

# Intellectual Inquiry and Academic Freedom Policy and Procedure

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## 1 Purpose and scope

This policy outlines the approach to intellectual inquiry and academic freedom at AIE Institute.

This policy applies to all members of AIE Institute's higher education community.

## 2 Objectives

AIE Institute is committed to promoting intellectual inquiry and academic freedom as an integral right for all staff and students. The creation and dissemination of new knowledge underpins scholarship and is highly valued at AIE Institute.

Intellectual inquiry and academic freedom are not protections from professional misconduct. AIE Institute staff and students are expected to act in accordance with *Staff Code of Conduct*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure*, and to observe the mission and values of AIE Institute.

## 3 Implementation

The Academic Board is responsible for the implementation of this policy and upholding and defending the rights of staff and students to pursue new ideas and knowledge, within the law, in the pursuit of teaching, learning, research, scholarship and any other academic activities.

The principles of intellectual inquiry and academic freedom confer the right to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead, and they acknowledge the right to teach, research, publish, develop curricula, assess, discuss and debate free from unreasonable restriction or undue interference. AIE Institute is committed to these principles for creating new knowledge and understanding, in challenging accepted ideas and testing novel hypotheses. AIE Institute considers free and open enquiry to be critical to teaching, research and scholarship, and encourages a scholarly environment of robust debate, supported by rigorous scholarship and backed by evidence. AIE Institute defends the right of its staff and students to pursue their research, publish their findings, express their views and engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship, so long as the expression of these views does not impinge upon, or impair, the rights of others.

Although AIE institute stands for, promotes, and defends the rights of its staff and students to free intellectual inquiry and open debate, it does not endorse the views expressed by academic or affiliated staff. Staff and students should indicate they do not represent or speak for AIE Institute's views when they speak or write publicly. Only executive staff can be authorised to speak on behalf of AIE Institute.

## 4 Procedure

Students and staff are expected to be aware of this policy and use it as a guide to pursue intellectual inquiry and academic freedom in an ethical manner. Relevant policies outline further procedures for handling issues relating to academic integrity, grievances or misconduct. In particular:

- a. *Student Code of Conduct* and *Staff Code of Conduct* outline standards of behaviour
- b. *Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure* outlines the management of academic misconduct
- c. *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure* provides procedures for dealing with students' complaints
- d. *Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure* deals with staff complaints.

#### 4.1 Rights

Staff and students have the right to:

- a. Pursue knowledge and participate in scholarly debate wherever it may lead
- b. Teach, research, publish and express their opinion without institutional censorship
- c. A learning environment that fosters free intellectual inquiry through free speech and the acceptance of diverse opinions and experiences
- d. An environment where their opinions and beliefs are tolerated and accepted with respect.

#### 4.2 Responsibilities

As an intellectual community, AIE Institute upholds the rights of its staff and students to free intellectual inquiry and academic freedom and considers them critical to teaching, research and scholarship. AIE Institute will support this right by providing an environment for all teaching, learning, research and scholarship activities that facilitates:

- a. Scholarly exchange of ideas and discussion of opinions
- b. Intellectual inquiry and freedom of expression
- c. Diversity of opinion
- d. Professional debate backed by evidence
- e. Academic integrity and honesty (see *Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure*)
- f. Ethical conduct and judgment.

In addition to the standards of behaviour defined in *Staff Code of Conduct*, AIE Institute staff are responsible for:

- a. Promoting a teaching and learning environment that facilitates the open pursuit of knowledge
- b. Encouraging diversity of opinion and debate
- c. Encouraging critical and independent thought
- d. Facilitating respectful and positive discourse
- e. Identifying themselves as members of, but not spokespersons for, the Institute.

Staff are expected to:

- a. Act with honesty and integrity in teaching, learning and research, including acknowledging when generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have been used to assist with efficiency and to support learning
- b. Uphold a commitment to academic scholarship and rigour in the construction of arguments with the appropriate use of evidence
- c. Respect and value the right of other staff and students to hold differing views
- d. Sustain the integrity of teaching, learning and research by taking action when academic integrity is compromised
- e. Act responsibly with respect to intellectual property rights.

## 5 Definitions

**Academic Freedom** is the right to pursue and publish knowledge through research and scholarship, free from unreasonable restriction or interference and without fear of reprisal or harassment.

**Academic Integrity** refers to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in all academic endeavours, including preparing and presenting work for assessment as part of coursework or research.

**Ethical and ethics** refers to the guiding values, principles and standards that enable people to determine how things should be done and how they should act. Ethics refers to the judgements that people make and the process that determines those judgements. It is the process by which people make value-based decisions which ultimately guides their actions and behaviours.

**Ethical Scholarship** entails the pursuit of scholarly enquiry marked by honesty and integrity, which is reflected both in individual and group approaches to study, assessment, and other scholarly activities for both students and staff.

**Intellectual Inquiry** is the open pursuit of knowledge, which may or may not lead to the production and dissemination of new knowledge, ideas or scholarship.

## 6 Related documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- a. Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- b. Staff Code of Conduct
- c. Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure
- d. Student Code of Conduct
- e. Student Grievance Policy and Procedure.

## 7 Review

Three years from commencement.

## 8 Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and the Institute's higher education community via the website and other publications.

## 9 Revision history

Approval authority	Contact person	Revision due date	Revision date	Approved date	Version no.	Revision description
Academic Board	Chair	15/02/26		16/04/19	v1	New document
				12/12/19	v1.1	Approved by BoD, final formatting
				27/05/21	v2.0	Approved by BoD
				02/08/24	v2.1	

<b>Drafting details</b>					
<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Preparation date</b>	<b>Revised by</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Draft no.</b>	<b>Revision description</b>
HL	20/03/17			v0.01	Preparation of new document
		MK/NT/ NM	20/06/18 – 03/04/19 – 15/06/21	v0.02- 0.07	Reformatting of bullets to numbering. Additional text at 2.e and 2.f, 3.2.b-c, 3.2.g-o. Separated Staff Code of Conduct from this policy and rewrote definitions, rights and responsibilities. Redrafted section 2 Objectives and section 4 Procedures, defined 'Academic Freedom' and 'Intellectual Inquiry'. Revised procedure, rights and responsibilities to remove overlaps, cleared repetitions removing overlaps with Staff Code of Conduct in the rights and responsibilities, reworded the responsibilities. Addition at 3 and 4.1.1 Added IP rights at 4.1.2, Staff, e. AB amendment to 4.1.1 b. Copyedited and proofread, applied new template, adjusted ethics definition to match that found in other policies.
		AMD TC	2 Jul 2024	2.1	Updated for use of generative AI.