

Academic Freedom and Ethical Conduct Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines academic freedom and ethical conduct at the Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (APAC).

This policy applies to all members of the APAC's higher education community.

2. Objectives

APAC is committed to promoting academic freedom as an integral right for all staff and students. The creation and dissemination of new knowledge underpins scholarship and is highly valued at APAC.

Staff and students will have the right to:

- question ideas and knowledge, even if they are controversial;
- participate in scholarly debate and contribute new ideas;
- engage in intellectual inquiry, scholarly activities and research.

Staff and students are expected to behave in an ethical and professional manner at all times.

3. Implementation

The Academic Board is responsible for the implementation of this policy and uphold the rights of staff and students to pursue new ideas and knowledge, within the law, in the pursuit of teaching, learning, research, scholarship and any other academic activities.

4. Academic Freedom and Intellectual Inquiry

4.1. Staff Conduct

Staff should ensure conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, are declared to ensure that their judgements are not inappropriately influenced.

Staff are responsible for:

- promoting an open teaching and learning environment;
- encouraging diversity of opinion and debate;
- encouraging critical and independent thought.

Staff are expected to:

- act with honesty and integrity in academic work, for teaching and research;
- promote trust by presenting clear guidelines and procedures for all academic work;

- exercise fairness and equity by applying clear expectations and standards for all academic work;
- respect and value the academic freedom of other staff and students to hold diverse opinions and ideas;
- sustain the integrity of teaching, learning and research by taking action when academic integrity is compromised.

4.2. Student Conduct

Students are expected to:

- act with integrity, dignity and honesty at all times;
- act responsibly and be responsible for their decisions, including their impact on others;
- explore independence of thought in an open and respectful manner;
- be fair and equitable;
- socially aware and act without discrimination;
- be respectful of others' opinions and ideas.

4.3. Ethical Conduct

Students and staff are expected to engage in teaching and learning in an ethical manner and be accountable for their conduct.

Staff are to promote ethical conduct and lead by example. Therefore, it is critical that staff:

- maintain the highest ethical standards;
- respect all staff, students, stakeholders and members of the community;
- conduct themselves with impartiality and objectivity;
- act upon and appropriately manage perceived or actual conflicts of interest;
- do not disclose confidential information.

Students are expected to:

- maintain high ethical standards;
- respect all staff, students, stakeholders and members of the community;
- not disclose confidential information.

5. Procedure

Students and staff are expected to be aware of this policy and use it as a guide to pursue academic freedom and to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. Relevant policies outline further procedures for handling issues relating to academic integrity, grievances or misconduct.

6. Definitions

- **Academic Integrity:** Demonstrating the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in all academic endeavours, including preparing and presenting work for assessment as part of coursework or research.
- **Ethics:** The guiding values, principles and standards that enable people to determine how things should be done and how they should act. Ethics refers to the judgements that people make and the process that determines those judgements. It is the process by which people make value-based decisions which ultimately guides their actions and behaviours.
- **Ethical Scholarship:** Entails the pursuit of scholarly enquiry marked by honesty and integrity, which is reflected both in individual and group approaches to study, assessment, and other scholarly activities for both students and staff.

7. Related Documents

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Grievance Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

8. Review

Three years from commencement.

9. Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and the APAC's higher education community via the website and other publications.

Version Control and Document Owner

Policy Category	Academic	Approval Date	22 January 2023	
Document Owner	Director of Higher Education	Approval Authority	Chief Executive Officer	
Audience	Staff	Review Date	January 2026	
Revision History				
Version	Author	Change Summary	Date Approved	Date Effective
1.0	APAC	New document.	18 December 2015	
2.0	APAC		14 July 2020	
3.0	DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd	Minor editorial changes.	22 January 2023	