

TYPE: Academic
TITLE: Academic Freedom
NO.: ACAD-123
RESPONSIBILITY: Executive Vice-President, Academic
APPROVED BY: Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 2022
REVISED DATE(S):
REVIEW DATE: November 2025

1. Introduction

Durham College (DC) values and protects academic freedom and is committed to fostering a teaching and learning environment that supports its principles. [Academic freedom](#), including freedom of inquiry, scholarly activities, the expression of alternate opinions and the publication of new knowledge is fundamental to the realization and preservation of the College's commitment to academic excellence.

2. Purpose

This policy articulates the rights and responsibilities that protect academic freedom for staff, faculty and students in the pursuit of scholarly activities.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. DC values academic freedom and recognizes the role it plays in providing quality education and scholarship. All members of the College community shall support and protect the fundamental principle of academic freedom.
- 4.2. In keeping with academic freedom, faculty, staff and students engaged in scholarly activities are free to act, write and speak in their capacity as public citizens provided that they indicate they are doing so as individuals and not acting as representatives of the College.
- 4.3. Faculty, staff and students engaged in scholarly activities have a duty to respect the rights of others, to exercise academic freedom in a responsible manner, and to adhere to the academic objectives of the College. Academic freedom shall be used in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research and teaching on an honest search for knowledge.
- 4.4. In exercising academic freedom, faculty, staff and students engaged in scholarly activities shall adhere to applicable laws, institutional policies, ministry directives, requirements of accrediting bodies, and program and curriculum requirements.

- 4.5. External partnerships and/or funding relationships shall not unduly influence or infringe upon the exercise of academic freedom at DC.
- 4.6. This policy does not address concerns in instances where a more appropriate college policy or procedure, grievance or appeal process exists, including but not limited to: discrimination and harassment; breaches of [academic integrity](#); [sexual violence](#); grade appeals; [employee](#) conduct; and/or student conduct.

5. Procedure

This section is not applicable.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of the Executive Vice-President, Academic to ensure this policy is fully implemented.
- 6.2. It is the responsibility of the college community to value, protect and promote academic freedom.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of academic administrators to ensure that decisions related to academic freedom are made collaboratively with input from relevant stakeholders.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

8. Non-compliance implications

Failure to comply with this policy may result in damage to internal and external relationships, financial loss, property damage, reputational harm, legal action and/or a diminished ability to achieve the mission of Durham College.

9. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Academic Employees Collective Agreement
- Ontario Human Rights Code