



Thammasat University Notification
on
Policy on Academic Freedom

Definition

Academic Freedom is the freedom and duty of professionally qualified persons to inquire or investigate, to discuss, publish or teach the truth as they see it in line with the tools of their discipline, subject to no religious or political control or authority, except the control of standards of professional ethics or the authority of the rational methods by which truths and conclusions are established in the disciplines involved. The protection of academic freedom and the requirements of academic responsibility apply not only to the full-time faculty but also to other academic activities.

Philosophy Statement

Thammasat University supports the Principles on Academic Freedom, both the rights and duties specified herein.

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual faculty or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free speech for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

- a. The faculty is entitled to full freedom to research in the publication of results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

- b. The faculty is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject. The intent of this statement is not to discourage what is controversial." Controversy is at the heart of free academic inquiry. Indeed, there would be no need for an Academic Freedom policy to protect teaching of the uncontroversial. This passage serves to underscore the need for teachers to avoid persistently intruding material that has no relation to their subject and hence cannot be in line with the tools of their discipline.

c. The faculty is a member of a learned profession, and an officer of an educational institution. When they speak or write as a citizen, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As a person of learning and an educational officer, they should remember that the public might judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence an individual should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not an institutional spokesperson.

Other duties correlative with the rights of Academic Freedom include the following.

While the faculty has the duty to design assessments to measure a student's mastery of course content, s/he must recognize and respect the distinction between the student's mastery of course content and the student's freedom of belief. Faculties assess student learning for mastery of course content. Decisions as to course content and quality of scholarship are to be made by reference to the standards of the academic profession, as interpreted and applied by the community of scholars who are qualified by expertise and training to establish such standards. A student's freedom of belief references an individual student's subjective decision to agree or disagree with the curricular content of a particular course within a broader academic discipline. Instructors have a duty to enhance student learning by assessing mastery of course content but have no authority to compel student belief.

Issued on October, 18 2019

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