Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy

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Current version	Approved by Board of Governors, 23 September 2024.
Previous versions	28 November 2012; 5 August 2021
Scheduled review date	September 2027
Threshold Standard	6.1.4
Responsible person	CEO
Appendix A:	Full list of amendments

1. Introduction

Freedom of speech and Academic freedom are essential to the pursuit of knowledge. This policy supports the rights of academic staff to teach, communicate, and contribute to public debate:

- the results of their research or scholarship, and
- views and opinions relating to their area/s of academic expertise.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines for freedom of speech and academic freedom for Adelaide Central School of Art staff and students

3. Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff employed by the Adelaide Central School of Art (the 'School'), regardless of their contractual conditions as well as all students enrolled at the School.

4. Definitions

4.1 Academic freedom means the following:

a. the freedom of academic staff to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research;
b. the freedom of academic staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research;
c. the freedom of academic staff and students to express their opinions in relation to the higher education provider in which they work or are enrolled;
d. the freedom of academic staff to participate in professional or representative academic bodies;
e. the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations;
f. the autonomy of the higher education provider in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings, the ways in which they are taught and the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted.

4.2 Freedom of speech is a fundamental human right that supports the freedom of an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction.

5. Policy

5.1 Academic staff

5.1.1 The School, as a provider of higher education recognizes the importance of challenging accepted ideas, encouraging vigorous debate, and supporting the development and testing of theories. Academic staff therefore have the right and duty to exercise their own professional judgment in engaging in teaching and practice-led research, and to disseminate the results of that research, without undue interference from any other party provided that the rights of other parties are respected and there is no breach of any relevant legislation.

5.1.2 In particular, academic staff have the right to:

- undertake scholarship that informs their teaching and leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour; and
- participate in determining the treatment of intellectual and practical issues in the subjects they teach, to provide a balanced presentation that enhances student learning.

5.1.3 Academic staff are expected to exercise their academic freedom with integrity, by communicating information ethically and honestly.

5.1.4 Academic freedom does not extend to staff expressing views on topics outside their field of expertise whilst still identifying themselves as being staff members of the School. On these occasions, staff must only identify themselves as private citizens.

5.1.5 The School supports the concept of academic freedom and freedom of speech and will not penalise those who may express views that do not align with the views of the School.

5.1.6 The School recognises the right to protest as a manifestation of freedom of speech.

5.1.7 The School expects that in public events and public discourse conducted by or in association with the School, participants will respect the need for reasoned argument, discourse and debate.

5.1.8 The School does not support the exercise of freedom of speech when the speech:

a. undermines the capacity of individuals to participate fully in the School;
b. is unlawful;
c. prejudices the fulfilment by the School of its duty to foster the safety and wellbeing of staff and students; or unreasonably disrupts the activities or operations of the School.

5.2 Visiting Speakers

The School supports the use of its facilities for events and activities that promote freedom of speech, informed intellectual discourse and public debate. The School may refuse permission to individuals to speak on School property or at School facilities or may decline to hire facilities for speakers or events where the proposed activities would:

a. undermines the capacity for students and staff to participate fully in the School;
b. be unlawful, including the encouragement of law-breaking; or
c. prejudice the fulfilment by the School of its duty to foster the safety and well-being of staff and students; or
d. involve the advancement of theories or propositions that would not meet scholarly standards to such an extent as to be detrimental to the School's character as an institution of higher learning.

5.3 Students

As members of a community of scholars, students should be encouraged to develop a capacity for critical judgment and sustained and independent search for truth. Freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom and in the larger community. Students have the right to freedom of speech and academic freedom and they should be encouraged to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and express opinions publicly as well as privately subject to the guidelines set out above.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF AMENDMENTS

- Updates to 1. Introduction, 4. Definitions, 5. Policy (addition of Items 5.3 – 5.9). August 2021.
- New heading, 5.2 Visiting Speakers. September 2024.