
POLICY C3.5

FREEDOM OF INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY AND EXPRESSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The Australasian College of Health and Wellness (ACHW) is a nationally accredited institute of higher education offering qualifications ranging from Undergraduate Certificates to Bachelor degrees. ACHW 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 which 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 Australasian College of Health and Wellness (ACHW) 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 ACHW, and the accepted ethical practices of the higher education community in Australia.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff at ACHW and TPP including external visitors and visiting speakers.

1.4 Scope Exceptions

None.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ACHW 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. ACHW 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. ACHW encourages students and academic staff to actively engage in free intellectual inquiry.
3. ACHW supports lawful freedom of speech which is closely aligned to academic freedom.
4. ACHW expects that students and staff adhere to ACHW policies, legislation and common courtesy, and respect diversity in exercising their right to freedom of academic inquiry and freedom of speech.
5. ACHW respects the rights of all of 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 ACHW or the Scentia Group.

Students

6. ACHW 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. ACHW 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. ACHW may impose restrictions, prohibitions or conditions where required by law or where reasonable and proportionate regulation is required in order for ACHW 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 Appeals 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 relevant 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).

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 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Staff Grievances Policy and Procedure
- [Legislation on human rights](#) and discrimination
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Note: This policy does not have a procedure.

6.0 POLICY OWNERSHIP

Policy Owner	Chief Education Officer Higher Education
Status	Reviewed September 2025
Approval Authority	ACHW Corporate Board
Date of Approval	11/09/2025
Effective Date	15/09/2025
Implementation Owner	Head of School, ACHW
Maintenance Owner	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education
Review Due	December 2027

7.0 AMENDMENTS

Version	Amendment Approval (Date)	Amendment Made By (Position)	Amendment Details
C3.0	10 July 2017	Head of Compliance / Director ACHW	Initial document review after purchase of MHMHE
C3.1	10 March 2020	Academic Board	General Review
C3.2	27 July 2021	Academic Board	New template. Freedom of Speech included.
C3.3	1 April 2024	Head of Compliance	Reference to complaints, breaches of policy and incidents of discrimination and harassment.
C3.4	13 January 2025	Executive Director	Changes to staffing
C3.5	11 September 2025	Senior Compliance Manager Higher Education	Minor administrative changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to staff titles • Template slightly revised following benchmarking