

Policy Name	ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY
Policy Number	A007_PO_HE (Academic)
Purpose	Legislation requires Australian higher education institutions to safeguard academic freedom and freedom of speech and to have policies upholding these freedoms. The purpose of this policy is to provide direction on matters of academic freedom and freedom of speech at Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia (Whitehouse).
Scope	This policy applies to all Higher Education staff, students and visitors across the Whitehouse Institute.
Policy Statement	Students and staff are expected to adhere to the provisions of relevant legislation https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2021A00022/latest/text and to the rules, policies, regulations, procedures and guidelines at Whitehouse, the accepted ethical practices of the higher education community in Australia and the standards of relevant academic research disciplines and professional practice. <i>Academic freedom</i> relies on a culture of research and scholarship undertaken without prejudice which may be associated with race, religion, gender, sexuality or disability, with open-minded access and acknowledgement of the work of others as the foundations for scholarship, learning and personal scholastic development. <i>Freedom of Speech</i> relies on a culture of mutual respect between people, irrespective of their background, belief or personal orientation for activities and practices not related to teaching, learning or research.
Roles, Rights and Responsibilities	Whitehouse institute to: - Have decision making autonomy in its approved course offerings, their mode of delivery and discipline and academic foci - Promote and protect academic freedom and freedom of speech in accordance with legislative requirements and relevant internal Whitehouse policies and procedures. - Ensure a safe environment for staff, students, and visitors to practice academic freedom and freedom of speech. Staff at Whitehouse have the freedom to: - access information and exercise academic freedom and freedom of speech in their teaching practice, and assessment of student work - discuss, express, disseminate and publish the results of their research - participate in professional or representative academic bodies - freely and generously cooperate with other staff and students to reciprocally exchange information and ideas for significant scholarly advancement - always act professionally and ethically, in accordance with the Whitehouse <i>Staff Code of Conduct</i> and related policies on anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment. Students at Whitehouse have the freedom to:

	• access information and exercise their academic freedom and freedom of speech as it relates to their studies (research, learning and assessment) • develop design theories, concepts and products underpinned by access to information from a broad and diverse scholarly base • create original and innovative design solutions to complex problems with open-minded, tolerant and professional research approaches, unimpeded by preconceived notions • freely and generously cooperate with other students and staff to reciprocally exchange information and ideas for significant scholarly advancement • participate in approved off-campus activities, such as fieldtrips, excursions and internships • participate in student societies and associations, and abide by their Terms of Reference • exercise their democratic right and participate in peaceful, non-violent protest, while not disrupting teaching, learning or wellbeing • always act professionally and ethically, in accordance with the Whitehouse <i>Student Code of Conduct</i> and related policies on anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment. Source: Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Act 2021, No.22, 2021 Section 9-115
Breaches of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech & Consequences	Breaches of academic freedom and freedom of speech (unlawful speech) may include, but are not limited to: • incitement to violence or hatred towards ‘protected groups’, distinguished by characteristics, such as background, race, religious belief, nationality, age, disability, gender identity / sexual orientation. • threatening, humiliating or intimidating behavior, distinct from what is merely offensive, shocking or insulting • speaking or displaying prohibiting slogans or symbols • disrupting classroom teaching, learning, research activities, and / or affecting staff and student safety and wellbeing. There are consequences for staff and students arising out of breaches of academic freedom and freedom of speech, resulting in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to: • warning, with academic counselling / mediation • suspension (for a specified duration) (staff or student) • enrolment termination (student) • employment termination (staff) • referral to police.
Relevant Legislation	• Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Act 2021, No.22, 2021 Section 9-115 • Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 • 2016 Higher Education Support Act (2003)

	• Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) • Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS) • Copyright Act 1968 (Cwlth) and the Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) ACT 2000 (Cwlth) • Telecommunications Act 1997 (Cwlth) and associated Acts • Crimes Act 1914 (Cwlth) • Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cwlth) and associated Acts Whitehouse recognises and abides by Commonwealth and State Anti-Discrimination Legislation including but not limited to: Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 • Age Discrimination Act 2004 • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 • Privacy Act (Cwlth) 1988 State Anti-Discrimination Legislation • Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) • State Records Act 1998 (NSW) • Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) No 40 • NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 • The Equal Opportunity Act 2010, (Victoria) • Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Victoria) • Information Privacy Act 2000 (Victoria) • Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) • Anti-Discrimination Act 199 (Qld)
Key Related Documents	• Code of Conduct (Students) • Code of Conduct (Staff) • Academic Integrity policy and procedure • Bullying, harassment and discrimination policy and procedure • Privacy policy and procedure • Critical Incident policy and procedure • Academic grievance and appeals policy and procedure.
Definitions	The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy: Academic Freedom as defined by the Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Act 2021: <i>Academic freedom</i> means the following:

	(a) the freedom of academic staff to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research; (b) the freedom of academic staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research; (c) the freedom of academic staff and students to express their opinions in relation to the higher education provider in which they work or are enrolled; (d) the freedom of academic staff to participate in professional or representative academic bodies; (e) the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations; (f) the autonomy of the higher education provider in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings, the ways in which they are taught and the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted. Freedom of Speech, relates to: • activities (e.g. freedom of association and expression) on campus grounds, OR • in connection with the campus but not related to teaching, study or research.
Responsible Officer	Academic Director, Whitehouse National Creative Director, Whitehouse
Approval Authority/ Authorities	Chief Executive Officer Academic Board
Date Approved	01/04/2026
Date of Commencement	02/04/2026
Date for Review	01/04/2029
Documents superseded by this Procedure	Free Intellectual inquiry policy
Amendment History	04/2026 • Changed the title to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech. • Updated the Policy statement, • Added new section: Roles rights and responsibilities of staff and students • Added new section: Breaches of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech & Consequences • Updated the sections: relevant legislation, key related documents and definitions.

	06/2021 Re-approval 05/2018 Re-branding – Header & Footer only 11/12 Changed formatting – minor adjustments and inclusions to policy working no material change 19/09/2012 Approved and effective 10/2016 Policy and Procedures separated and HE and VET documentation separated. Updated formatting and minor amendments		
Signed and dated for Whitehouse Pty Ltd			
	Signature	Leanne Whitehouse	01 04 2026
	Signature	Name	Date

INFORMATION FOR PUBLISHING ON POLICY REGISTER	
Category	Academic
Stakeholders	Academic Board Learning, Teaching and Assessment Curriculum Committee (LT&ACC) Staff Students