

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 69 – ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY**

### **ARDEN UNIVERSITY**

#### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY**

##### **1. Context**

This policy sets out Arden University's approach to academic freedom, as an important value central to its status as a place of learning. This policy applies to all staff and students of the university, including contracted lecturers, regardless of their location within the UK or internationally and whether they are communicating verbally or online.

##### **2. Definition of Academic Freedom**

Academic freedom is the freedom for staff and students, acting within the law of England and Wales, to question and test accepted ideas and theories, to advance new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without fear of legal or disciplinary action.

##### **3. Key Principles**

The University is a teaching and learning institution in which scholarly activity is supported to ensure that the appropriate level of academic standards is maintained and enhanced. Within and consistent with the University's strategies, policies and terms and conditions of employment and/or enrolment, the University supports and protects:

- Freedom in teaching and discussion;
- Freedom in publishing and carrying out research;
- Freedom of expression;
- Freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies, including University recognised trade unions.

##### **4. Responsibilities of Staff and Students**

Academic freedom is qualified to the extent that it must co-exist with the University's other values, strategies, policies and terms and conditions. In the exercise of academic freedom, the University expects its staff and students to be mindful of the following responsibilities:

- i. To keep an open mind at all times;
- ii. To ensure academic debate is conducted through rational enquiry and supported by demonstrable evidence;
- iii. To comply with the University's Ethics Policy and related procedures when conducting research;
- iv. To recognise and articulate clearly where personal belief impinges upon academic debate and judgement;

- v. To express dissent in a way that is not injurious to others or to the reputation of the University or disruptive to teaching and discussion;
- vi. To refrain from all forms of discrimination whether on grounds of gender, racial background, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief, marital status, caring responsibilities or any other personal characteristics;
- vii. To be sensitive to the personal beliefs, cultural attitudes and opinions of others, and not to cause unnecessary distress in the expression of contrary ideas and opinions;
- viii. Not to attempt to impose a set of beliefs on others;
- ix. Not to encourage or incite extremist views where these are deemed likely to draw people into terrorism;
- x. To listen and take account of views and arguments which challenge those personally or institutionally held;
- xi. To ensure that professional or academic activities do not conflict with the law or with the University's policies and procedures;
- xii. To obtain approval from the Research Committee to publish academic research in the University's name;
- xiii. If communicating in public, staff and students should indicate clearly that they are not communicating on behalf of the University, unless expressly authorised to do so.

Staff or students who infringe these responsibilities, including by bringing the University into disrepute, may be subject to the University's disciplinary procedures or other policies and procedures as appropriate.

## **5. Reporting any breach of this Code of Practice**

Staff breaches of this code of conduct should be reported to Arden University's Nominated General Counsel in the same way as violations of the Code of Business Conduct. Directors, officers, contractors and employees may choose to report a suspected breach anonymously through Arden University's reporting service, details of which are provided in the Code of Business Conduct and duplicated below.

Alona Ligay  
Group General Counsel  
Global University Systems  
40 Tower Hill  
Sceptre Court  
London  
EC3N 4DX

0203 4354450

When sending a report of a suspected breach anonymously, the sender should provide as much detail as possible regarding the breach or suspected breach so that an investigation can be completed. All reports of breaches or suspected breaches will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with Arden University's need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Neither Arden University nor any director, officer, contractor or employee of Arden University will engage in any form of retaliation against any director, officer, contractor or employee because he or she has reported a suspected breach in good faith. Any director, officer, contractor or employee who engages in any form of retaliation against someone who has reported a breach or suspected breach in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including (if relevant) termination of employment.

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is the responsibility of the Academic Board to ensure that this policy is implemented effectively, as part of its oversight of the maintenance of appropriate academic quality and standards.

The Academic Board will review this policy annually in conjunction with its Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.