



The Islamic College Statement on Academic Freedom



September 2024

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Table of Contents

1.01	The Islamic College statement on academic freedom	3
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1.01 The Islamic College statement on academic freedom

1. One of the purposes of post-compulsory education is to serve the public interest through extending knowledge and understanding and fostering critical thinking and expression in staff and students, and then in society more widely. As such The Islamic College believes that academic freedom is essential to the achieving of these ends.
2. Academic freedom includes the right(s) to:
 - freedom in teaching and discussion;
 - freedom in carrying out research without commercial or political interference;
 - freedom to disseminate and publish one's research findings;
 - freedom from institutional censorship, including the right to express one's opinion publicly about the institution or the education system in which one works; and
 - freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies, including trade unions.
3. Academic freedom is also bound up with broader civil liberties and human rights. Higher education staff and students have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression, association and assembly. They must not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through free expression of opinion on matters of public interest. We recognize that this may touch upon sensitive or controversial issues.
4. Academic freedom also comes with the responsibility to respect the democratic rights and freedoms of others. In particular, The Islamic College expects all its members shall refrain from all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or other status or personal characteristics.
5. Academic freedom requires the development of open, democratic and collegial forms of institutional governance, including access to proper whistleblowing procedures. The Islamic College believes that academic staff must play the pre- eminent role in determining the curriculum, assessment standards and research priorities. Academic freedom means that academic staff and students should also have the right to elect representatives to related academic bodies (Academic Boards, Student Voice Groups, etc) within the college, and the opportunity to be heard by the Board of Trustees. Collegial decision-making should encompass decisions regarding curricula, research, administration, outreach and community work, the allocation of resources and other related activities.

6. Academic staff must be free to criticize and publish without fear for their jobs. Academic freedom, therefore, is dependent upon proper employment conditions for higher education staff. Security of employment in the profession constitutes one of the major procedural safeguards of academic freedom and against arbitrary decisions by managements and Trustees.
7. This statement is placed/announced on the College's website, display boards and subsequent events like the Induction Week and Students Safeguarding Week.
8. Moreover, this will be reflected and referred in college formal documents like Handbooks, Policies and employment contracts.
9. The Islamic College requires the heads of the departments to ensure that this statement is fully communicated and implemented for our new Equivalent Programmes of study.