

Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Inquiry

Preamble:

Academic freedom can be defined as 'the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead.' (Global Colloquium of University Presidents)¹.

The National Tertiary Education Union states that “Academic freedom is central to the mission of all Australian universities and is internationally acknowledged as an essential and defining characteristic of university education. The particularities of a university education, as opposed to secondary education, lie in the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, the link between teaching and research and in promoting independent thought and critical inquiry. Academic freedom is central to providing this type of education”.²

In its statement on academic freedom, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states that academics have “the right without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof”³

The Australian Institute of Business (AIB) subscribes to these statements.

Purpose:

To set out guidelines for academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry for AIB staff and students.

Scope:

AIB academic staff and students

Detail:

1. Academic staff

AIB as an institution of higher learning, recognises the importance of challenging accepted ideas, encouraging vigorous debate, and supporting the development and testing of theories. Its academic staff therefore have the right and duty to exercise their own professional judgment in engaging in teaching and research, and to disseminate the results of that research, without undue interference from any other party provided that

¹ Global Colloquium of University Presidents, Statement on Academic Freedom, May 26 2005

² NTEU Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee Inquiry into Academic Freedom, 15th August 2008.

³ UNESCO, Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, VI. Rights and Freedoms of higher-education teaching personnel, adopted by the General Conference at its 29th session, Paris, 21 October-12 November 1997, pp 10-11.

the rights of other parties are respected and there is no breach of any relevant legislation.

In particular, academic staff have the right to:

- undertake scholarship that informs their teaching and conduct research that 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.

These rights are incorporated into employment contracts with academic staff.

2. 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 they should be encouraged to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and express opinions publicly as well as privately.

Responsibility:

Academic Director

Related Policies:

Nil

Current Status

Approved By:

Date of Approval:

Previous versions:

Version 3

Academic Board

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