



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Statement:

Academic Freedom

Effective: 30 September 2020

Audience: Academic Staff

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Resources

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Responsible Officer: Provost

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1 OBJECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University's Objects are defined in Section 5 of its Act of Parliament:

The Objects of the University are:

- (a) the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values; and
- (b) the provision of an excellent standard of -
 - i. teaching, scholarship and research;
 - ii. training for the professions; and
 - iii. pastoral care for its students.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1** To ensure that Academic Staff Members are able to pursue lines of enquiry and to express views relating to their area of academic expertise.

3 STATEMENT

The University of Notre Dame Australia is a Catholic University committed to the provision of university education, within a context of Catholic faith and values; and the provision of an excellent standard of - teaching, scholarship and research; training for the professions; and pastoral care for its students. Our educational programs reflect our commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition and incorporate relevant material derived from centuries of Catholic academic thinking (in healthcare, education, business, law, the arts and other disciplines).

The principle of academic freedom is a foundation of the mission and the culture of the University. Promoting an environment of genuine academic freedom requires fully respecting freedom of conscience; it also allows the community of scholars who are central to the University to pursue teaching, research, communication and publishing in accordance with academic standards of scholarship, without unreasonable interference or restriction. As a Catholic University, we acknowledge that the search for truth, the principle of the common good, and the pursuit of knowledge are informed by the community, faith, tradition and teaching authority of the Catholic Church.

Academic staff members have the right to express views and opinions and to investigate, either through research or other means, issues that relate to their particular area of academic expertise. The right to free intellectual enquiry and expression consistent with scholarly standards is accompanied by responsibilities. These include academic staff members' responsibilities to approach any issue in a balanced, open, fair and academically rigorous way. Staff members engaging in public discourse have responsibilities to do so in good faith, to declare conflicts of interest where they exist, and to consider whether it is appropriate to link their comments to their role and relationship with the University.

Acting in accordance with the Objects of the University, all academic staff members have the right to

academic freedom. This includes:

- a. a right to pursue critical and open inquiry and to discuss freely, teach, assess, develop curricula, publish and research;
- b. a right to pursue, generate and transmit knowledge through research, scholarship of learning, study, discussion, creation, writing and publication;
- c. a right to participate in public debates and express opinions about issues and ideas related to their discipline area;
- d. a right to participate in professional and representative bodies including industrial associations and to engage in community service without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment; and
- e. a right to express unpopular or controversial views, although this does not mean the right to harass, vilify or intimidate others.

In the exercise of academic freedom, academic staff will act in a manner consistent with the professional standards of a staff member's discipline, applicable laws and regulations, and the University's *Staff Code of Conduct*. The right to academic freedom does not extend to staff members who express views on topics outside their sphere of expertise while identifying themselves as being staff members of the University. Nor does academic freedom allow staff members to express their views as private citizens and identify themselves as being staff members of the University.

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	1 January 2018	Vice Chancellor (Approved by Board of Trustees 23 November 2017 and Board of Directors 24 November 2017)	Effective date.
2	30 September 2020	Reviewed by Board of Directors	No amendments made.