

ACADEMIC FREEDOM & FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY

2024-2025

The College is committed to promoting academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law for members of the College (including staff and students) and for external speakers invited to the College.

Academic institutions play an important role in society as places of debate and discussion within the law where ideas can be tested and where students learn to challenge ideas and think for themselves.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM INCLUDES THE RIGHT/S TO:

- Freedom in teaching and discussion
- Freedom to carry out research without commercial or political interference
- Freedom to disseminate and publish one's research findings
- Freedom from institutional censorship, including the right to express one's opinion about the institution or education system in which one works
- Freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies

Academic freedom is also bound up with broader civil liberties and human rights. Staff members have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression, association and assembly. Staff must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through free expression of opinion on matters of public interest. We recognise that this may touch upon sensitive or controversial issues.

Through its commitment to academic freedom, the College ensures that academic staff, students and other members of the College have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.

The College ensures that staff and student voices are heard through the committee structure, which includes academic representation at all levels.

A registered student, staff member and any individual or body invited to the College will not be denied access to express their beliefs or views unless it is reasonably anticipated that such beliefs or views might be considered unlawful. The College will not restrict debate or discussion simply because views might be considered offensive – it is expected that students and staff be treated with respect during any such discussion or debate.

For staff, this policy operates within the context of Vogue College Code of Ethical Responsibility.