

Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy

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1. PURPOSE

This policy states Barton Business School's ("BBS") commitment to promote, preserve, and defend an environment that values and encourages academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of BBS's Boards and Committees and all BBS staff and contractors. This policy also applies to all BBS students.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to BBS's *Glossary of Terms*.

4. POLICY

BBS recognises and values the right to academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry as central to its endeavours in learning, teaching, and research. BBS is committed to the promotion and protection of academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry within BBS. The main principles informing this policy are:

- a. Academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry must be approached responsibly and ethically.
- b. BBS staff and students can exercise their right to academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry in learning, teaching, scholarship and research, free from fear of harassment or discrimination. The research aspect of this policy does not relate to Domain 4: Research and Research Training of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HES Framework).
- c. BBS encourages a diversity of opinion and the right to express that opinion freely.

BBS staff and students are entitled to complete freedom in any scholarly activity they pursue within their area of study. Academic staff are allowed freedom in the classroom to discuss the unit they are delivering, providing that such discussion is within the framework of their academic responsibilities and does not breach academic integrity and ethical behaviour.

BBS staff have the right to:

- a. be upfront in the respectful expression of informed views and to be able to express these views free from undue institutional constraint;

- b. undertake scholarship that informs their teaching and research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour;
- c. participate in determining the treatment of philosophical and practical issues in the units they teach to provide a balanced presentation that enhances student learning.

BBS students are encouraged to develop a capacity for critical judgment and a sustained and independent search for truth. Freedom to learn depends upon providing appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom and the larger BBS community. BBS students have the right to:

- a. freedom of speech
- b. discuss and examine all questions of interest to them
- c. express opinions publicly as well as privately

Students and staff must reasonably expect their right to hold values of their choosing will be respected, even when those values are being challenged.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Academic Board ("AB") is responsible for ensuring that academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry are maintained and protected.

BBS staff and students are responsible for approaching all academic matters with integrity in a fair, balanced, open, and respectful manner.

Specific responsibilities of the academic staff include, but are not limited to:

- a. upholding a commitment to academic standards, including academic integrity, rigour in the construction of arguments, and the appropriate use of evidence;
- b. exercising intellectual freedom within the parameters of legislative and internal policy requirements and their obligations within the organisational context of BBS;
- c. fostering intellectually vigorous and open discussion in all forums, adhering to the standards of scholarship, and avoiding actions that may inhibit freedom of inquiry and expression;
- d. undertaking discourse reasonably and in good faith, with declarations of conflicts of interest where appropriate;
- e. avoiding expressing views on any topic other than those within their sphere of expertise when identifying themselves as staff member of BBS.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they engage in a scholarly approach within their area of study while ensuring the well-being of their fellow students and academic staff.

6. BREACHES AND COMPLAINTS

Any complaints or disagreements relating to this policy will be addressed following the *Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures* under the *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures* under the *Student Code of Conduct*.

7. VERSION CONTROL

Document title	Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy	
Approved By	The Academic Board	
Date of Review	This document is to be reviewed every two years at a minimum from the date of final approval	
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board Terms of Reference • Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures • Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy • Staff Code of Conduct • Student Code of Conduct • Scholarly Activity and Professional Development Policy • Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures • Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures 	
Related Legislation and References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Higher Education Standards Framework – (Threshold Standards) 2021</i> • <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</i> • <i>TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Leadership, Beta version 1.0, 18 June 2019</i> • <i>Report of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers March 2019</i> • <i>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</i> • <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> • <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> • <i>Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023</i> 	
Version	Notes	Date Approved
1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft tabled and approved with minor suggested changes. 	30/09/2022
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document approved with minor editorial revisions. Additional inclusion of the Higher Education Support Act and related guidelines in the sections for related legislation. 	21/03/2025