

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

Approve	Council	Academic Board
Approval date	11 March 2020 10 February 2017 12 September 2012 27 April 2011	17 February 2020 14 March 2011
Date for Review	February 2025	
Responsible Officer	Academic Director	
Author / Role	D Speed (Dean) P Bolt (Academic Director)	
Related Documents		
Higher Education Standards (2015)		
National Code (2018)		

This policy is aligned with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards 2015, as amended following the *Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers* ('The French Report'), March 2019, that:

The governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom is upheld and protected, students and staff are treated equitably, the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered, informed decision-making by students is supported and students have opportunities to participate in the deliberative and decision-making processes of the higher education provider. (HES 6.1.4).

and

The higher education provider has a clearly articulated higher education purpose that includes a commitment to and support for freedom of speech and academic freedom. (HES B.1.1)

1. The SCD supports implementation of the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom in teaching, research and scholarship associated with the delivery of all its awards, whether coursework or research awards. All SCD staff are required to embrace and enact this principle and to encourage their students to do likewise.
2. The mission of the SCD concerns the advancement of learning about, research into, and appreciation of Christian tenets and values, and adherence to the academic integrity of the discipline in all areas is regarded as entirely compatible with this mission.
3. The intentionally ecumenical ethos of the SCD is regarded as supportive of the principle of freedom of speech and academic freedom.
4. All staff and students are expected to show respect for all Christian traditions.
5. The SCD will ensure that the staff employed by the SCD and by Member Institutions for the purpose of delivery of SCD awards understand this policy and are equipped to implement it.
6. Admission of students to SCD award programs is open and dependent entirely on academic preparedness. No statement of faith is required as a condition of enrolment or in fulfilment of any assessment task or other academic requirement. However, enrolment in the SCD entails a willingness to understand and contribute positively to its Christian and ecumenical ethos.
7. Students who are directed to SCD award programs by sponsors may pursue patterns of study required by their sponsors, but their learning and completion of assessment tasks will be carried out with due regard for the principle of freedom of speech and academic freedom in pursuit of academic excellence, and they will not be penalised for expressing particular opinions.

8. Staff and students are encouraged to appreciate the respective roles of faith and reason in an academic context.
9. Academic staff are free to make public comment on issues that lie within their personal capacity, with the normal proviso that their expressed views are not necessarily those of the SCD or their Teaching Body. To facilitate this freedom, the authority to speak officially on behalf of the SCD is delegated solely to the Dean.