



CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Procedures

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:

Conscientious Belief : an individual's genuine and sustained inward conviction of what is morally right or wrong, uninfluenced by any consideration of personal advantage or disadvantage either to oneself or others. A Conscientious Belief can be linked to ethical, religious, or cultural values.

Conscientious objection: a genuinely held, enduring and considered ethical, cultural or religious conviction that an action or proposed action is morally wrong. Conscientious objections are independent of fear, personal advantage, convenience, and preference.

Inherent requirement: essential requirement of a course that students must satisfy if they are to be granted credit for that course. (Note that some inherent requirements may be quite general and require study or the development of skills relating a wide range of contexts. For example an inherent requirement may refer to 'diverse cultures in Australia').

Staff Member: a person who has been offered and has accepted a contract of employment from Australian Chiropractic College.

Student: a person who is enrolled in, a unit, course or program of study approved by ACC, and which leads to, or is capable of leading to, an academic award of the College.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consistent approach to conscientious objection which recognises that some students and staff may have a conscientious belief that is in conflict with teaching and learning activities (content and mode of delivery), assessment practices, fieldwork education, or engagement in scholarly, professional and/or research activities. Areas of potential conscientious objections may include, but are not limited to vaccination requirements, site visits, scheduling of fieldwork on Saturdays (Sabbath worship day), handling cadavers, physical contact between students of both genders particularly if minimally clad when practising chiropractic related procedures, and the use of animals in laboratory work.

SCOPE

These procedures apply to all Staff Members and Students of the College.

PROCEDURAL DETAILS

Where the College foresees that a prospective student, current student or staff member may have conscientious objection in conflict with their education or employment, will publish relevant information about requirements

(a) for students in either the Student Handbook or Unit Profile and (b) for staff in their Position Description or other contracts pertaining to their activities/services.

The onus is on the person who has a conscientious belief to identify their objection and to provide reasonable notice of it to the relevant supervisor (Academic Dean for students or General Manager for staff).

The College will record details of all conscientious objections in order to determine whether consideration is provided to future design of alternative teaching/assessments or work practices that are acceptable to the College.

If a student and/or staff member has a conscientious objection which conflicts with College Policy and Procedure, including teaching and learning and assessment practices and employment duties, they will contact their supervisor (Academic Dean/ General Manager) as soon as possible outlining their conscientious objection and the specific implications of their objection for their studies or employment duties.

Upon exploration of the feasibility, the Academic Dean/ General Manager will formally notify the student/staff member, in a timely manner, of the decision and reasons for the decision to either accommodate or not accommodate the conscientious objection, and if applicable, the appropriate arrangements.

Alternatives made available to a student/staff member with a conscientious objection are not required to be made available to all other students/staff members.

In considering alternatives, the following LIMITS apply:

- A student/staff member may request that there be a suitable alternative, but has no right to demand that the alternative take a particular form.
- The College is not obliged to accommodate a conscientious belief.
- Where the conscientious objection relates to an assessment item or teaching/learning activity, the Academic Dean will explore the feasibility of an alternative that:
 - is of comparable difficulty requiring a similar amount of time and effort and;
 - meets the unit learning outcomes and/or professional competencies required for professional registration bodies;
 - is able to be implemented/achieved in a timely manner;
 - does not disadvantage other students in the quality of their education;
 - does not violate any legal obligations; and
 - does not create unreasonable hardship.
- Where the conscientious objection relates to a staff member's employment duties, the General Manager will explore the feasibility of alternative duties that:
 - meet the inherent requirements of the position;
 - are able to be implemented/achieved in a timely manner;
 - do not disadvantage other staff/students;
 - do not violate any legal obligations; and
 - do not create unreasonable hardship.

APPEALS

A student/staff member who has evidence that consideration was not provided to their conscientious objection may in accordance with the *Student Grievance and Appeals Policy* and associated Procedures or the *Staff Grievance Management Policy* and associated Procedures.

A student/staff member will have 20 working days from the date on which they were formally notified of a decision by the Academic Dean/General Manager to lodge an appeal.

The student/staff member will document the grounds of their appeal and provide evidence to substantiate their claim.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Academic Dean is responsible for the implementation of these procedures in relation to students.

The General Manager is responsible for the implementation of these procedures in relation to staff.

POLICY REVIEW

The ACC's *Conscientious Objection Procedures* 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.

RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- Student Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Staff Grievance Management Policy and Procedure
- Equity and Diversity Policy
- Academic Progress Policy and Procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures.

VERSION CONTROL

Document: A014P Conscientious Objection Procedure		
Responsible Officer: President		
Reviewed and endorsed by: Academic Board		Date: 12 May 2021
Reviewed and approved by: Board of Directors		Date: 25 May 2021
Reviewed and approved by: FARC		Date: 8 Dec 2021
Reviewed and approved by: Board of Directors		Date: 14 Dec 2021
Reviewed and approved by: General Manager		Date: 25 July 2023
HESF	2.2 Diversity and Equity	2.2.1
Version: V2.0	Replaces Version(s): V1.1	Next Review: July 2026
Nature of Change	<p>May 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed the requirement for students to adhere to healthcare workers COVID-19 rules. <p>July 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the formatting of the Procedure to align with the standard formatting Separate the Policy and Procedure Change Policy number from A to C to reflect that it covers the whole College Clarify and simplify responsibilities and the appeal process Update references to ACC policy and procedure documents. 	