

Classification: Academic Affairs

Approving Authority: President

Responsible Authority: Vice President of Academic Affairs

Implementing Authority: College Deans, Office of Human Resources, Office of Student Affairs

Effective Date: October 2025

Review: October 2026

Academic Freedom Policy & Procedures

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to affirm the University's commitment to academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, and responsible expression as core principles of its mission and educational philosophy.
- 1.2 This policy also outlines the academic and ethical responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students to make sure that these freedoms are exercised with integrity, respect for others, and in line with University policies and applicable laws.
- 1.3 Academic freedom and free expression are crucial to the quest for truth, advancement of knowledge, and fulfillment of AUIB's mission to promote intellectual growth and critical thinking.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The University recognizes the cultural and religious context of Iraq and affirms that academic freedom is to be exercised in a manner respectful of religious values, Iraq social norms, and the constitutional framework of the Republic of Iraq.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all members of the University community faculty, students, administrators, and staff involved in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, publication, or any other academic or co-curricular activities.
- 2.3 The policy extends to all forms of expression spoken, written, artistic, or digital that take place on or off campus or through University-supported platforms, consistent with AUIB's values, mission, and legal obligations.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 Academic Freedom The right of faculty, researchers, and students to investigate, teach, discuss, publish, and share ideas without institutional censorship or undue interference, within legal, professional, and ethical standards.
- 3.2 Free Expression The open and respectful exchange of ideas, opinions, beliefs, or artistic works, provided such expression does not incite violence, discrimination, or harassment.
- 3.3 Academic Responsibility The duty of all members of the academic community to exercise academic freedom with integrity, accuracy, fairness, and respect for others' rights and dignity.
- 3.3 Professional Conduct Behavior that upholds honesty, objectivity, collegiality, and ethical standards, as defined in the *Faculty Academic and Professional Integrity and Misconduct Policy* and the *Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy*

4.0 Policy

- 4.1 AUIB upholds academic freedom as a foundation of scholarly and teaching excellence. Faculty and students are free to do research, engage in critical inquiry, and express their views in academic contexts without fear of retaliation or censorship.
- 4.2 Academic freedom must be exercised responsibly, consistent with professional ethics and the University's commitment to intellectual honesty, inclusivity, and respect.
- 4.3 Faculty are entitled to:



- 4.3.1 Freedom in teaching, research, publication, and creative work, subject to professional standards, institutional policies, and the Iraqi law.
- 4.3.2 Freedom to participate in academic debate and institutional governance.
- 4.3.3 Freedom of free speech, while recognizing their responsibility not to misrepresent the University.
- 4.4 Students are entitled to:
 - 4.4.1 Learn in an environment that promotes open inquiry and respectful debate.
 - 4.4.2 Freedom to express views relevant to their courses, research, without discrimination or coercion.
- 4.5 Expression is protected unless it:
 - 4.5.1 Incites violence or harassment,
 - 4.5.2 Disrupts University operations,
 - 4.5.3 Violates the rights, dignity, or safety of others,
 - 4.5.4 Breaches confidentiality or applicable laws,
 - 4.5.5 Disparages religious beliefs or sacred values,
 - 4.5.6 Contradicts Iraqi law or public morality as defined by national institutions.
- 4.6 The University prohibits retaliation against any individual exercising rights of academic freedom or free expression in good faith.
- 4.7 AUIB acknowledges its responsibility as an institution in Iraq. Academic freedom shall be practiced in ways that strengthen social cohesion, mutual respect, and the dignity of Iraqi culture and identity. The University promotes robust intellectual debate while prohibiting discourse that insults, mocks, or demeans religious or cultural traditions.
- 4.8 Faculty, staff, and students share responsibility to maintain civility, tolerance, and intellectual honesty, consistent with the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, *Faculty Workload Responsibilities Policy*, *Faculty Academic and Professional Integrity and Misconduct Policy*, and relevant student conduct codes.

5.0 Procedures

- 5.1 Implementation and Oversight
 - 5.1.1 The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) oversees implementation of this policy for faculty and academic matters
 - 5.1.2 The Vice President of Enrollment Services & Student Affairs (VPESA) oversees its implementation in co-curricular and student contexts.
 - 5.1.3 The Director of Human Resources (HR) ensures alignment with employee ethics and disciplinary procedures.
- 5.2 Reporting and Resolution
 - 5.2.1 Concerns related to violations of academic freedom or free expression should be submitted in writing to:
 - 5.2.2 The Department Chair or College Dean (for faculty matters),
 - 5.2.3 The VPAA (for unresolved or institutional cases), or
 - 5.2.4 The VPESA or Student Conduct Office (for student-related matters).

All reports will be reviewed promptly, confidentially, and fairly, consistent with the *Faculty Academic and Professional Integrity and Misconduct Policy*, *Employee Disciplinary and Appeal Policy*, or *Non-Academic Student Misconduct Policy*, as appropriate.

- 5.3 Appeals

- 5.3.1 Individuals who believe their rights to academic freedom or free expression have been restricted may appeal following established grievance procedures outlined in:
- *Faculty Handbook (Section on Grievances),*
 - *Employee Disciplinary and Appeal Policy, or Student Concerns and Complaints Policy.*

Related Policies and Documents

Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
Employee Disciplinary and Appeal Policy
Faculty Academic and Professional Integrity and Misconduct Policy
Faculty Handbook
Faculty Workload Responsibilities Policy
Human Resources Handbook
Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct
Non-Academic Student Misconduct Policy
Student Concerns and Complaints Policy
Students' Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy
Students' Rights and Responsibilities Policy

Approval Signatures

Signature of Policy Owner: _____
Date: _____

Signature of Project Chair: _____
Date: _____

Signature of President: _____
Date: _____