

FREEDOM OF INQUIRY POLICY

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Approved by	Academic Board	28 September 2015
Responsible Person	Dean	
Related Documents	Academic Misconduct Policy; Academic Integrity Statement; Grievances Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure; and Code of Conduct.	
References and Legislation	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth); Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015; Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth); Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001; National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011; Migration Act 1958 (Cth); National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018; the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth); Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	

1. Purpose:

Freedom of inquiry is necessary in order for higher education providers to fulfil their roles in “advancing scientific and social progress”, as “incubators of new theories and as the promoters of the orthodoxies of tomorrow” (Senate, 2008). Academic freedom is a necessary pre-condition in the development of a knowledge society and is therefore foundational for higher education providers such as the Navitas Professional Institute.

This policy statement outlines the college’s commitment to freedom of inquiry.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all the college’s functions.

3. Definitions:

Term	Definition
<i>Academic staff / teaching staff</i>	Permanent and casual employees engaged in teaching and assessment of courses at the institution.
<i>College (the)</i>	The Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP).
<i>Freedom of inquiry, or academic freedom,</i>	Defined by the Global Colloquium of University Presidents (2005) as “the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead.”
<i>International student/ Overseas student</i>	A student required to hold a student visa for study in Australia.
<i>Unit</i>	A unit of study in a higher education course or a unit of study, module and/or unit of competency in a vocational education and training course.

4. Policy:

The college is committed to freedom of inquiry (frequently referred to as academic freedom) as fundamental to its objects and purpose, which are to improve professional practice through the provision of education and the promotion of critical reflection, freedom of inquiry, academic excellence, research and a culture of scholarship.

4.1 Characteristics of Freedom of Inquiry

- a) Freedom of inquiry is characteristically understood to involve the capacity to research, publish and teach in areas of established expertise without collegial interference.
- b) Freedom of inquiry is constrained by the legal, ethical and methodological conventions of academic scholarship and by regard for the reputation and mission of the college. Freedom of inquiry never justifies the dissemination of that which is knowingly false, poorly researched, or the product of negligently prepared or falsified data.
- c) Within the framework of freedom of inquiry, the college seeks to foster a collegial culture in which the exploration of knowledge, informed critical analysis, and the discussion of ideas, issues and perspectives are encouraged in an environment of openness and mutual respect.

4.2 Responsibilities

4.2.1 Academic Staff

While the college acknowledges that academic staff members operate in the context of freedom of inquiry, it also expects that they will conduct themselves within the Australian legal environment, which includes the Privacy Act and the Human Research Ethics Guidelines of the NHMRC (used by the college). In exercising their rights and responsibilities associated with freedom of inquiry, the college staff members are expected to support the ethos and mission of the college and to act in accordance with the Navitas Code of Conduct. When academics speak or write on controversial issues, they are free to express their opinions without fear from collegial censorship or discipline, but they should clearly indicate that they are not speaking for the college.

4.2.2 College Council

The College Council is responsible for ensuring that a culture of freedom of inquiry underpins all the college’s academic work and that academics are not penalised or discriminated against on the basis of exercising their rights to freedom of inquiry.

The College Council is also responsible for ensuring that the reputation, status and integrity of the college are not compromised by the actions of academics that fall outside the framework of freedom of inquiry established in this policy statement.

4.3 References

Doyle, M. W., Fine, J., & Moneyhon, M. (Eds.). (2005). Report of the First Global Colloquium of University Presidents on Academic Freedom and International Migration. Columbia University.

Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (SSCEEWR) 2008, Allegations of Academic Bias in Universities and Schools: Report, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, December.

5. Document Management Control

Date	Summary of Changes	Author
28/09/2015	Initial approval	Dean
25/01/2016	Minor template technical amendments	Dean

Date	Summary of Changes	Author
30/06/2017	Administrative update to business and academic titles and roles	Dean
12/10/2018	Change of template	VET Compliance Manager