

Category: Research and Research Training

Version: 5

Document Type: Policy

Document Status: Published

Approved On: 08 November, 2021

Audience: Staff, Students, Research, Academic, Affiliate

Effective Date: 08 November, 2021

Review due by: 31 December, 2022

Policy Approver: Council

Policy Steward: Academic Secretary

Supporting Process: Research and Research Training Processes , Guidelines for the Appropriate Exercise of Freedom of Speech

Academic Freedom of Expression Policy (MPF1224)

1. Objective

The objectives of this policy are to elucidate the:

- (a) right to academic freedom of expression; and
- (b) responsibilities of scholars in exercising academic freedom of expression.

2. Scope

This policy applies across the University.

3. Authority

This policy is made under the University of Melbourne Act 2009 (Vic) and the Council Regulation .

4. Policy

Right to academic freedom of expression

4.1. A core value of the University of Melbourne is to preserve, defend and promote the traditional principles of academic freedom in the conduct of its affairs, so that all scholars at the University are free to engage in critical enquiry, scholarly endeavour and public discourse without fear or favour.

4.2. Accordingly, the University supports the right of all scholars at the University to search for truth, and to hold and express diverse opinions. It recognises that scholarly debate should be robust and uninhibited. It recognises also that scholars are entitled to express their ideas and opinions even when doing so may cause offence. These principles apply to all activities in which scholars express their views both inside and outside the University.

4.3. The liberty to speak freely extends to making statements on political matters, including policies affecting higher education, and to criticism of the University and its actions.

4.4. Scholars at the University should expect to be able to exercise academic freedom of expression and not be disadvantaged or subjected to less favourable treatment by the University for doing so.

Responsibilities of scholars in exercising academic freedom of expression

4.5. Like all rights, the right to academic freedom of expression carries responsibilities. Scholars may hold their own views and speak freely on all topics, even outside their expertise, and even identifying themselves as members of the University. However, if they speak in public on topics outside their expertise, they should consider whether it is reasonable in the circumstances to link their comments to their association with the University.

4.6. Academic freedom of expression is subject to the following principles:

- (a) all discourse must be undertaken reasonably and in good faith; and
- (b) all discourse should accord with principles of academic and research ethics, where applicable. For example, reasons should be given for an argument so that those who wish to respond have a basis to do so and speakers may need to state affiliations (including speciality), sources, funding and potential conflicts of interest. The University recognises that these principles may vary according to the context in which the discourse occurs.

POLICY APPROVER

Council

POLICY STEWARD

Academic Secretary

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 31 December 2022.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Council President Academic Board (authorised by Academic Board)	08 October 2012	08 October 2012	Previously Standing Resolution of Council. New version arising from the Policy Simplification Project. Loaded into MPL as Version 1.
2	-	--		Version 2 made in error.
3	Council	16 March 2016	21 July 2016	New version arising from policy consolidation project.

4	Council	30 May 2018	30 May 2018	Review date changed from 16/03/2021 to 31/12/2022.
5	Policy Officer	8 November 2021	8 November 2021	Amendment to Supporting Processes link.