



Policy Name: Academic Freedom
Approving Authority: Academic Council

Policy # AA-005
Approval Date: 1/16/2025
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Statement

The Academic Freedom Policy of Yorkville University ("Yorkville" or the "University") supports and encourages faculty, staff, researchers, and students to engage in scholarly activity in pursuit of knowledge, guided by principles of free inquiry, open dialogue, and the unyielding commitment to the exploration of ideas. The Academic Council will review this policy every five (5) years.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the University's commitment to protect the intellectual independence of faculty, staff, researchers, and students to pursue knowledge and express ideas without interference from authorities within the University.

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all members of the University in their University-related work and/or use of University resources. The Vice President of Academics has oversight of this policy.

Definitions

Members: All faculty, staff, researchers, and students of the University.

Scholarly Misconduct: Unethical or dishonest behavior within the academic and scholarly community, which can compromise the integrity of research and professional activities.

Scholarly Activity: A range of intellectual academic pursuits typically conducted by scholars, researchers, academics, and students within an educational institution.

Serious Scholarly Misconduct: Egregious violations of ethical standards and principles in the academic and research community.

Complainant: An individual who makes a formal accusation or brings a grievance to the attention of an authority or a legal body, typically seeking redress or a solution.

Respondent: An individual or entity that responds to a complaint, accusation, or legal claim, usually in a formal or legal context.

Policy

As an institution of higher learning, Yorkville is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity and academic freedom. Faculty members, staff, and students are encouraged to seek and disseminate knowledge, truth, and understanding; foster independent thinking and expression; and engage in scholarship of

discovery,

integration, application, engagement, and/or pedagogy.

Academic freedom includes:

- The right of faculty members to teach and discuss all aspects of their subject with their students.
- The right of students to question all aspects of the subjects they are learning.
- The right of faculty members, staff, and students to carry out research and disseminate and publish the results; to produce and perform creative works; to engage in service to the institution and the community; to acquire, preserve, and provide access to documentary material in all formats; and to participate in professional and representative academic bodies.
- The right of faculty members, staff, and students to speak and write as citizens without censorship from the University.

As noted in [Universities Canada Statement on Academic Freedom](#), academic freedom must be based on reasoned discourse informed by evidence. It is “constrained by the professional standards of the relevant discipline and the responsibility of the institution to organize its academic mission.” The latter constraint “includes the institution’s responsibility to select and appoint faculty and staff, to admit and discipline students, to establish and control curriculum, to make organizational arrangements for the conduct of academic work, to certify completion of a program, and to grant degrees.”

Academic freedom requires that faculty members, staff, and students play a role in the governance of the institution, with faculty members assuming a predominant role in determining curriculum, assessment standards, and other academic matters.

Academic freedom protects the intellectual independence, not only of faculty members and researchers, but also of students who may pursue knowledge and express ideas without interference from authorities within the institution. Students should have the freedom to critically engage with and respectfully question the data or views presented in any course of study, while reserving judgment on matters of opinion, provided this is done in a manner that is respectful and does not cause harm to any members of the University community, including, but not limited to, students, faculty, staff, visitors, partner organizations, and, where applicable, patients.

Yorkville University supports a respectful environment based on these principles of academic freedom and intellectual honesty.

Academic freedom violations are considered a form of academic misconduct. Refer to the Student Corrective Action Policy (AA-004) for the University’s process for allegations, review, inquiry, and appeals process of misconduct regarding students. Refer to the Employee Corrective Action (HR-018) policy for the University’s process for reviewing misconduct regarding employees.

Related Policies and Documents

AA-002 Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy
AA-004 Student Corrective Action Policy
HR-002 Employee Code of Conduct
HR-018 Employee Corrective Action Policy
RE-001 Ethical Research Policy
RE-003 Intellectual Property Ownership and Use Policy