



## Teaching and Learning

### Academic Freedom Policy

#### Policy Purpose

The policy outlines a framework for the protection of academic freedom as an integral part of maintaining the position of Mayfield Education as a world-class higher education institution. Free intellectual inquiry and expression are fundamental to Mayfield Education's approach to all academic activities.

This policy outlines the rights granted under the principle of academic freedom, as well as discusses the limitations of these rights.

#### Background

Mayfield Education is completely committed to supporting the practice of free and independent intellectual inquiry. This open, unbiased, critical approach to scholarship will ensure that students' learning experiences are of the highest calibre. If the right to academic freedom is not protected, Mayfield Education's capacity to provide an environment that challenges and stimulates both students and staff will be compromised.

The principle of academic freedom protects the reputation of Mayfield Education by encouraging intellectual freedom, as well as freedom of expression and the capacity of academic staff to engage in research without fear of censure. By enshrining this right, Mayfield Education ensures that students are provided with a high-quality education and that these students can, in turn, enjoy the freedom of academic expression – a freedom that is essential to the spirit of robust debate and intellectual growth.

#### Policy Scope

This policy applies to all academic employees at Mayfield Education, as well as all students, irrespective of their status or year of learning. The policy covers academic freedom in terms of research and the publication of opinions, as well as speech in academic matters related to the activities of Mayfield Education. It does not negate any relevant statutes and laws governing freedom of speech and expression. Nor does it abrogate the responsibility of individuals to act in a responsible manner, consistent with the laws of the country.

#### Definitions and Terms

**Academic Freedom:** The freedom of staff members and students to engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship or repercussion.

**Types of expression relating to this policy:** Expression and/or intellectual debate shall be protected irrespective of the manner in which it is broadcast. This freedom applies to all expression, in print form, electronic form, or speech.

#### Policy Principles

This policy seeks to protect the rights of students and academic staff members to engage in intellectual debate in written or verbal form. The policy seeks to avert the threat of censorship and its effects on vigorous intellectual debate.

The right to academic freedom does not encompass discussions or statements that cause harm, including through impairment of the legal rights of third parties. It does not include dishonest statements or, where it applies to academic staff, to those that are demonstrably outside of the staff member's field of academic expertise.

The Institute shall make every effort to minimise the influence of corporate bodies on research, including any efforts to stop the publication of findings and/or opinions.

Academic staff will not face discrimination as a result of undertaking research in the pursuit of growing the academic body of knowledge, even when the subject matter of such research is controversial.

## Procedures

### Overview

Academic staff at Mayfield Education will not face penalties or discrimination for undertaking or contributing to research that enhances an academic body of knowledge, even if the particular research topic is controversial. Additionally, academic staff should not be subject to censorship and should be permitted to publish all research based on rigorous academic research. Furthermore, academic staff should be able to conduct research without commercial or political obstruction. To this end, academic governance at Mayfield Education is both formally and functionally separate from corporate governance and any business interests. (See Academic Governance Policy for more information.)

An atmosphere of academic freedom creates a responsibility for staff to behave with integrity in their development of academic knowledge. They must act ethically at all times and must treat people, animals, the environment, and the culture respectfully. Additionally, academic staff are required to act in accordance with all internal and external legislation and laws pertinent to them. Any academic staff member who breaches the law or ethical standards in their academic activities may face disciplinary procedures.

### Complaints and breach of policy

A student or staff member who feels that the Academic Freedom Policy has been breached may request a review.

Staff members who feel that a violation of their academic freedom has taken place should register a complaint with the Education Manager/CEO.

Prior to seeking a review, students should first try to resolve the issue with the relevant staff member. In some instances, communication between the staff member and the student may resolve the issue without any formal involvement from Mayfield Education. If the issue cannot be resolved, a review should be submitted to the Education Manager. If a staff member is repeatedly found to be in violation of this policy, they may be subject to an official review.

### Communication to Media

Freedom of expression and speech flows through all staff and student media interactions. However, Mayfield Education hopes that all staff and students will act in a manner that represents the values, ethics and goals of Mayfield Education. Furthermore, Mayfield Education requests that staff members speaking, writing or acting on behalf of the Institute conduct themselves with respect for Mayfield Education's values.

## Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed bi-annually, if necessary, prior to the beginning of the academic year, or earlier if issues arise that call for a revision of the policy.