

Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy

Policy Category			
Document Owner			
Responsible Officer	Dean		
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Related Documents	<i>Equity and Diversity Framework</i> <i>Learning and Teaching Plan</i> <i>Library Plan</i> <i>Staff Code of Conduct</i> <i>Staff Misconduct Procedure</i> <i>Student Code of Conduct</i> <i>Student Misconduct Procedure</i> <i>Student Support Framework</i>		
Version	Authorised by	Approved	Effective Date
1.1			/06/2018

1. Context

This Policy supports Waratah Institute’s (the ‘Institute’) commitment to providing an environment that upholds, protects and promotes academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry. Critical debate and diversity of expression and opinion are central to delivering quality higher education.

2. Definitions

Academic freedom: the right to express or otherwise communicate ideas or facts free from religious, political or institutional restrictions.

Free intellectual enquiry: the process of exercising critical reasoning and open debate for teaching and learning while being unaffected by philosophical or religious dogma or other external constraints.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to Waratah Institute’s students and academic staff.

4. Policy Principles

The key principles informing this Policy are:

- a robust and engaged academic environment which values informed discussion; and
- a right to academic freedom in teaching and learning without fear of discrimination or harassment.

5. Policy Details

5.1. Rights

In support of its commitment to academic freedom, Waratah Institute recognises and promotes the right of academic staff and students to:

- reciprocate in the exchange of information, provided that any result or outcome of the use of information is duly acknowledged; and
- hold opinions and communicate ideas without interference, censure or fear of recrimination.

5.2. Responsibilities

The right to academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry entails responsibilities. To avoid abuse of such freedoms, staff and students must not:

- impinge on the ability of others to engage freely in teaching, learning and academic debate;
- act unlawfully, engage in poor behaviour or disrespectful treatment of others; or
- express views on any topic other than those within their sphere of expertise when identifying themselves as a staff member of Waratah Institute.

While academic staff should be free from institutional censorship when writing or speaking as private citizens, any public communication may by association be perceived as a statement of Waratah Institute. Staff speaking or writing publicly are therefore expected to take care to demonstrate academic, professional and scholarly rigor, exercise appropriate restraint, and show respect for the opinions of others.

In addition, staff and students are expected to approach all academic matters in a fair, open, balanced and academically rigorous manner.

Waratah Institute's Corporate Board receives regular advice from the Academic Board on the development and maintenance of an institutional environment promoting academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry.

6. Breaches

If a staff member or student is found to be in breach of this Policy, she or he may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant *Code of Conduct* and *Misconduct Procedure*.

7. Appeals

Appeals or disputes concerning any decision taken in relation to this Policy should be made under the relevant *Complaints and Appeals Procedure*. Overseas students may lodge an appeal with the Overseas Students Ombudsman.

8. References

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 – Part A, Standards 6.1, 6.3

9. Acknowledgements

In developing this Policy, Waratah Institute acknowledges:

- *TEQSA Guidance Notes:*
 - o *Corporate Governance; and*
 - o *Academic Governance.*

Document History:

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
0.1		Leanne McCoy	Draft	All
0.2		Julien Marechal	Amended to incorporate comments from the 16/05/18 Academic Board meeting	All
1.0	25/6/2018	Julien Marechal	Approved by Academic Board.	All
1.1	17/12/2019	Philippa Ryan	Amended to reflect new trading name 'Waratah Institute'.	All