic Board
Responsible office	Chair of Academic Board's Office
Contact officer	TBA
Effective date	29 June 2020
Review date	TBA
Modification history	Version 1.0
Related documents	AITC Staff Recruitment, Review & Promotions Policy. AITC Staff Professional Development Policy. AITC Staff Code of Conduct. AITC Student Code of Conduct.
Authority	Approved by Council

1. Purpose

Higher Education in Australia has asserted the principle that academic staff and students have the right to express views and opinions and to investigate or research issues that relate to an academic staff member's area of academic expertise.

The right to free intellectual enquiry/academic freedom (see definition in Item 3 below) comes with responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of Council and the Academic Board to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of intellectual inquiry is upheld and protected ensuring that members of academic staff and students are able to pursue lines of enquiry and to express views relating to their area of academic expertise without fear or favour (HES 2017 Standard 6.1.3).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff and students at the Australian Institute of Technology & Commerce (AITC).

3. Definition

Academic freedom includes the rights of all staff, affiliates, students and volunteers to:

- (a) Hold and express opinions about the operations of AITC and higher education policy more generally, in areas of their academic expertise.
- (b) Pursue critical and open inquiry and (where appropriate) to teach, assess, develop

curricula, publish and research.

- (c) Participate, in a personal capacity, in public debates about political and social issues.
- (d) Participate in public debates as a recognised expert or as a person with recognised specialist knowledge.
- (e) Participate, in a personal capacity, in professional and representative bodies including industrial associations and to engage in community service without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment.
- (f) Express unpopular or controversial views, although this does not mean the right to harass, vilify or intimidate other persons or to demean alternative points of view.

4. Principles

- 4.1 AITC supports and encourages academic staff and students to pursue lines of enquiry and to express personal views, both within AITC and publicly, in their area of academic expertise.
- 4.2 In relation to 4.1, Academic staff must make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking on behalf of AITC. Also, members of academic staff will not identify themselves as a staff member of AITC when speaking, writing or otherwise communicating on matters not within the province of their academic expertise.
- 4.3 Academic staff members' responsibilities include approaching any issue in a balanced, open, fair and academically rigorous way.
- 4.4 The responsibilities of institutions include the creation and maintenance of a culture that fosters such enquiry and which does not, in any way, penalise those who may express views that do not align with the views of AITC.
- 4.5 The Chair of Academic Board is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the policy.