

Academic Freedom Policy

Title: Academic Freedom Policy
Author: Academic Dean
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Mary Andrews College recognises the importance of its commitment to the principle of academic freedom for its faculty and students. This policy outlines the college's principles of academic freedom and reflects the requirements for the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes.

Background and Values:

Mary Andrews College is a Christian college and a ministry of Anglican Deaconess Ministries (ADM). The college affirms the Christian faith, as expressed in the Anglican Deaconess Ministries' statement of faith and as found in the historic creeds (Nicene, Athanasian and Apostles'); and upholds the authority of the Old and New Testaments as being the inspired word of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.

As an affiliate of the Australian College of Theology, Mary Andrews College adheres to the values of the ACT which state that 'the College is committed to open independent intellectual inquiry by faculty and students in line with its (the ACT's) educational philosophy [...] in academic and pastoral theology.'¹

Within the teaching and learning environment of Mary Andrews College, it is expected that:

Faculty:

- Are expected to accept and work within the boundaries of ADM's statement of faith.
- Are encouraged to pursue God's truth within their classroom disciplines and in research and writing.
- Are free to engage in scholarly, intellectual enquiry and critical thinking in an academic capacity, as shaped by a Christian worldview.
- Will critically evaluate their own work and research.
- Will model 'non-threatening civil discourse [in the classroom] which respects the search for truth in the individual student and encourages others to similarly respect that process in their fellow student.'²
- Welcome students of all faiths and none into the classroom community.

¹ Australian College of Theology, 'The Mission, Objectives, Values and Vision of the Australian College of Theology', Australian College of Theology 2014 Undergraduate Handbook, p5-6.

²The Australian College of Theology 'Academic Freedom in a Theological Context: Occasional Paper No.4 by Professor Neil Ormerod, July 2008. Cited 16 December 2015 on:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=68c86f50-6fbd-4de7-b2b5-d22541ca9339>

- Will not make or allow discriminatory or offensive comments about another person's spirituality or faith commitment, but encourage fair criticism of other theological perspectives.
- Are responsible for encouraging, facilitating and supporting positive, analytical discourse and awareness amongst students.
- Will not assess students on the basis of their own personal faith/beliefs but solely on the grounds of academic merit and required standards.

Students:

- Will acknowledge and respect Mary Andrews College's Christian worldview and its teaching within an evangelical framework of the Christian faith.
- Are expected to subject own beliefs to reasoned critique.
- Will not make discriminatory or offensive comments about another person's spirituality or faith commitment.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If there is any reason to believe that this policy has been breached, procedures as outlined in the Mary Andrews College Grievance Policy should be followed.

Sources:

In the formation of this document, the following sources were used for ideas and phrasing:

Statements/Policies of Academic Freedom:

Morling College Academic Freedom Policy, Version 2, February 2014. Cited 16 December 2015 on

http://www.morlingcollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2014_Academic_Freedom_Policy.pdf

NSW Higher Education Free Intellectual Inquiry Policy – TAFE NSW. Cited 16 December 2016 on:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/students/high_edu/intell_inq/

Vose College Statement of Academic Freedom, Version 100, 20/03/2012. Cited 16 December 2015 on

<http://www.vose.wa.edu.au/upload/documents/college/statement-of-academic-freedom-1.00.pdf?1442798752>

Other Sources:

The Australian College of Theology 'Academic Freedom in a Theological Context: Occasional Paper No.4 by Professor Neil Ormerod, July 2008. Cited 16 December 2015 on:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=68c86f50-6fbd-4de7-b2b5-d22541ca9339>

Australian College of Theology, 'The Mission, Objectives, Values and Vision of the Australian College of Theology', Australian College of Theology 2014 Undergraduate Handbook.