

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

Policy Name: Academic Freedom	Responsible Owner: VP, Academic and Provost	Created: 2009
Policy Number: A35	Approval Body: Board	Last Reviewed/Revised: 2021 Nov
Category: Administration	Replaces: A02.10.06	Next Review: 2025 Mar

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A. PURPOSE

Institutions of higher learning serve the common good of society and are dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of truth, knowledge and understanding through fostering independent thinking and expression. These ends cannot be achieved without Academic Freedom. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Douglas College (the College) provides a working and learning environment that serves these ends by protecting, supporting and maintaining the Academic Freedom of its Students and Academic Employees.

B. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Academic Employees and Students at Douglas College.

C. DEFINITIONS

Academic Employees: Persons employed by and engaged in educational pursuits within the College, including faculty members, instructional staff, teaching assistants and/or tutors and academic administrators who teach, tutor, facilitate learning, develop curriculum, and design and/or approve educational programs and credentials; may include external visiting speakers, researchers or scholars operating under the auspices of the College.

Academic Freedom: The right to engage in teaching, learning, research and/or other creative or intellectual work in order to expand knowledge, and to do so in an atmosphere of free inquiry and exposition; includes the right to examine, question, critique, teach and learn in an environment that supports the need to investigate, speculate and comment without penalty or sanction.

College Community: All College Students, employees and Board members, and any other person who is contractually obligated to comply with College policy; for the purposes of this policy, includes any visiting speakers, researchers or scholars operating under the auspices of the College.

Student: A person enrolled in studies at the College in credit or non-credit courses.

D. POLICY STATEMENTS

1. In keeping with its [Core Purpose and Values](#), Douglas College will ensure a teaching and learning environment that protects, supports and maintains Academic Freedom, recognizing that teaching and academic inquiry often involve controversial matters and the interrogation of truth and knowledge.
2. Academic Employees are authorized to conduct, and Students are authorized to participate in, frank discussions of controversial matters; both Academic Employees and Students are also authorized to conduct research and other forms of inquiry into such matters.
3. Academic Employees and Students have rights and privileges to engage in independent thinking and expression unhindered by external or non-academic constraint; to pursue avenues of inquiry; and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion.
 - a. Academic Employees have Academic Freedom to pursue the following, without institutional censorship or reprisal:
 - i. Conduct teaching, including the setting of educational activities and content in any media, and engage Students in related discussion;
 - ii. Freely express their opinions on matters related to teaching, curricular responsibilities and institutional policy;
 - iii. Carry out research and disseminate the results;
 - iv. Produce and perform creative works;
 - v. Engage in service to the institution and community;
 - vi. Acquire, preserve and provide access to the widest range of materials in all formats; and
 - vii. Participate in professional and representative academic bodies.
 - b. Students have Academic Freedom to pursue the following, without institutional censorship or reprisal:
 - i. Meet on campus to discuss topics or issues;
 - ii. Raise for discussion in class aspects of a topic pertinent to the subject matter of that class;
 - iii. Carry out research under the guidance of an Academic Employee and disseminate the results;
 - iv. Produce and perform creative works, under the guidance of an Academic Employee;
 - v. Engage in service to the institution and community; and
 - vi. Freely express their opinions about the institution and matters related to their studies.

4. Academic Freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom responsibly, respecting the rights and dignity of others and in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research in an honest search for truth, knowledge and understanding, grounded in research, data and evidence, and reliant upon reasoned discourse, scholarship and peer review. Academic Freedom rights must be exercised in compliance with applicable laws and College policies.
5. The rights of Academic Employees and Students to exercise their Academic Freedom do not vary according to the medium in which they are exercised. These rights are as essential to academic activities undertaken electronically as to those undertaken in speech, writing and/or other media.
6. Academic Employees and Students have the responsibility to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction and the free expression of ideas; they are obliged to respect the opinions of Students and others in the academic and College Community, including opinions that arise from worldviews, values and intellectual traditions other than their own, and to maintain accuracy, integrity and academic honesty in the fulfillment of their roles.
7. As professionals and members of the College Community, Academic Employees may choose or be called upon to speak publicly in their area of expertise. In these cases, it is appropriate for them to identify themselves as College Employees, but they should not present their views as the official position of the College.
8. Librarians have a duty to promote and maintain intellectual freedom in the institution in keeping with the principles expressed in the *Canadian Library Association Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom* and in the *British Columbia Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom*.

E. PROCEDURES

N/A

F. SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES

[Administration Policies](#)

- *Acceptable Use of Computer and Information Technology*
- *Advertising on College Property*
- *Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Response*
- *College Use of Copyrighted Works*
- *Commercialization of Intellectual Property*
- *Conflict of Interest*
- *Human Rights*
- *Integrity in Research and Scholarship*
- *Respectful and Inclusive Environment*



- *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention and Response*
- *Student Non-academic Misconduct*
- *Use of the Douglas College Concourse and Atriums*
- *Violence Prevention and Response*

[BC Library Association's Statement of Intellectual Freedom](#)

[Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#)

[Douglas College Code of Conduct](#)

[Douglas College Core Purpose, Vision and Values](#)

[Douglas College Research Ethics and Policies](#)

G. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS

N/A

H. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

N/A