



# Academic Freedom Policy

## Objective

To ensure that the exercise of academic freedom for all staff and students is given significant importance by the corporation and across all higher education providers within Kaplan Australia.

## Scope

This policy is applicable to all higher education providers within Kaplan Australia. It applies to the governing bodies of Kaplan Australia, its officers, staff, contractors and students.

## Policy Standards

In the context of Kaplan Australia academic freedom refers to:

- i. the freedom of academic staff to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research without restriction by established scholarly consensus or institutional policy, but subject to lawful expression, scholarly standards and in alignment with the objects of Kaplan Australia's higher education providers;
- ii. the freedom of academic staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research;
- iii. the freedom of academic staff and students to make public comment on any issue in their personal capacities, not speaking either on behalf of Kaplan or as an officer of the company providing it does not contravene the contractual obligations of the employee or enrolled student;
- iv. the freedom of academic staff to participate in professional or representative academic bodies;
- v. the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations; and
- vi. the autonomy of Kaplan Australia which resides in its governing bodies, executive and academic staff in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings, the ways in which they are taught and the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted, albeit subject to TEQSA Standards and conditions of accreditation, and national research ethics policies.

## Academic Freedom Principles

Kaplan endorses the concept of academic freedom and supports academic staff and students in their right to engage in critical enquiry, scholarly endeavour and robust public debate within Kaplan education units and across the broader community, providing it is not unlawful and does not contravene the contractual obligations of the



employee or enrolled student. Public statements and critical debate must not discriminate or vilify individuals and must be undertaken in good faith, within reason and in accordance with Kaplan's code of conduct and ethical behaviour.

Academic freedom is shaped by the following principles:

- to explicitly demonstrate respect for the rights of others;
- to uphold the freedom to express views, theories or content in a professional manner, free from harassment, and in a way that does not constitute misconduct or is unlawful;
- to express views free from personal force and violence and with due regard for the wellbeing of staff and students.

Academic freedom does not include the teaching of doctrines (religious, political or of other groups) or the dissemination of propaganda that is inconsistent with the stated purpose of Kaplan; nor does it allow for the dissemination of thoughts or materials that do not meet scholarly standards or may be detrimental to Kaplan's reputation as a registered provider of higher education.

## Policy Context

Kaplan aims to provide an environment that:

- preserves, defends and promotes the principles of academic freedom for staff and students;
- encourages debate and expression of diverse opinions within the discipline of study or research;
- protects the right of staff and students to exercise academic freedom of expression and not be disadvantaged or subject to less favourable treatment by Kaplan for doing so.

## Application of Policy

### Staff

Staff are required to demonstrate the responsibilities that are integral to academic freedom of expression. All members of Kaplan teaching staff are required to uphold respect for all and promote an open, supportive academic culture valuing the contributions and academic freedoms of their colleagues and students. They are required to show respect for the opinions and dignity of others. They accept their share of responsibilities for the governance of the institution and commit to participating ethically and responsibly in those activities and decisions appropriate to their role and consistent with the principles of Kaplan as described in this policy.

Kaplan values learning, encourages growth, and appreciates and nurtures differences. As a global corporation Kaplan recognises everyone's role in enabling success (Kaplan Guiding Principles, 2019). As such, Kaplan staff are required to encourage academic freedom with their students, reasonably and in good faith in the following ways, by:

- demonstrating scholarly standards of their discipline;
- demonstrating respect for diversity and individual academic views within the discipline of study;
- adhering to their professional role as academic guides and counsellors;
- fostering honest academic conduct always;
- ensuring their evaluations of students reflect their true merit;
- avoiding conflicts of interest with their students;
- protecting students' academic freedom.



## Version Control and Accountable Officers

It is the joint responsibility of the Implementation Officer and Responsible Officer(s) to ensure compliance with this policy.

<b>Policy Category</b>		Academic		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>		Vice President, Academic		
<b>Implementation Officer</b>		Academic Dean, College Director or equivalent		
<b>Review Date</b>		November 2019		
<b>Approved by</b>		<b>Endorsed by:</b>		
<b>Corporate Board</b>		<b>Academic Board</b>		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Authored by</b>	<b>Brief Description of the changes</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>
1.0	Quality & Standards Group	Unpacking of one document into existing document.	01.01.2014	01.01.2014
1.1	Academic Quality and Governance Team	Copyright section removed as it will be covered in a separate 'Copyright Policy'. Formatting and wording changes to improve coherency and introduced a policy Implementation Officer. This update aligns this policy with other Kaplan academic entities.	25.05.2016	13.06.2016
2.0	Quality, Regulations and Standards Team	Policy re-written to incorporate the proposed Government Model Code for Freedom of Speech but within a Kaplan Australia context.	16.12.2019	01.01.2020