

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Policy Lead	Director Learning and Innovation
Approving Authority	Academic Board
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Relevant legislation or external requirements	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESFs: 6.1.4) Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2020 (Cth) Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Act 2021 (Cth)
Related ASA Documents	Academic Integrity Policy Academic Misconduct Procedure Staff Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct Student Grievance Policy Student Grievance Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to affirm and protect the academic freedom of academic staff and students within Australian School of Accounting (**ASA**). Academic freedom is essential for the pursuit of knowledge, the advancement of scholarship, and the free exchange of ideas.

2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all ASA students and all academic staff, including casual/sessional staff.

3. Principles

The key principles informing this Policy and Procedure are:

- **Freedom of Inquiry:** Academic staff and students have the right to pursue research, teaching, and learning in any field aligned with staff members' qualifications or role without fear of reprisal or censorship.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Individuals have the right to express their ideas, opinions, and beliefs openly and freely within the academic community, both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Intellectual Diversity:** ASA recognises and values diverse perspectives, theories, and methodologies in scholarly inquiry and encourages the exploration of controversial and challenging ideas.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** Individuals exercising their academic freedom shall be protected from retaliation or discrimination based on the content of their research, teaching, or expression.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
academic freedom	<p>Comprises the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the freedom of staff, in the course of their academic activities, to educate, discuss, disseminate and publish the results of those activities; the freedom of staff and students, in the course of their academic activities, to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to those activities; the freedom of staff and students to express their opinions in relation to the ASA in which they work or are enrolled; the freedom of staff to participate in professional or representative bodies and associations; the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations; and the autonomy of the ASA in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings, the ways in which they are taught and the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted
Academic Staff	A member of staff appointed to undertake a teaching function at ASA, whether full-time, part-time, casual, or sessional.
freedom of intellectual inquiry	The principles of intellectual inquiry and academic freedom confer the right to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead, and they acknowledge the right to teach, research, publish, develop curricula, assess, discuss, and debate free from unreasonable restriction or undue interference where this aligns with their qualifications or role.
duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students	<p>Duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes the duty to ensure that no member of staff and no student suffers unfair disadvantage or unfair adverse discrimination on any basis recognised at law including race, gender, sexuality, religion and political belief; includes the duty to ensure that no member of staff and no student is subject to threatening or intimidating behaviour by another person or persons on account of anything they have said or proposed to say in exercising their freedom of speech; supports reasonable and proportionate measures to prevent any person from using lawful speech which a reasonable person would regard, in the circumstances, as likely to humiliate or intimidate other persons and which is intended to have either or both of those effects; does not extend to a duty to protect any person from feeling offended or shocked or insulted by the lawful speech of another.
speech	Extends to all forms of expressive conduct including oral speech and written, artistic, musical and performing works and activity and communication using social media; the word 'speak' has a corresponding meaning.

5. Policy Statements

This policy and procedure provide a framework for protecting and promoting academic freedom within ASA for all staff and students.

5.1 Academic Freedom

A core value of ASA is to preserve, defend and promote the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom in the conduct of ASA affairs, so that all staff, students, and visitors to

ASA are free to engage in critical inquiry, and scholarly or public discourse without fear or favour.

Accordingly, ASA supports the right of all staff, students, and visitors to ASA to search for truth and to hold and express diverse opinions. ASA recognises that scholarly activities and debates should be robust and uninhibited. ASA recognises also that members of the ASA community are entitled to express their ideas and opinions.

Every member of staff and every student enjoys freedom of speech and academic freedom subject only to prohibitions, restrictions or conditions imposed by:

- law;
- reasonable and proportionate regulation necessary to the discharge of ASA's teaching activities;
- the right and freedom of others to express themselves and to hear and receive information and opinions;
- reasonable and proportionate regulation necessary to discharge ASA's duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students;
- reasonable and proportionate regulation to enable ASA to give effect to its legal duties; and
- ASA by way of its reasonable requirements as to the courses to be delivered and the content and means of their delivery.

5.2 Responsibilities

- Academic staff have a responsibility to engage in rigorous and ethical academic scholarly activity, to uphold academic standards, and to foster an environment conducive to intellectual growth and critical inquiry.
- Students have the responsibility to engage in scholarly activities with integrity, to respect the rights and perspectives of others, and to contribute positively to the academic community.
- ASA is responsible for creating an environment that supports academic freedom, including providing resources for scholarship, promoting intellectual diversity, and safeguarding individuals from censorship or undue influence.

5.3 Limitations

While academic freedom is fundamental to the mission of ASA, it is not absolute. The following limitations may apply:

- **Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards:** Academic activities must comply with applicable laws and ethical guidelines.
- **Respect for Others:** Academic freedom does not include the right to engage in harassment, discrimination, or speech that promotes violence or incites hatred.
- **Organisation Mission:** Academic activities should align with the mission and values of ASA.

6. Procedures

6.1 Communication

The *Academic Freedom Policy and Procedure* shall be communicated to all academic staff and

students upon their enrolment or employment at ASA. It shall also be made available on ASA's website and included in relevant academic and administrative documentation.

6.2 Training and Orientation

New academic staff and students shall receive training or orientation sessions that include information about academic freedom, its importance, and the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Academic Freedom Policy.

6.3 Promotion of Intellectual Diversity

ASA shall actively promote intellectual diversity by encouraging the exploration of diverse perspectives, theories, and methodologies in teaching and scholarly activities. Academic staff and students shall be encouraged to engage in respectful discourse and debate on controversial and challenging ideas.

6.4 Protection from Retaliation

Any academic staff or students who believe their academic freedom has been violated or who have experienced retaliation for exercising their academic freedom shall have the right to file a complaint through ASA's grievance procedures. Retaliation against individuals for raising concerns about academic freedom violations shall not be tolerated.

6.5 Review of Academic Materials

ASA shall not engage in prior censorship of academic materials, including research papers, course syllabi, or teaching materials. However, academic staff may be encouraged to seek feedback from colleagues or academic peers to ensure the quality and integrity of their work.

6.6 Compliance with Ethical Standards

All academic staff and students shall adhere to applicable legal and ethical standards in their academic activities, including integrity, copyright compliance, and ethical treatment of human subjects in research.

6.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Academic Freedom Policy and its implementation shall be monitored and evaluated periodically by ASA to ensure compliance and effectiveness. Feedback from academic staff and students shall be solicited and considered in the review process.

6.8 Reporting

Any concerns or incidents related to academic freedom violations shall be reported to the Senior Management within ASA, such as the Academic Dean or via the Complaints process.

6.9 Confidentiality

All reports and investigations of academic freedom violations shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy and reputation of the individuals involved.

7. Relevant HESFs

This Policy and Procedure comply with Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) which specifies that:

Standard 6.1 Corporate Governance [...]

4. The governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are 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.

8. Version Control

This Policy and Procedure has been reviewed and approved by the Australian School of Accounting Academic Board as at April 2024 and is reviewed every three years.

The Policy and Procedure is published and available on the Australian School of Accounting website <https://www.asahe.edu.au/policies-and-forms/>.

Change and Version Control				
Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved:	Effective Date:
2024.1	Director Learning and Innovation	Updated policy to include HESF references, changes in regulatory compliances and added procedure section. Benchmarked against 6 other Higher Education Providers.	03/04/2024	18/04/2024
Previous version archived. New Policy code and numbering system implemented.				
2.1		Academic Board approval	04/11/2020	
1.0		Academic Board approval	16/06/2020	