

Policy History
Policy No. AC8
Approving Jurisdiction: Board of Governors, with Senate Advice
Administrative Responsibility: Provost & Vice President Academic
Effective Date: June 7, 2023

Principles of Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy

A. PREAMBLE

1. The rights of members of the University community are not fundamentally different from those of other members of society. The University, however, has a special autonomy, and reasoned dissent plays a particularly vital role in its existence. To that end, the University places particular emphasis upon certain values which are essential to its nature as an academic institution. Among these are freedom of speech and academic freedom.
2. The central functions of an academic community are learning, teaching, research and scholarship. By accepting membership in a University, an individual joins a community ideally characterized by free expression, free inquiry, intellectual honesty, respect for the dignity of others, and openness to constructive change. The rights and responsibilities exercised within this group must be compatible with these qualities.

B. STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

1. Kwantlen Polytechnic University is committed to the belief that the exchange of knowledge and ideas in an environment of intellectual freedom is an indispensable foundation of quality education and scholarship.
2. Academic freedom is one means to ensure that an environment of intellectual freedom is sustained, and extends to the entire University community: students, staff, faculty (including visiting faculty), and University officers and administrators;
3. Academic freedom includes the right of all members of the University community to inquire, discuss and express themselves, study, conduct research, teach, publish, create and exhibit their work, associate and peaceably assemble without deference to prescribed doctrine on ideas, principles, concepts, or issues related to pedagogy and research; and without hindrance by the University, any of its representatives, or coercion by external agents.
4. The rights described in (3) presuppose, but are not limited to, the freedom to:
 - a. carry out research and scholarship with public monies, trust, and support, and to disseminate the results without censorship, institutional or otherwise;

- b. discuss ideas both in research and in the classroom that challenge theories, laws, propositions, methodologies, conventional thought, and ideologies, including the right to criticize the University, the University stakeholders, the government, and society at large;
 - c. pursue teaching methods and utilize resources that may be considered unconventional;
 - d. organize and join political associations, convene and conduct public meetings, publicly demonstrate and picket in orderly fashion, advocate, and publicize opinions by print, sign or voice.
5. The censorship of information is inimical to the free pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, no censorship based on moral, religious or political values shall be permitted against any communication or informational material, including collections in the University libraries
6. Decisions concerning
- a. the search for, and appointment and promotion of, faculty;
 - b. the assignment of teaching and other primarily academic responsibilities;
 - c. the support and sponsorship of scholarly research; and
 - d. any other granting or withholding of benefits or imposition of burdens shall be made without regard to
 - i. any prohibitive grounds identified under the Human Rights legislation;
 - ii. a person's political, social, or other views not directly related to academic values or to the assumption of academic responsibilities;
 - iii. the conduct of a person holding an appointment at the University, unless such conduct is directly related to academic values or to the assumption of academic responsibilities.
7. Academic freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual, but, on the contrary, makes possible the adherence to a position or course of action. Neither does it confer legal immunity nor diminish the obligation of individuals to meet their duties and responsibilities.

C. STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

1. In exercising academic freedom, there is a responsibility to remain within the bounds of all applicable institutional policies, municipal, provincial and federal laws, and to respect the rights and freedoms of all others within the University and society at large. Hence, academic freedom does not entitle anyone to promote hatred or contempt for any social, national, or ethnic group, to display incompetence in teaching or scholarship, or to violate the rights of others.
2. It is the responsibility of all members of the University community to maintain an atmosphere in which violations of rights and obligations are unlikely to occur, and to develop processes by which these rights and obligations are fully assured. In particular, it is the responsibility of officers of administration and instruction to be alert to the needs of the University, to give full and fair hearing to reasoned expressions of grievances, and to respond promptly and in good faith to such expressions.
3. Kwantlen's commitment to academic freedom does not obviate the responsibilities of members of the University community, including, but not limited to, the responsibility to
 - a. seek and state the truth as apprehended;
 - b. foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction;
 - c. respect those with differing views;

- d. work collectively to foster the education of learners; and
 - e. acknowledge when personal views and opinions may differ from those of the institution.
4. Kwantlen reserves the right to establish orderly procedures consistent with imperatives of academic freedom for the purpose of assuring and maintaining the responsibilities of those whose decisions affect the life of the University.
 5. In addition to any recourse that a member of the University community may have under the collective agreements between Kwantlen and its unions, any member of the University community who believes that his or her academic freedom is not being respected has a right to appeal for redress to the Board of Governors, through its Chair or designate.