



## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### Policy

#### DEFINITIONS

Terms in this document, for which definitions are not provided in the text or may not be self evident or for which usage at ACC may differ to that in other higher education institutions are as follows:

**Academic freedom:** Comprises two main elements - Intellectual Inquiry and Freedom of Speech - as defined below.

**Defamation:** The act of communicating false statements about a person that injure the reputation of that person.

**Discrimination:** Involves making unlawful distinctions between individuals or groups, so as to disadvantage some and advantage others, including slander or libel.

**Freedom of Speech:** The power or right to express one's opinions without censorship, restraint, or penalty, providing such expression is lawful. Freedom of Speech that is lawful, is a primary aspect of academic freedom and a paramount value of ACC.

**Harassment:** Behaviours that are found to be intimidating or offensive. This may be on any of the grounds included in Australian Anti-discrimination legislation and can be a single or repeated act of offensive behaviour.

**Intellectual Inquiry:** Questioning to determine thought and reason to gain a better understanding and contribute to knowledge. It is a primary aspect of Academic Freedom and a paramount value of ACC.

**Intellectual Rigour:** Clarity in thinking and an ability to think carefully and deeply about content or concepts. This involves engaging constructively and methodically when exploring ideas, theories and philosophies. In the academic context it refers to a certain standard of excellence that teaching staff and administrators expect of their students, made clear to students through examples, instruction and rubrics.

**Vilification:** To say or write unpleasant things about someone or something, in order to cause other people to have a bad opinion of them.

#### PURPOSE

As a core value of the ACC, the College is committed to ensuring the provision and promotion of academic freedom within the College.

#### SCOPE

This policy applies across the College and will be relevant to all academic and professional staff, students and affiliates of the College.

## POLICY STATEMENT

In its commitment to uphold the principles of academic freedom, the College supports the right of all scholars, staff and affiliates to participate and actively engage others in scholarly debate. The College encourages critical thinking and recognises the right to expression of thought, ideas and opinions, within the remit of law, terms of engagement with the College and the College's policies and procedures including *Ethics and Code of Conduct*.

- 1. Rights of Academic Freedom** (of which two primary elements are Freedom of Speech and Intellectual Inquiry) available to all staff, students and affiliates, include:
  - 1.1. The right to hold and express opinions on political matters, including College operations and academic policy and procedures;
  - 1.2. Engagement in critical and open inquiry on Academic matters including learning and teaching frameworks, assessment and curricula development;
  - 1.3. Participation in public debates on political and social issues;
  - 1.4. Expression of personal thought and opinion without fear of being disadvantaged or subject to less favourable treatment;
  - 1.5. Participation, in a personal capacity, in professional and representative bodies including industry associations and engagement in community service;
  - 1.6. Expression of unpopular or controversial views., providing this does not involve harassment, intimidation, discrimination, vilification or defamation of other persons or demeaning their alternative points of view.
- 2. Responsibilities of Scholars, Staff and College Affiliates include:**
  - 2.1. Ensuring that, when exercising academic freedom or freedom of speech, compliance with the College's Code of Conduct is maintained;
  - 2.2. Acting in a professional and ethical manner;
  - 2.3. Not harassing, vilifying, intimidating or defaming the College, its staff, students or affiliates.
  - 2.4. Ensuring intellectual rigor and scientific enquiry when engaging in acts of academic freedom.
- 3. The Responsibility of the ACC is to:**
  - 3.1. Ensure that staff, students and College affiliates do not suffer any penalties due to exercising their rights of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

## IMPLEMENTATION and MONITORING

The Academic Board is responsible for ensuring the development, implementation and compliance monitoring of this policy.

## REVIEW

The ACC's *Academic Freedom Policy* is normally reviewed every three years.

It is a policy of the ACC that any Policy or Procedure may be reviewed earlier as indicated by internal or external

factors (including but not limited to such factors as changes in the guidelines of regulatory authorities, accreditation/registration requirements of the profession, or relevant legislation at state or federal level) as determined the Board of Directors and/or Academic Board.

## VERSION CONTROL

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|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Document:</b> A002 Academic Freedom Policy   |  |                                |
| <b>Responsible Officer:</b> Academic Dean       |  |                                |
| <b>Initially Approved by:</b> Academic Board    |  | <b>Date:</b> 15 January 2018   |
| <b>Reviewed and approved by:</b> Academic Board |  | <b>Date:</b> 2 September 2020  |
| <b>Version:</b> V2.1                            | <b>Replaces Version(s):</b> V2.0   | <b>Next Review:</b> March 2022 |
| <b>Nature of Change</b>                         | August 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor text and formatting edits,</li> <li>• Addition of definitions</li> </ul> |                                |