

Academic Freedom Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides a framework to outline the support mechanisms and requirements for the academic freedom of all academic staff and students of Perth Bible College.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all academic staff and students of Perth Bible College.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Academic Dean to implement this policy.

4. Definitions

<i>Academic Staff</i>	All staff employed on a permanent or sessional research, academic or teaching focused contract.
<i>Academic Freedom</i>	The freedom of intellectual inquiry and expression of any field by both staff and students at Perth Bible College without interference or penalty from others, including teachers and officials.

5. Policy Provisions

Principles

- 5.1 Perth Bible College is committed to the freedom of intellectual inquiry and expression by both academic staff and students.
- 5.2 The following policy is to be interpreted within the broader framework of Perth Bible College's *Statement of Faith* and *Student Code of Conduct* (available on the College's website), which both students and academic staff agree to uphold as part of their enrolment and employment respectively (as outlined within the *Staff Manual* and *Admissions Policy*).
- 5.3 The *Statement of Faith* is broad in nature to allow critical discussion from a range of perspectives. If students find that their research takes them to a place which is contra to the *Statement of Faith*, they may voice it within the framework of their studies without penalty.

- 5.4 Students may not express these views outside the College as if they are endorsed by the College.
- 5.5 Furthermore, it is incumbent on them to communicate that their view does not align with the *Statement of Faith* endorsed at PBC. The faculty, however, retains the right to engage the student in dialogue as to why their position clashes with the College's *Statement of Faith*.
- 5.6 Academic staff who find themselves reaching conclusions which do not agree with the College's *Statement of Faith* may not communicate such research to people within or outside the College. It is incumbent on them to communicate their position to the Academic Dean and to enter into discussion with the Dean and Faculty regarding their point of view. If there is no change in the researcher's findings, the matter will be reported to the Board. The Board reserves the right to terminate the employment of an academic staff member who advocates a position contrary to the College's *Statement of Faith*.

Intellectual Inquiry

- 5.7 All staff and students are permitted and encouraged to undertake free intellectual inquiry.
- 5.8 Should any student or staff believe they have not been permitted to undertake free intellectual inquiry, they should refer to the *Complaints, Appeals and Opportunities for Improvement Policy*.

Intellectual Expression

- 5.9 All staff and students are permitted and encouraged to participate in free intellectual expression. Subject to the broader framework stated above, this freedom extends to all verbal, written, and electronic formats without interference or penalty, but includes the duty to use this freedom in a responsible manner, avoiding libels and defamation.
- 5.10 In the cases of intellectual expression, both staff and students may indicate their association with Perth Bible College, but may not give the impression their views are representative of the College unless they have been approved to do so by the Principal or the Board of Management.
- 5.11 Should any student or staff believe they have not been permitted to participate in free intellectual expression, they should refer to the *Complaints, Appeals and Opportunities for Improvement Policy*.

Academic Freedom in the Context of Contentious Issues

- 5.12 Perth Bible College recognises that contentious theological and ethical issues may arise within the context of a student’s studies and discussed within the context of the lecture.
- 5.13 In alignment with the principles of this policy, students should be provided the opportunity to disagree with the lecturer’s position and should not be belittled, dismissed or discriminated against in anyway for the views they may espouse in class.
- 5.14 The lecturer must endeavour to address contentious issues with a high level of sensitivity and respect, being conscious that there may be students who hold alternate views or who could be negatively impacted by the view expressed by the lecturer.
- 5.15 Lecturers should not defame, malign or demonise any people group, but engage with students in a way that reflects the love and care of God.
- 5.16 The lecturer should strive to depersonalise contentious issues as much as possible. On issues where such depersonalisation is difficult or impossible, lectures must take extra care to ensure a respectful, caring and loving environment is created.
- 5.17 The lecturer should not use their interpretation of the Bible and its resulting authority to silence debate. Though within a theological class the Bible may form the framework for such debate, all parties must exercise respect and humility, being aware that their view is an interpretation and may misappropriate Biblical texts to serve their own cause and agenda.
- 5.18 The historically orthodox view is that God’s ideal for human sexuality is realised in a committed and faithful relationship between a man and a woman within the bounds of marriage. It is expected that this view will be fairly represented in any class discussion.

6. Policy Information

Date first approved: 19/11/2012	Date of effect: 19/11/2012	Date last amended: 7/04/2022	Date of next review: 7/04/2023
Approved by		Academic Council	
Authorised Officer		Academic Dean	
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy		<i>Statement of Faith</i> <i>Student Code of Conduct</i> <i>Staff Manual</i> <i>Admissions Policy</i> <i>Academic Research Policy</i>	

	<i>Complaints, Appeals and Opportunities for Improvement Policy</i>
Related Legislation and Codes of Practice	<u>Higher Education Standards Framework 2015, Part A: Standard 6.1</u> <u>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</u>
Audience	Staff

7. Version History

Review Table			
Date	Review Type	Summary of Changes	Review person/group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled • Policy amendment • Admin update 		
19/11/2012	Initial Issue		Academic Council
26/7/2017	Scheduled	Addition of 2 nd sentence in 2.1	Peter Elliott
9/9/2019	Policy amendment	New template and amendments made.	Natalie Tierney Capital Review Group consultant
12/08/2021	Admin update	Grammar fixes and general clean up.	Chris Burton
7/04/2022	Policy amendment	Re-formatted for simpler use. Cleaned up previous errors missed. Inclusion of 5.12 – 5.17.	Chris Burton