

Policy 8150 Academic Freedom

A. PURPOSE

This policy fulfills the following purpose(s):

Selkirk College (the “College”) is responsible to nurture and maintain a culture of academic freedom as outlined in this policy. The privilege of academic freedom is extended in the context of academic integrity and responsibility in the conduct of research, inquiry and other scholastic pursuits.

B. SCOPE / LIMITS

This policy applies to all members of the college academic community.

C. PRINCIPLES

Freedom of expression and academic freedom are subject to the following constraints and responsibilities:

1. Academic Freedom carries with it the responsibility to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to carry out academic activities on the basis of an honest search for knowledge, and in accordance with the college’s policies, procedures and ethical guidelines.
2. Members of the college academic community who engage in academic activities have an obligation to use their freedom of expression and academic freedom in a responsible manner. This means that members of the academic community have the right to criticize and question other views expressed, but cannot obstruct or interfere with other members’ freedom of expression or academic freedom. Members of the academic community also cannot engage in any action that demeans the freedom or dignity of other members of the academic community.
3. Academic Freedom does not supersede legislation or College policies and plans related to the protections afforded to citizens that deal with human rights, for example Bill 41 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, free speech, discrimination, hate speech, violence, employee codes of conduct, and the right of all employees to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly and association, and the right to liberty and security of the person.
4. Academic Freedom entails the need to not infringe, appropriate, or discredit Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge accessed and used within academic activities requires adherence to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 31.1, which states: “Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their Intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.”

Policies and Procedures

D. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Academic Activities	Academic Activities are teaching, program and course development, program and course delivery, learning, scholarly activity and applied research, academic administration and governance, and academic advising.
Academic Community	Academic Community includes all College employees, students, and members of the extended College community who are engaged in academic activities. This may include external visitors, speakers or scholars operating under the auspices of the College.
Academic Freedom	Academic Freedom is the freedom to teach and conduct research in an academic environment. Academic Freedom is fundamental to the mandate of academic institutions to seek truth, educate students and disseminate knowledge and understanding. Unlike the broader concept of freedom of speech, academic freedom must be based on institutional integrity, rigorous standards for enquiry and institutional autonomy, which allows post-secondary institutions to set their research and educational priorities.
Academic Integrity	Academic Integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, Courage. ¹ These values can also include Indigenous teachings of humility.
Applied Research	Applied research is a systematic investigation and discovery of knowledge that results in an immediate and identifiable impact.
Freedom of Expression	Freedom of Expression is the right to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn.
Free Speech	Free Speech is the right to hold opinions without interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media. The exercise of this right carries special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions when necessary for respect of the rights or reputation of others or for the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals. ²
Hate Speech	Hate Speech is public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. This usually includes communications of animosity or disparagement of an individual or a group on account of a group characteristic such as race, colour, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. ³

Policies and Procedures

Indigenous Knowledge	The knowledge held by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples is specific to place, transmitted orally, and rooted in the experience of ancestral experiences and teachings. It is determined by an Indigenous community’s land, environment, region, culture and language. Indigenous knowledge is usually described by Indigenous peoples as holistic, involving body, mind, feelings and spirit. Knowledge may be expressed in symbols, arts, ceremonial and everyday practices, narratives and, especially, in relationships. Indigenous knowledge is held collectively by all members of a community, although some members may have particular responsibility for its transmission and stewardship. Scholars and researchers cite where and when Indigenous knowledge comes from, and that the knowledge is held by the community, not the researcher. It includes preserved knowledge created by, and received from, past generations and innovations and new knowledge transmitted to subsequent generations. In international or scholarly discourse, the terms “traditional knowledge” and “Indigenous knowledge” are sometimes used interchangeably. ⁴
Scholarly Activity	Scholarly Activity in the college context is any activity that involves the intentional creation, integration and/or dissemination of knowledge with a view to informing professional practice, contributing to the state-of-practice within a field and/or impacting the broader external environment. Applied research and scholarship of teaching and learning are forms of scholarly activity at the college.

¹ *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, The Centre for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999. Retrieved June 10, 2020: <https://www.academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fundamental-Values-2014.pdf>

² Article 19, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

³ Per Canada’s *Criminal Code* and British Columbia’s *Human Rights Code*

⁴ Definition adapted from the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2018) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.

E. REFERENCES

Selkirk College wishes to acknowledge Douglas College, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Canadian Association of University Teachers, whose Academic Freedom policies or policy statement informed the creation of this policy.

F. RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES

1. 9100 Contract and Other Self-Funding Activities
2. 8701 Care and Use of Animals in Research and Teaching
3. 8618 Cheating and Plagiarism
4. 6000 Employee Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest
5. 6520 Employee Evaluation
6. 6010 Human Rights, Harassment, and Discrimination
7. 8710 Integrity in Research
8. 2500 Media Relations
9. 2501 Publications and Promotional Materials
10. 8700 Research Involving Human Participants
11. 6005 Responsible Use of College email
12. 6030 Sexual Violence prevention and Response
13. 8615 Standards of Academic progress
14. 3400 Student Code of Conduct
15. 6550 Protection of Privacy

Responsibility, Recommendation and Approval Dates

Executive Responsibility: Vice President, Education

Administrative Responsibility: Deans

Recommended by Policy Review Committee: 2021-10-20

Recommended/Approved by Education Council: N/A

Approved by President: February 14, 2022

Linkage to Board Policy: EL10 Respect and Fairness in the Workplace, EL30 Values and Commitments, EL90 Employee Code of Conduct