

Policy Title: Academic Freedom Policy
Policy Approver: Board of Governors and Senate
Policy Holder: Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic
Executive Lead: Provost and Vice-President Academic
Category: Academic
Original Date: June 2023
Last Revised: n/a
Next Review: as determined by Senate

Policy Statement

Yukon University reaffirms the principle of academic freedom as it is enjoyed by members of the University and the obligations of the University to protect those rights.

Approval Statement

With the approval of the Board of Governors and Senate, this policy is hereby deemed in effect the 9th day of June, 2023.



June 16, 2023

David Morrison
Chair, Board of Governors
Yukon University

Date



June 16, 2023

Lesley Brown
Co-Chair, Senate

Date



June 16, 2023

Victoria Castillo
Co-Chair, Senate

Date

Version: June 2023 Revised: Jan 2025 (code change from AC 2.0 to F 2.0)
Original Date: June 2023 Revised:
Next Review: as determined by Senate Revised:
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to affirm the Yukon University's commitment to academic freedom with its attendant rights and responsibilities.

2. Yukon University Statement on Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is fundamental to the mandate of Yukon University ("University"). Its purpose is to pursue truth, educate students, and advance and communicate knowledge. Academic freedom is a core value of Yukon University.

Academic freedom protects the right of faculty to teach and students to learn. It is critical to advancing knowledge through research and scholarship. Academic freedom promotes the open exchange of ideas, which is an essential function of Yukon University.

Academic freedom allows faculty to take intellectual risks and explore challenging and controversial topics in their teaching, research, and scholarship. The free and open pursuit of truth can result in different judgements with respect to that truth.

Academic freedom is available to the faculty of the University and must be guided by the principles of evidence and truth. It must be based on reasoned discourse, rigorous and extensive research, and scholarship, as guided by peer review and constrained by the professional standards of the faculty member's disciplines.

The commitments, rights and responsibilities of faculty members include three major inter-related roles:

- To participate in the search for truth and to openly communicate the results of this search;
- To develop scholarship and research in specific disciplines, within which students participate in the process of rational enquiry; and
- To ground their teaching, research, and scholarship in the best available evidence.

Faculty members have the right to exercise their academic freedom. This means they have the freedom to teach; to design and develop curriculum and pedagogy; to engage in scholarly

activity including but not limited to research and creative work; and to publish or otherwise present the products of that scholarly activity.

Faculty must be committed to the highest ethical standards in their teaching and research. They must be free to examine data, question assumptions and be guided by evidence. Faculty have an equal responsibility to submit their knowledge and claims to rigorous and public review by peers who are experts in the subject matter under consideration and to ground their arguments in the best available evidence. They must adhere to the professional standards of the faculty member's discipline. The insistence on professional standards speaks to the rigour of the enquiry and not to its outcome.

Academic freedom must be exercised in a reasonable and responsible manner. It does not require neutrality; rather it carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the Yukon University Code of Ethics and the scholarly obligation to base research, teaching, publication, and other forms of scholarly expression on an honest search for knowledge and rigorous enquiry.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors and Senate of the University to protect and promote academic freedom and to communicate the values of academic freedom to internal and external stakeholders.

Faculty members and university leaders have a responsibility to ensure that students' human rights are respected and that students are encouraged to pursue their education according to the principles of academic freedom.

Faculty members and university leaders share the responsibility of ensuring that pressures from funding and other types of partnerships do not unduly influence the intellectual work of the university.

Yukon University includes, respects and honours Yukon First Nations' knowledge, worldviews, cultural and traditional practices in its educational programming and scholarly activities. Faculty members maintain their academic freedom to teach, design and develop curriculum

and pedagogy, and undertake research and scholarship as they deem most appropriate, while honouring and supporting Yukon First Nations.

3. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as determined by the Senate and as needed following the Indigenization Strategy.