

## POSITION STATEMENT

# ACADEMIC FREEDOM

*This position is applicable to all members of the CQU community, especially academic staff and students.*

This position statement is consistent with the principles of the Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers. Freedom of speech, including academic freedom, is of such value that it will not be restricted or its exercise unnecessarily burdened.

Academic Board of CQUniversity supports the ideal of academic freedom. Academic freedom differs to Freedom of Speech in that it is informed by scholarship. That is, it is the difference between stating a personal opinion and stating an opinion formed by intellectual inquiry. Both can still offend people, though intellectual inquiry gives reasons for that opinion and for those wishing to argue against it.

This ideal is linked to the responsibilities of employees and students to support the role of CQUniversity as a place of independent learning and thought, where ideas may be put forward and opinion expressed freely; and as an institution which must be accountable for its expenditure of public money, and which upholds the values of truth, accuracy, honesty, civility and courage.

### **Academic Board supports:**

- » critical and open inquiry
- » the expression of unpopular or controversial views, where such views have been informed by scholarship
- » open decision-making processes within the University via appropriate, diverse representation on University committees, and
- » participation in professional and representative bodies, including trade unions, without fear of harassment or intimidation.

**Academic Board does not support** any pursuit of academic freedom that results in harassment, bullying, vilification or intimidation of others.



## ACADEMIC FREEDOM DEFINITION

Academic freedom is the freedom to put forward an opinion informed by scholarship and intellectual inquiry without interference or penalty. Academic freedom allows for independent learning, teaching and research whilst upholding the values of truth, accuracy, honesty, rigour, civility and courage.

## ACADEMIC BOARD

Academic Board is the University's senior academic governance body and the primary forum for discussing and resolving all matters relating to and affecting the University's education, training and research activities.

## OBJECTIVES

To provide a collective position statement on topics that have potential for genuine controversy or uncertainty, and are relevant, meaningful, credible, and clear, are in the interests of achieving CQUniversity's Strategic Plan and aligned to the University's values.

Approved: 29/05/2019

Amended: 25/09/2019, 25/09/2020, 31/03/2021