

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY			
Effective Date	May 14, 2020	Policy Type	Academic
Responsibility	Provost and Vice-President Academic	Cross-Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Human Rights Act • Research Involving Human Subjects Policy • Freedom of Expression Policy • Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy • Intellectual Property and Ownership Policy • ASA/BOG Collective Agreement
Approver	Board of Governors	Appendices	N/A
Review Schedule	Every 5 years		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy will establish guidelines for the use and protection of Academic Freedom for students, staff, and community at Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP).

2. Background

- 2.1. The creation of knowledge depends on a free and open academic environment in which the exploration of a wide range of ideas is encouraged and celebrated.
- 2.2. Academic Staff must be free to teach, conduct research, and participate in public life without fear of unreasonable professional repercussions.
- 2.3. Students must be free to explore and express a wide range of ideas and viewpoints in their coursework, research, and class discussions without fear of unreasonable academic penalty.
- 2.4. When exercising Academic Freedom, Academic Staff and Students have a responsibility to adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic rigour. Academic freedom must be based on institutional integrity, and rigorous standards for enquiry, while allowing institutional autonomy to set research and educational priorities.

3. Policy Objective

- 3.1. Encourage an academic environment where the exploration of ideas can flourish.
- 3.2. Ensure Academic Freedom is exercised ethically and responsibly by NWP staff and students.
- 3.3. Maintain a respectful, safe, and open environment for all members of the NWP community.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy affects NWP Academic Staff and current Students.

5. Definitions

- 5.1. **Academic Freedom** is the freedom of Students and Academic Staff to teach, engage in scholarly activity and participate in public life without being subject to undue interference or reprisals.
- 5.2. **Academic Staff** is an employee covered under the Academic Staff Association Collective Agreement.
- 5.3. **Institution or NWP Support** refers to administrative, funding, or other formalized forms of support for which NWP bears financial responsibility. Support can include, but is not limited to, the use of NWP funds, staff time and expertise, facilities, equipment, materials, technological information, or proprietary know-how.
- 5.4. **Public Life** refers to activities that include political engagement, advocacy work, participation in the media (including participation in media interviews, personal or professional blogs, public information sessions, etc.) as related to one's discipline of inquiry.
- 5.5. **Research** refers to the undertaking intended to extend knowledge through disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.
- 5.6. **Researcher** refers to a NWP Staff or Students who engage in Research as part of their role at the Institution.
- 5.7. **Student** refers to any person registered in an NWP credit course.

6. Guiding Principles

- 6.1. Actions not protected by this policy include;
 - 6.1.1. Any publication or display that is likely to expose a person or a class of persons to hatred or contempt based on the protected grounds outlined in the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#).
 - 6.1.2. Any publication or display that includes potentially defamatory material.
 - 6.1.3. Any publication or display that includes illicit material, except in instances where such material is being used for bona fide teaching or research purposes.
 - 6.1.4. Any intentional or unintentional public divulgement of proprietary or privileged Institution information.
 - 6.1.5. The publication or presentation of scholarly activities that are evidenced to have been conducted in a manner inconsistent with the principles of research ethics, academic rigour, and academic integrity according to NWP protocol.
 - 6.1.5.1. It is the responsibility of all NWP researchers to familiarize themselves with and adhere to principles governing the responsible conduct of research at NWP, including the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and other relevant policies and procedures.
- 6.2. Teaching and Curriculum Development
 - 6.2.1. With the exceptions listed in item 6.1 of this policy, Academic Freedom guarantees the right of Academic Staff to develop curriculum and teach course subjects without fear of undue censure.

- 6.2.2. Academic Staff must develop and teach curriculum within the frameworks of NWP policies, course outlines, and requirements of Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) as well as any other governing bodies to which the Institution is accountable.
- 6.3. Research
 - 6.3.1. With the exceptions listed in item 6.1 of this policy, NWP shall not explicitly or implicitly censor or enact reprisals against Academic Staff or Researchers who publicize the results of Research or other scholarly activity.
 - 6.3.2. With the exceptions listed in item 6.1 of this policy, NWP shall not explicitly or implicitly censor or enact reprisals against Academic Staff or Researchers who, in the course of engagement with public life, as related to their discipline of enquiry, express an unpopular or controversial opinion or otherwise challenge the status quo.
 - 6.3.3. Academic Freedom guarantees the right of Academic Staff to pursue programs of research according to their choice without institutional interference, including the free selection of topic and methodology according to the researcher's interests, strengths, and available resources.
 - 6.3.4. Selective Institution Support of research projects on the basis of the following criteria will not be deemed a breach of Academic Freedom:
 - 6.3.4.1. Alignment with institutional research interests and priorities.
 - 6.3.4.2. Potential to facilitate student engagement.
 - 6.3.4.3. Alignment with the needs, interests, and priorities of NWP's industry and community partners.
 - 6.3.4.4. Alignment with industry, provincial and federal research funding priorities.
 - 6.3.4.5. Availability of Institution facilities, equipment, personnel, and other resources.
- 6.4. Research and Coursework by Students
 - 6.4.1. Academic Freedom guarantees the right of Students to express and engage with ideas that may be unpopular or challenge to the status quo during the course of their studies without fear of academic reprisals.
 - 6.4.1.1. With the exceptions listed in item 6.1 of this policy, protected student activities in this vein include:
 - 6.4.1.1.1. Research and other forms of scholarly work, and the publication or presentation thereof.
 - 6.4.1.1.2. Comments and questions expressed during in-class discussions.
 - 6.4.1.1.3. Results or outcomes of course assignments, papers, quizzes, examinations, and out-of-classroom experiential learning opportunities.
 - 6.4.2. A student who submits work meeting the standards of rigour normally expected at the particular level of study, but is deemed in violation of one or more principles listed in item 6.1 of this policy, may receive academic penalty at the discretion of their instructor. Such penalization shall not be deemed a breach of Academic Freedom.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Board of Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve and formally support this policy.
Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally support this policy. • Promote and protect Academic Freedom for students, staff, and community at NWP.
Provost and Vice-President Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and formally support this policy. • Enforce and uphold this policy for the promotion and protection of Academic Freedom for students, staff, and community at NWP.

8. Exceptions to the Policy

8.1. There are no exceptions to this policy.

9. Inquiries

9.1. Provost and Vice-President Academic

10. Amendments (Revision History)

10.1. Approved by Academic Council 14 May 2020

10.2. Recommended by Academic Council 11 May 2023

10.3. Approved by Board of Governors 01 June 2023