

ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

Policy Section & Number:	Student and Academic Support Services	Effective Date:	July 1, 2025
Policy Owner:	Vice-President Academic & Student Experience	Last Revised:	March 24, 2025
Policy Administrator:	Dean, School of Business, University Studies & Academic Upgrading	Review Scheduled:	Every 4 years
Approver:	Executive Committee Academic Council		

The official controlled version of this document is held with the Legislative Compliance / Policy & Procedure Coordinator.

A. POLICY STATEMENT

Academic Freedom at Keyano College (“the College”) creates an opportunity for the academic community to advance knowledge and learning. Knowledge and learning can be disseminated in several forms, including but not limited to research, teaching, creative works, or scholarly works. While academic freedom allows the academic community to create and share knowledge and teach without censorship, mutual respect should be maintained, and academic freedom should not interfere with or limit individuals within the academic community’s ability to teach or express their ideas. Academic freedom is not to be confused with freedom of speech, as the College regards these as distinct but related items.

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The College promotes academic freedom as without this freedom critical thinking cannot take place and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through research, teaching and creative works cannot be achieved.
- 1.2 Academic freedom requires that the academic community exercise this freedom while fulfilling their academic responsibilities.
- 1.3 The College supports academic freedom and remains responsible for setting strategic priorities, establishing academic and research standards, and ensuring compliance with accreditation and legal requirements.
- 1.4 Faculty shall select course materials, content, and methodology consistent with approved curricula and institutional policies, except where the selected materials will impact the transferability of courses to other post-secondary institutions, professional associations or national and provincial licensing and accrediting bodies.
- 1.5 Academic freedom does not allow for the violation of any Canadian or Alberta laws, which include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Human Rights Act, and other provincial laws.

- 1.6 As no freedom is absolute and no right is unlimited, those who claim the right to academic freedom also accept the attendant responsibility to be open-minded, respectful, ethical, and honest.
- 1.7 The college academic community should inform their audience when the discourse provided under the right to academic freedom may disturb a group or individual who holds an opposing view when foreseeable.
- 1.8 Academic community members associated with the College have the right to act and speak in their capacity as public citizens without institutional censorship or reprisal, subject to the obligations of this policy.
- 1.9 The College academic community is accountable for the quality and integrity of their work. Scholarly claims and activities must undergo rigorous peer review and adhere to institutional policies and national guidelines for research ethics.
- 1.10 Individuals within the College academic community who participate in applied research may exercise their academic freedom while pursuing the problem as identified by research sponsors and must comply with the terms and conditions of the contract or grant.

2. ACADEMIC FREEDOM TRANSGRESSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- 2.1 Should any violations of academic freedom take place, the College will hold accountable the academic community member to the laws, legislation, and the College's established policies and procedures.
- 2.2 Academic freedom may be limited by legal requirements, institutional policies, professional and ethical standards, and the responsibility to respect confidentiality, privacy, and safety. Restrictions may also apply when activities conflict with accreditation standards, external agreements or when speech constitutes harassment, discrimination, misinformation, or harm. These boundaries ensure that academic freedom is exercised responsibly and within the scope of one's professional expertise.
- 2.3 Faculty shall have the right to appeal any limitations placed on academic freedom through a College review process, with representation from the faculty association.

B. DEFINITIONS

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| (1) | Academic community: | means faculty, students, staff and those associated with Keyano College who exercise their right to academic freedom. |
| (2) | Academic freedom: | means the academic community has the right to engage in independent thought, research, teaching, and expression without censorship or undue restriction. |

- (3) **Academic responsibility:** means that the academic community is responsible for exercising its academic freedom, understanding it is subject to legal, institutional, and disciplinary constraints, and ensuring that it is exercised responsibly and in alignment with the institution's mission and policies.
- (4) **Expression:** means communication of any idea, opinion, concept, data or other view.
- (5) **Freedom of speech:** means the free expression of ideas or perspectives through a variety of media including text, performance, images, or speech, either virtually or physically, by individuals or groups. Freedom of Speech does not include expression that violates provincial or federal laws, falsely defames an individual, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment or unjustifiable invades substantial privacy and confidentiality of interests.
- (6) **Public citizen:** means when a member of the College academic community provides their view but confirms that it is not necessarily the view of the College on a matter of public interest.

C. RELATED POLICIES

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Copyright – Fair Dealing Policy
- Curriculum and Instruction Policy
- Employee Progressive Discipline Policy
- Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Student Complaint Policy
- Student Rights Policy

D. RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Access to Information Act*
- *Criminal Code of Canada*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Post-Secondary Learning Act*

E. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Integrity Procedure
- Copyright and Fair Dealing Procedure
- CUPE Collective Agreement

- Employee Progressive Discipline Procedure
- Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Procedure
- KCFA Collective Agreement
- Student Complaint Procedure

F. REVISION HISTORY

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Description of Change	Sections	Person who Entered Revision (Position Title)	Person who Authorized Revision (Position Title)
08/27/2018	New Policy		Executive Assistant, Academic	Director, Quality Assurance and Research Services
03/24/2025	Revision of existing policy. Previous 2018 version of Academic Freedom Policy will be rescinded.	All	Dean, School of Business, University Studies & Academic Upgrading	Interim Vice- President Academic & Student Experience