



Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 As academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry and expression are the cornerstone of critical enquiry, Polytechnic Institute Australia ('PIA') is committed to the promotion of these interlinking concepts..

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff and students at PIA.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

- 3.1 PIA's mission and vision statement, states that the Institute seeks to "advance collective knowledge and understanding through a commitment to free intellectual enquiry and scholarship." Furthermore, one of the key functions of the Academic Board, as espoused in its terms of reference is to "facilitate free intellectual enquiry and ensure academic integrity."

Commitment to Scholarship and Academic Integrity

- 3.2 PIA expects its academic staff to have knowledge of contemporary developments in their field, which is informed by continuing scholarship. The pursuit of knowledge through intellectual enquiry is highly valued as a mark of institutional excellence.¹
- 3.3 Academic integrity is essential to the fabric of an academic community, embracing managers, researchers, teachers and students.² Therefore, when staff are undertaking any intellectual enquiry it is important that they are cognisant of their responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

¹ Refer to PIA's *Staff Performance Monitoring Policy and Procedure* for more detail.

² Students should refer to the Institute's *Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure*.

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- 3.4 PIA takes a serious view of academic misconduct and will penalise staff who are found guilty of offences associated with misappropriation of others' work, misrepresentation of personal performance, fraud, and improper access to scholarly resources and/or obstructing others in pursuit of their academic endeavours.

Respect for Academic Freedom

- 3.5 Academic freedom and its related responsibilities as recognised and practised by PIA have their fundamental basis in the culture commonly found in Australian universities and other higher education providers. Specifically, academic staff and students are entitled to full freedom in any scholarly activity they pursue in order to encourage scholarly enquiry.
- 3.6 Academic staff are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the unit of study they are delivering. However, they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to the unit.
- 3.7 When speaking or writing as private citizens ensuring that they make it clear that they are NOT speaking in an official capacity, academic staff are free from institutional censorship or discipline. However, they should keep in mind that as scholars the public may judge their profession and the Institute by their utterances. Therefore, academic staff should at all times demonstrate academic and scholarly rigour to ensure accuracy, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for PIA. Academic staff will refrain from using their institutional affiliation when publicly expressing an opinion on topics outside their area of expertise and/or on contentious issues where personal opinion may deviate from PIA's rules and regulations.
- 3.8 PIA will ensure that students and staff have a reasonable expectation that their right to hold values of their own choosing will be respected, even when those values are being questioned. Academic freedom carries associated responsibilities to exercise professional care and competence in the conduct of teaching and research, to subject academic work to the critical scrutiny of others, to consider the impact that one's work may have on others, and not to impinge on the ability of others to engage freely in learning and teaching, research, and academic debate.

4 DEFINITIONS

Academic Freedom: the freedom to express, discuss and investigate ideas without risk of official interference or professional disadvantage.

5 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Documents

Staff Performance Monitoring Policy and Procedure
Student Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure

Higher Education Standards Framework

- 5.1 This policy complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standard 6.1, which states:
4. The governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of intellectual inquiry is 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

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opportunities to participate in the deliberative and decision making processes of the higher education provider.

- 5.2 This policy also complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standard 5.2, which states:
1. There are policies that promote and uphold the academic and research integrity of courses and units of study, research and research training activities, and institutional policies and procedures address misconduct and allegations of misconduct.
- 5.3 This policy also complies with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standard 3.2, which states:
3. Staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles, including having:
 - a. knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice.

6 FEEDBACK

- 6.1 PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au.

7 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Administrator	Dean
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