

Academic Freedom and Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy		
Code: A1.05	Area: Academic	
Policy Owner: Academic Board	Version #: 2.1	Date: 1 Sep 2022
Policy Developer/Reviewer: QAM	Review date: 1 Sep 2025	

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Updated by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	AB	24 Mar 2011	Document creation.
1.1	AB	26 Nov 2014	Regular review only (no amendment made).
1.2	Dean	04 May 2017	Regular review only (no amendment made).
2.0	AB	10 Dec 2019	Review and update to meet the requirements of the HESF15.
2.1	AB	1 Sep 2022	Regular review.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline SITCM's commitment to academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry.
- Provide guidance to staff and students on academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry.

This policy applies to all staff and students at the Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SITCM).

1 OVERVIEW

As academic freedom and free intellectual enquiry are the cornerstone of critical enquiry, Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SITCM) is committed to the promotion of these interlinking concepts. One of the key functions of the SITCM Academic Board is to facilitate free intellectual enquiry and ensure academic integrity. This policy provides guidance on academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry for SITCM, staff and students.

This policy has been informed by the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, Section 6.1.4 Corporate Governance, *The Higher Education Support Act 2003*, and the *Report of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers March 2019*.

2 POLICY

- 1) SITCM expects its academic staff to exhibit a strong commitment to scholarship and the professional expectations of their academic disciplines.
- 2) The pursuit of knowledge through intellectual inquiry is highly valued as a mark of institutional excellence.
- 3) Academic freedom carries associated responsibilities for staff, students and SITCM.

- 4) Academic freedom, free intellectual inquiry and associated responsibilities are recognised and practised by SITCM and have their fundamental basis in the culture commonly found in Australian universities and other institutions of higher education.
- 5) This policy is overseen by the Dean.

2.1 FREE INTELLECTUAL ENQUIRY

Free intellectual inquiry is the freedom for staff and students at SITCM to have:

- 1) Full freedom in any scholarly activity they pursue, including:
 - a. To explore their own ideas.
 - b. To pursue knowledge wherever that pursuit may lead.
 - c. To communicate any knowledge gained.
- 2) Freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject.
- 3) Their right to academic freedom without fear of harassment, bullying, intimidation or unfair treatment.

2.2 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Free intellectual inquiry must be undertaken reasonably and in good faith and carries the following associated responsibilities:

- 1) Professional care and competence must be exercised in the conduct of teaching and research;
- 2) Academic work must be subject to the critical scrutiny of others;
- 3) The impact that one's work may have on others must be considered;
- 4) Staff should not introduce into their teaching matters which are unrelated to their subject;
- 5) Staff and students must not impinge on the ability of others to engage freely in teaching and learning, research, and academic debate; and
- 6) Freedom of intellectual inquiry will not be permitted as a defence for acting unlawfully.

2.3 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SITCM

- 1) While supporting and allowing academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry, SITCM does not endorse the views expressed by staff.
- 2) Students and staff must have a reasonable expectation that their right to enjoy academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry will be respected by SITCM.

2.4 OUTSIDE OF SITCM

When speaking or writing as private citizens, academic staff should be free from institutional censorship or disciplinary measures. However, academic staff should keep in mind that as scholars the public may judge their profession and SITCM by their speech. Staff should:

- 1) Exercise appropriate restraint;
- 2) Show respect for the opinions of others; and
- 3) Make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for SITCM.

3 RELATED POLICY AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

- 1) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.
- 2) The Higher Education Support Act 2003.
- 3) Report of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers March 2019.