

Policy Name	ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY
Policy Number	V007_PO_VET
Purpose	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) for students and staff engaged in Vocational Education and Training (VET) learning and teaching. Whitehouse will uphold and protect academic freedom and freedom of speech in its course offerings, teaching, student learning and related activities.
Scope	This policy applies to all Vocational Education and Training (VET) staff, students and visitors across the Whitehouse Institute.
Policy Statement	Whitehouse will deliver student centered VET courses that are informed by research and promote academic freedom (critical thinking, inquiry and creative reasoning), and freedom of speech 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 learning and with respect for persons, at all times.
Roles, Rights and Responsibilities	Whitehouse institute to: • Have decision making autonomy regarding its approved course offerings, their mode of delivery and discipline 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 in accordance with legislative requirements and relevant internal Whitehouse policies and procedures. • 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>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 (inquiry, learning and assessment) • create design solutions with open-minded, tolerant and professional research approaches, unimpeded by preconceived notions • 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.

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 • Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025 • Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) • National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 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) • 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 • Appeals policy and procedure.
Definitions	The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy: Academic Freedom: a process by which curiosity and discovery are facilitated through unprejudiced and ethical inquiry to develop innovative and original design solutions in learning and teaching. Freedom of Speech: respect for people (e.g. freedom of association and expression) while on campus grounds engaged in teaching and learning, OR in connection with the campus but not related to teaching, study or research.
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Approval Authority/ Authorities	Chief Executive Officer Academic Board
Date Approved	20/12/2023
Date of Commencement	21/12/2023
Date for Review	20/12/2026
Documents superseded by this Procedure	Free Intellectual inquiry policy
Amendment History	04/2026 • Re-approval • Changed the title to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech. • Updated the Policy statement • Added a new section and clauses related to consequences arising out of breaches of the policy • Updated the sections: relevant legislation, key related documents and definitions.

	12/2023 • Re-approval • checked and updated relevant legislation section and links. • updated key related documents section. 10/2016 Policy and Procedures separated and HE and VET documentation separated. Updated formatting and minor amendments.		
Signed and dated for Whitehouse Pty Ltd			
	Leanne Whitehouse	20 12 2023	
	Signature	Name	Date

INFORMATION FOR PUBLISHING ON POLICY REGISTER	
Category	Academic
Stakeholders	Academic Board Staff Students