

# Academic Freedom Policy

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## Purpose

In accordance with the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011, this policy articulates how Federation University will promote and protect academic freedom. It provides its scholars with clear guidance regarding their rights to academic freedom and their associated responsibilities

Federation University Australia is a place of inquiry and the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom are essential to the purpose of the University and the principles of the academy in general. The University upholds academic freedom as central to its advancement of inquiry, research, scholarship, and teaching. The University is committed to its promotion and protection and supports the rights of scholars to engage in critical inquiry and robust debate in pursuit of academic excellence. It recognizes and promotes diversity of informed opinion and the right to express that informed opinion freely

## Scope

This policy applies to all academics, teachers and researchers of the University community inclusive of adjunct appointments and Higher Degree by Research Students.

## Legislative Context

- The Higher Education Support Act 2003
- The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
- Federation University Australia Act 2010

## Definitions

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Term	Definition
Adjunct Staff member	An expert in the relevant profession, working within industry or the community, who offers a valuable contribution to the University's teaching, learning, research and/or advisory and/or other committees. The person is appointed under the Universities Honorary Adjunct and Visiting Appointments Policy
Academic Freedom	Freedom to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead, without undue or unreasonable interference or sanction. This freedom applies to all forms of expression of research, teaching and inquiry.
Freedom of Speech	Freedom to express opinions without censorship, restraint or legal penalty.
Informed Opinion	Opinions formed based on knowledge of the facts and carefully considered principles. It relies on verifiable evidence.
Media	Collective communications outlets including traditional and new media. Includes but is not limited to print, television, radio and online forums such as news sites, comment boards, social networking sites, blogs, podcasts, etc.).
Academic	An academic employee of the University at the time of the issuing statements. This includes full-time, part-time, sessional or casual staff.
Higher Degrees by Research Student	A person enrolled in a formal program of learning (PhD or Masters by research) at FedUni

## Policy Statement

Academic freedom is based on scholarship and evidence – with the right to academic freedom comes the responsibility to present an informed view. It therefore differs from freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

### Federation University will:

- Preserve, defend and promote the traditional principles of academic freedom in the conduct of its affairs, so that all scholars at the University are free to engage in critical inquiry, scholarly endeavour and public discourse without fear or favour.
- Recognise and promote a diversity of intellectual inquiry and the expression of that inquiry through appropriate media.
- Investigate complaints and issues regarding Academic freedom through Academic Board which will refer them to the appropriate authority for investigation.

### Academic staff and HDR students have the right to:

- Exercise academic freedom without fear of harassment, bullying, intimidation or unfair treatment
- Express academic freedom through through speech, writing and publishing, performance or exhibition, without being subject to University sanction, censorship or discipline
- Express views that may be unpopular or controversial, although this does not mean the right to harass, vilify or intimidate other persons or to demean alternate points of view.

### Academic staff and HDR students have a responsibility to:

- Act lawfully, responsibly, ethically, honestly, and respectfully.
- Observe the University's codes and appropriate legislation.
- Make it clear that the views they are expressing are their own, not those of the University

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## Confidentiality and Privacy

## Supporting Documents

[Staff Code of Conduct Policy](#)

[Staff Grievance Policy](#)

## Responsibility

Academic Board (as Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy and its accompanying procedure.

Chair, Academic Board (as Policy Sponsor) is responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by Academic Board.

## Promulgation

The Academic Freedom Policy will be communicated throughout the University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under 'FedNews' website and through the University Policy - 'Recently Approved Documents' webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the University Policy, Procedure and Forms website; and/or

## Implementation

The [Academic Freedom Policy](#) will be implemented across the University.