



KIHE

Kingsford Institute
of Higher Education

ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INTEGRITY AND FREE INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY POLICY

1. Overview

As academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry and expression are the cornerstone of critical inquiry and the defining characteristics of a higher education provider, Kingsford Institute of Higher Education ("KIHE" or "the Institute") is committed to the promotion of these interlinking concepts. This commitment also reflects the intent of Standard 6.1.4 of the *Standards for Higher Education*¹.

The overarching statement of this commitment lies within the Institute's Company Constitution, which states that "the company is committed to support academic integrity, freedom of speech and academic freedom in all its endeavours". Furthermore, one of the critical functions of the Academic Board, as espoused in its terms of reference, is to "facilitate free intellectual inquiry, encourage and support freedom of speech, respect and support academic freedom and protect academic integrity".

2. Commitment to scholarship and academic integrity

The Institute expects its academic and, where relevant, its professional staff to exhibit a strong commitment to scholarship and the professional expectations of their academic disciplines. Pursuing knowledge through intellectual inquiry is highly valued as a mark of institutional excellence². To support this pursuit of knowledge, the Institute commits that its academic staff have freedom of inquiry without fear of repression.

In pursuing knowledge, academic integrity is essential to the fabric of an academic community, embracing managers, researchers, teachers and students³ alike. Therefore, when staff undertake any intellectual inquiry, they must be cognizant of their responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

The Institute takes a serious view of academic misconduct. It will penalise staff found guilty of offences associated with misappropriation of others' work, misrepresentation of personal performance and fraud, improper access to scholarly resources and obstructing others in pursuit of their academic endeavours.

3. Respect for academic freedom

Academic freedom and its related responsibilities, as recognised and practised by the Institute, have their fundamental basis in the culture commonly found in Australian universities and other higher education providers. Specifically, academic staff and students are entitled to complete freedom without unreasonable restriction in any scholarly activity they pursue to encourage scholarly inquiry. Furthermore, academic staff are entitled to freedom in the teaching environment to discuss the unit of study they are delivering; however, they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which is outside of their areas of expertise, and that has no relevance to the content of the unit.

The concept of academic freedom includes:

¹ Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
<<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L00488>>

² Refer to the Institute's *Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure* for more detail.

³ In regards to academic integrity and students, reference should be made to the Institute's *Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure*.



- The freedom of academic staff to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research without restriction by established scholarly consensus or institutional policy, but subject to scholarly standards;
- the freedom of academic staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, express their opinions and beliefs, and contribute to public debate about their areas of expertise;
- the freedom of academic staff and students to express their opinions about the higher education provider in which they work or are enrolled free from institutional censorship or sanction;
- the freedom of academic staff and students to make lawful public comments on any issue in their personal capacities, not speaking on behalf of the Institute or as an officer of the Institute;
- the freedom of academic staff to participate in professional or representative academic bodies and
- the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations⁴.

As noted above, academic staff are free from institutional censorship or discipline when speaking or writing as private citizens. However, academic staff should remember that as scholars, the public may judge their profession and institution by their utterances. Therefore, they should at all times demonstrate scholarly rigour to ensure accuracy, should exercise appropriate restraint when commenting on matters outside of their areas of expertise, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the Institute unless expressly authorised to do so. Academic staff will refrain from using their institutional affiliation when publicly expressing an opinion on topics outside their area of expertise, contentious issues, or both, where personal opinion may deviate from the Institute's published position.

The Institute will ensure that it respects the right of students and staff to hold their chosen values, even when those values face questioning. Academic freedom carries associated responsibilities to exercise professional care and competence in the conduct of teaching and research, to subject academic work to the critical scrutiny of others, to consider the impact that one's work may have on others, and not to impinge on the ability of others to engage freely in teaching and learning, research, and academic debate.

4. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	15 December 2023	Document creation and initial approval

Document owner: Dean

⁴ From the Model Code in the report by Mr Robert French into freedom of speech in Australian higher education providers (March 2019): <https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-reviews-and-consultations/independent-review-adoption-model-code-freedom-speech-and-academic-freedom>