

A12 - Academic Freedom Policy

1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the commitment of BBI-The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI-TAITE) to academic freedom and intellectual inquiry.

2. BACKGROUND

BBI-TAITE is committed to quality learning and teaching, as reflected in its primarily educational mission. This policy is to ensure the implementation of the principle of free intellectual inquiry in teaching, research and scholarship associated with the delivery of all its awards, courses and scholarly activity.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all BBI-TAITE academic staff.

4. POLICY

The principal of academic freedom is fundamental to the advancement of knowledge. Promoting an environment of genuine academic freedom requires fully respecting freedom of conscience; it allows the community of scholars within the Institute to pursue teaching, research, communication and publishing in accordance with academic standards of scholarship, without unreasonable interference or restriction. As a Catholic institution, we acknowledge that the search for truth, the principle of the common good, and the pursuit of knowledge are informed by the community, faith, tradition and teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

Academic staff members have the right to express views and opinions and to investigate, either through research or other means, issues that relate to their particular area of academic expertise. The right to free intellectual inquiry and expression consistent with scholarly standards is accompanied by responsibilities. These include academic staff members' responsibilities to approach any issue in a balanced, open, fair and academically rigorous way. Staff members engaging in public discourse have responsibilities to do so in good faith, to declare conflicts of interest where they exist, and to consider whether it is appropriate to link their comments to their role and relationship with the Institute.

Acting in accordance with the Objects of the Company, all academic staff members have the right to academic freedom. This includes:

- A right to pursue critical and open inquiry and to discuss freely, teach, assess, develop curricula, publish and research;
- A right to pursue, generate and transmit knowledge through research, scholarship of learning, study, discussion, creation writing and publication;

- A right to participate in public debates and express opinions about issues related to their discipline area;
- A right to participate in professional and representative bodies including industrial associations and to engage in community service without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment; and
- A right to express unpopular or controversial views, although this does not mean the right to harass, vilify or intimidate others.

In the exercise of academic freedom, academic staff will act in a manner consistent with the professional standards of a staff member's discipline, applicable laws and regulations, and the Institute's Code of Conduct – Staff and Students. The right to academic freedom does not extend to staff members who express views on topics outside their sphere of expertise while identifying themselves as being staff members of BBI-TAITE. Nor does academic freedom allow staff members to express their views as private citizens and identify themselves as being staff members of BBI-TAITE.

5. KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Unit Design and Development Policy and Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Course of Study Design and Development Policy

6. NOTES

Contact Officer	Academic Dean
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean
Approval Authority / Authorities	Academic Board
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Key Stakeholders	Faculty and Sessional Academics