
POLICY C3.2

FREEDOM OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The AIM Business School (ABS) is a nationally accredited institute of higher education offering qualifications at AQF Levels 8 & 9. ABS aims for excellence in its academic activity, and integral to this is freedom for its students and academic staff to explore their own ideas and to challenge in a thoughtful manner the assumptions and evidence that underpin the academic content of their programs of study, their teaching, and their research. Academic freedom is vital to knowledge building and includes freedom to investigate a range of divergent views, to interrogate accepted wisdom, and to participate in scholarly discourse in an ethical, inclusive, and factually informed manner, including the freedom to express academically informed but unconventional or unpopular views, free from undue institutional, political or commercial restraint.

1.2 Purpose

This policy provides direction on free intellectual inquiry and freedom of speech at the AIM Business School (ABS) and its Third-Party Partners (TPP). This policy supports the freedom of sharing ideas and views while highlighting that students and staff should respect the provisions of relevant legislation, the rules and policies of the ABS, and the accepted ethical practices of the higher education community in Australia.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff of ABS and TPP including external visitors and visiting speakers.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

None.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ABS and TPP students and staff are responsible for adhering to this policy, related policies, and related legislation in exercising their right to freedom of intellectual inquiry and freedom of speech.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Principles

1. ABS students and staff have the right to exercise their own judgment in engaging in learning, teaching, and research without undue interference, while understanding that free intellectual inquiry and freedom of speech carry responsibilities that must not adversely affect the ability of others to engage freely in teaching, learning, research, and debate.
2. ABS encourages students and academic staff to actively engage in free intellectual inquiry.
3. ABS supports lawful freedom of speech which is closely aligned to academic freedom.
4. ABS expects that students and staff adhere to ABS policies, legislation, and common courtesy, and respect diversity in exercising their right to freedom of academic inquiry and freedom of speech.
5. ABS respects the rights of all its students and staff, within the law and, insofar as they apply, within the parameters of its policies and procedures, to express views as private citizens, provided that it is clear that these are the views of the individual concerned and not the views of ABS or the Scintia Group.

Students

6. ABS encourages students to explore alternate ideas and theories and to critically question teachings where they believe alternate arguments based on evidence exist.
7. Students are also encouraged to engage in debate with academic staff and other students, creating robust discussion and the sharing of thoughts and experiences.

Staff

8. ABS encourages academic staff to actively engage in free intellectual inquiry to:
 - a. pursue critical and open inquiry and freely discuss, teach, assess, develop curricula, publish, and research in their area of discipline;
 - b. engage in scholarly activity which enables them to maintain knowledge of current developments within their area of discipline;
 - c. encourage and engage in critical and independent thinking amongst peers and students;
 - d. pursue, generate, and transmit knowledge through research, study, discussion, writing, and publication,
 - e. publicly debate and express opinions about issues and ideas related to their area of discipline; and to

- f. participate in professional and representative bodies.
9. ABS may impose restrictions, prohibitions, or conditions where required by law or where reasonable and proportionate regulation is required in order for ABS to protect the wellbeing of students and staff, discharge teaching activities, and give effect to its legal duties.
10. Complaints relating to the exercise of freedom of intellectual inquiry and speech will be managed per the relevant Student and Staff Complaints and Grievance Policies and Procedures.
11. Incidents of discrimination or harassment when exercising freedom of intellectual inquiry and speech will be managed per the Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination (Staff and Students) Policy and Procedure.
12. Breaches of this policy will be managed per Student and Staff Code of Conduct policies.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Freedom of intellectual inquiry** - the freedom for students and staff to explore their own ideas and to challenge in a thoughtful manner the assumptions and evidence which underpin their study and research. This freedom brings with it a serious responsibility to use the freedom in a reasonable, balanced, measured, and honest way, in the pursuit of and dissemination of knowledge and truth.
- **Freedom of Speech** - the right to freedom of expression in any medium, for example, written and oral communications, the media, public protest, broadcasting, artistic works, and commercial advertising. The right protects not only favourable information or ideas, but also unpopular ideas including those that may offend or shock (subject to limitations in law).
- **Student** - Refers to domestic and international ABS students.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

- Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy
- Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy
- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination (Staff and Students) Policy and Procedure
- Student Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Staff Grievances Policy and Procedure
- Legislation on human rights and discrimination

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy

Note: This policy does not have a procedure.

6.0 POLICY OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Executive Dean
Status	Reviewed April 2024
Approval Authority	ABS Corporate Board
Date of Approval	01/05/2024
Effective Date	01/05/2024
Implementation Owner	Executive Dean
Maintenance Owner	Head of Compliance
Review Due	May 2027
Content Enquiries	Professor Sabina Cerimagic - Executive Dean, ABS Email: sabina.cerimagic@aimbusinessschool.edu.au

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
C3.0	21 October 2021	Director of Education	New Policy
C3.1	10 March 2023	Head of Compliance	Minor administrative change: update to staffing titles.
C3.2	1 April 2024	Head of Compliance	Reference to complaints, breaches of policy, and incidents of discrimination and harassment.