

Academic Freedom Policy

Fact box

- **Policy owner:** Director of Research
- **Policy category:** Academic: Research
- **Policy status:** Approved
- **Approval body:** Council
- **Endorsement body:** Research Committee
- **Related policies:**
 - [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#)
 - [Staff Grievance Resolution Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 20th Dec. 2022
- **Relevant HESF:**

Purpose

This policy outlines the principles by which Alphacrucis University College (AC) academic faculty and students pursue research and scholarship and express views relating to their area of academic expertise without fear or favour.

Scope

All staff and students

Policy

AC is committed to the protection and promotion of academic freedom and seeks to promote a mature independence of mind.

Academic freedom includes the rights of all faculty and students to:

- pursue critical, responsible and open inquiry and (where appropriate) to teach, assess, develop curricula, publish and research in accordance with the highest ethical, professional and legal standards;
- disseminate outcomes of research in teaching, publications, public debates and media discourse.

In the exercise of academic freedom, faculty and students will:

- remain at all times subject to the law, the terms of engagement with AC and the AC policies and procedures, including the AC Code of Conduct Policy;
- act in a professional, ethical and legal manner;
- conduct research in accordance with the principles of academic rigour and ethics without any interference or suppression;
- refrain from identifying themselves as AC faculty or students when speaking, writing or otherwise communicating on matters outside the area of academic expertise.

Faculty and Freedom of Public Expression

AC encourages its faculty to participate in public debate and be available to the media for comment in their field of expertise. Members of faculty, individually or collectively, have the right to express opinions, ideas, and research outcomes in their fields of expertise in accordance with Australian conventions of academic debate. Faculty who contribute to public commentary should identify themselves using their official title, appointment and qualifications when they are writing or speaking publicly on a matter within their expertise. If speaking outside their academic expertise they should do so in a private capacity. Statements should always be accurate, professional, and respectful of others and exercise appropriate restraint.

Student Freedom of Inquiry

Students are free to inquire, exchange ideas, critically examine, present, and discuss controversial material relevant to a class. As there may be substantial variation in students' competence to engage in scholarly inquiry based on their level in the educational process, faculty are generally responsible for establishing conditions that encourage all students in their learning and research activities.

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the conclusions or views offered in any subject and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any subject for which they are enrolled regardless. No student can obstruct other students when exercising their right to differ. Faculty guidance and supervision of student research is desirable and appropriate. Students' freedom of inquiry while conducting research is protected subject to accepted legal, scholarly and professional standards. Views expressed in student assessment tasks or research are not to be taken as views of AC or the ACC movement, and students should take care not to represent them as such.

Freedom of Expression in Journals associated with AC

Views expressed in journals such as Australasian Pentecostal Studies(APS) or Crucis are not necessarily those of AC or the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) movement. Editors have a duty to uphold free expression in accordance with Australian conventions of academic debate, but should also exercise wisdom in avoiding needless offense to those at AC and ACC movement who hold different views of contentious matters. In all cases persons regardless of affiliation or views should be treated respectfully, and continued dialogue between those of different views encouraged.

Responsible for implementation

Academic Board

Key stakeholders

Faculty and students

Procedures

Academic Freedom Policy

In the event that a student or faculty member believes his/her academic freedom as set out in this policy has been compromised, s/he may follow AC's grievance resolution procedures. Similarly, AC has the right to act in accordance with AC policies and procedures in the event that a faculty person or student breaches this this policy.
