

Institution	Universal Higher Education (UHE)
Policy name	Academic Freedom Policy
Policy Governance	Academic Board

1. Introduction

UHE recognises the freedom of inquiry by academic staff, which is essential to the values of the college as well as the principles of academia. UHE recognises that that scholars should have freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts, and provide opinion without being targeted for job loss, or disadvantaged in employment. This policy outlines the commitment of UHE in respecting academic freedom.

2. Policy principles

UHE recognises and values the right to academic freedom as central to its endeavours in scholarship and teaching and is committed to its promotion within UHE. It supports the right of its academics to engage in critical inquiry, debate and promotes a diversity of opinion and the right to express freely.

3. Academic freedom

Academic Freedom pertains to any form of expression (including communication and performance). Academic freedom includes the rights of all academic staff to:

- a. exercise academic freedom without fear of harassment, bullying or unfair treatment
- b. speak, write and publish without being subject to UHE sanction
- c. hold and express opinions on a range of issues
- d. participate, in a personal capacity, in public debates about political and social issues
- e. participate, in a personal capacity, in professional and representative bodies to engage in community service without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment
- f. express controversial views, although this does not mean the right to harass intimidate other persons.

Academic staff and students are expected to exercise academic freedom in a manner that is consistent with a responsible search for knowledge and its dissemination. Academic freedom of expression does not extend to behaviour that is illegal. Academic staff and students should uphold the good name of UHE and exercise judgement in the best interests.

In the exercise of academic freedom, staff and students will act in a professional and ethical manner and will not harass, vilify, intimidate, or defame others. Furthermore, in exercising their freedom to carry out teaching and research, academic staff have a responsibility to conduct it in accordance with the principles of intellectual rigour without any interference or suppression.

4. Responsibilities of staff

Academic freedom does not denote the freedom to neglect the basic obligations of the employer-employee relationship. Academic staff and students may hold views and express them freely on all topics, even outside their expertise whilst identifying themselves as members of UHE.

However, in exercising academic freedom, academic staff and students who communicate ideas publicly on topics outside their area of expertise should be conscious of whether it is reasonable, in the circumstances, to link their comments to their association with UHE. Both the UHE and the scholar have an obligation to enhance the value of academic freedom to society.

5. Monitoring academic freedom

The Chief Academic Officer will monitor any complaints or grievances related to academic freedom. Where a case needs to be discussed, the Chief Academic Officer will seek advice from the Chair of Academic Board.

6. Review

The Academic Freedom Policy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently as appropriate.