



Policy and Procedures –

Academic Freedom, Integrity, and Free Intellectual Enquiry

THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“TIIS”) is committed to the promotion of academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry and expression. This commitment is consistent with the requirements of Provider Registration Standard 4.2 of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

This *Policy and Procedures* lies within one of the key functions of the Academic Board, as espoused in its terms of reference, to “... facilitate free intellectual enquiry and ensure academic integrity”.

2. Commitment to Scholarship and Academic Integrity

As per Provider Category Standard 1.4, TIIS expects its academic staff to exhibit a strong commitment to scholarship and the professional expectations of their academic disciplines. The pursuit of knowledge through intellectual inquiry is highly valued as a mark of Institutional excellence.¹ In support this pursuit of knowledge, TIIS makes the commitment that its academic staff will have freedom of academic inquiry without undue fear of repercussion.

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and should be interwoven throughout the fabric of an academic community — including managers, researchers, lecturers, and students.² However, when staff undertake intellectual enquiry it is important that their academic freedom is leavened with the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

TIIS considers academic misconduct serious and will penalise staff who are found guilty of offences associated with misappropriation of others’ work, misrepresentation of personal performance, fraud, improper access to scholarly resources, obstructing others in pursuit of their academic endeavours, and/or negligent acquisition, handling, use, or storage of sensitive human data.

3. Respect for Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and its related responsibilities as recognised and practised by TIIS have their roots in cultures commonly found in Australian universities and other higher education providers. Thus, subject to social, financial, and time constraints, academic staff and students may freely choose scholarly activity that supports, encourages, and drives the notion of intellectual enquiry. Furthermore, academic staff are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject they are delivering. However, notwithstanding the forgoing, academics should be wary of introducing potentially controversial matters which have little or no relevance to the subject and must ensure that materials and concepts deemed necessary by their discipline and/or appropriate disciplinary bodies are well covered.

When speaking or writing as private citizens, academic staff are free from Institutional censorship/discipline. However, academic staff should be mindful that as scholars the public may judge their profession and their Institute by their utterances. Therefore, at all times, they must demonstrate academic and scholarly rigour, integrity, and decorum by ensuring that expressed notions are accurate and reasonably propitious, demonstrate appropriate restraint, show reasonable respect for the opinions of others, and must not indicate that they are speaking for TIIS or allow such a perception to persist. Academic staff will refrain from using their Institutional affiliation when publicly expressing an opinion on topics outside their area of expertise and/or on contentious issues where their personal opinion may deviate from TIIS’s rules, regulations, and/or position.

TIIS students and staff have a reasonable expectation that their right to hold values of their own choosing will be respected, even when those values are being questioned. An exception to that

¹ Refer to *Policy and Procedures – Scholarly Activity* for more detail.

² In regard to academic integrity and students, reference should be made to *Policy and Procedures – Student Academic Integrity and Honesty*.

principle is where an opinion and/or its derivative actions threaten public safety (e.g., antivaccine, threats, agitation, harassment, defamation, etc.). Academic freedom comes with associated responsibilities to exercise *due professional care and competence* in (among other things):

- a. Conducting teaching and research,
- b. Subjecting academic work to the critical scrutiny of others,
- c. Considering the impact that one's work may have on others, and
- d. Not impinging on the ability of others to engage freely in teaching and learning, research, and academic debate.

4. Version History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	24 March 2016	
1.1	Academic Board	7 October 2020	Minor changes
1.2	NA	13 Dec 2021	Removed "RMIT Classified Trusted "from the Header by the Dean

Document owner: Dean