

Policy Title	Academic Freedom Policy			
Policy Number	VU/CTL/Policies/03			
Functional Field	Academics			
Custodian	Director, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)			
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Active	<input type="checkbox"/> In-revision	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed	
		Draft #	Draft #	
Approved By	Vice Chancellor, Vishwakarma University, Pune			
Approval Date	01/02/2022			
Effective Date	01/02/2022			

Revision History			
Number	Date	By	Main Changes
Revision # 1	17/01/2024	Director IQAC	Change in Custodian and Improved Processes and Procedures
Revision # 2			
Revision # 3			
Revision # 4			
Revision # 5			

Contact office: Office of Director Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), VU, Pune

Email address: director.ctl@vupune.ac.in

Phone Number: 020-26950304

VU_ Academic Freedom Policy

A. PURPOSE

This academic freedom policy is established to ensure that educators have the freedom to pursue their teaching, research, and scholarship without undue interference. It is a cornerstone of intellectual inquiry and the advancement of knowledge. This policy serves to protect the rights and responsibilities of the faculty members (irrespective of their rank or employment status) with respect to their teaching and research activities. It is also closely related to the evaluation and assessment policies of a university.

B. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Academic freedom policy is primarily applicable to students, research scholars, and faculty members, including professors, lecturers, researchers, and lab assistants. This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of educators in the context of teaching, evaluation, research, and scholarly activities. In addition to faculty members, academic freedom policy is also applicable to librarians, research scholars, visiting faculties, academic advisors, industrial mentors, and academic administrators.

C. POLICY STATEMENT

a) Freedom to Professional Development:

Academic freedom policy provides opportunities for faculty members (irrespective of their rank or employment status) to engage in continuous professional development, staying current in their fields, and contributing to their respective disciplines.

b) Quality of Education:

Academic freedom policy ensures that the faculty members have the autonomy to design their courses, select teaching materials, use innovative teaching methods and technology that they believe will best benefit their students. This contributes to the overall quality of education by allowing instructors to adapt and evolve their teaching strategies. It also allows the faculty members to propose and implement new courses or programs.

c) Freedom of Research and Scholarship:

Academic freedom policy extends to research activities, allowing faculty members and research scholars to choose their research topics, methodologies, and approaches based on their expertise and interests. This freedom facilitates the advancement of knowledge and the ability to tackle societal challenges effectively.

d) Supporting Student Research/Project Opportunities:

Under the academic freedom policy, the students can engage in research projects with faculty members. This hands-on experience can be invaluable in developing research skills and contributing to the academic community.

VU_ Academic Freedom Policy

e) **Choice-Based Education System:**

Vishwakarma University is committed to providing a dynamic and adaptable learning environment that empowers students to pursue their academic interests, develop critical thinking skills, and prepare for successful and meaningful lives. In line with this commitment, we recognize the importance of implementing a Choice-Based Education System, which offers students a greater degree of autonomy in their academic journey while ensuring the maintenance of rigorous educational standards.

f) **Outcome-Based Education (OBE):**

University provides high-quality education that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed for personal and professional success in a rapidly evolving world. In alignment with this commitment, we recognize the significance of implementing an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework that focuses on student learning outcomes and continuous improvement.

g) **Interdisciplinary, Multi-Disciplinary, and Transdisciplinary Education:**

University is committed to fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that empowers students to explore the intersections of knowledge, break down disciplinary boundaries, and tackle complex real-world challenges. In alignment with this commitment, we recognize the importance of implementing Interdisciplinary, Multi-Disciplinary, and Transdisciplinary Education approaches, which encourage students to embrace diverse perspectives and develop holistic problem-solving skills.

h) **Feedback Mechanism:**

University provides high-quality education that empowers students to excel academically and personally. We recognize the pivotal role of feedback in the teaching and learning process and are committed to implementing effective feedback mechanisms to enhance the educational experience and facilitate student growth.

D. PROCEDURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) **Freedom to Professional Development:**

Procedure: Faculty members have the autonomy to pursue professional development opportunities that align with their research and teaching goals. This includes attending faculty development programs, refreshers courses, short term training programs, conferences, seminars workshops, training sessions, round table discussions as well as engaging in academic collaborations or pursuing further education.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Members: Faculty members are responsible for identifying professional development opportunities that enhance their expertise and contribute to their academic growth. They shall communicate their plans with their HoD or Dean well in advance and adjust their academic and/or administrative responsibilities in their absence.

VU_ Academic Freedom Policy

Faculty/Departments: The faculty/ departments support faculty members in their professional development endeavors by providing resources, guidance, and flexibility in workload management.

b) Quality of Education:

Procedure: To ensure the quality of education, faculty members have the freedom to design and deliver courses that align with their expertise and pedagogical approaches. They have freedom to choose relevant teaching materials, assessment methods, and instructional strategies.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Members: It is the responsibility of faculty members to create engaging and effective learning experiences for students. They should stay updated with current pedagogical practices, technologies and continuously improve their teaching methods.

Faculty/Departments: Faculty/Departments shall provide support, resources, and opportunities for faculty development related to teaching. They shall also conduct periodic assessments of teaching quality and offer feedback for improvement.

c) Freedom of Research and Scholarship:

Procedure: Faculty members have the freedom to select research topics, methodologies, and approaches based on their expertise and interests. They shall disseminate their research findings through publications, presentations, and other scholarly activities.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Members: Faculty members have the responsibility to conduct research that adheres to ethical standards and contributes to their field. They shall actively seek research funding, collaborate with peers, and engage in scholarly activities and interdepartmental/interdisciplinary research activities.

Faculty/Departments: Vishwakarma University has Research and Development cell and department wise research advisory committees responsible for facilitating research orientation, funding, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines, and supporting faculty research activities.

d) Supporting Student Research/ Project Opportunities:

Procedure: Vishwakarma University encourage and support opportunities for students to engage in research under the guidance of faculty mentors. This includes inclusion of research methodology courses in program curriculum, research internship, and opportunities for student-led research projects.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Members: Faculty members shall actively mentor students in research activities, provide guidance, and create an inclusive and supportive environment for student researchers.

VU_ Academic Freedom Policy

Faculty/Departments: Departments shall establish mechanisms for connecting students with research opportunities and resources. They shall also recognize and celebrate student research achievements.

e) Choice Based Education System:

Procedure: University offers a flexible curriculum that allows students to choose from a wide range of courses and create their academic schedules according to their interests, provided they meet the foundational requirements of educational programs. Students will have the autonomy to select courses from various disciplines and programs based on their interests, career goals, and academic readiness. A robust academic advising system of mentorship is established to guide students in making informed choices about their academic pathways.

Responsibilities: Students and faculties are equally responsible for the effective implementation of Choice Based Education System.

f) Outcome-Based Education (OBE):

Procedure:

Academic programs and courses are designed with clear and measurable learning outcomes that specify the knowledge, skills, and competencies students should acquire. Curriculum development ensures alignment with OBE principles and incorporate both formative and summative assessments to measure learning outcomes. A variety of assessment methods, such as rubrics, projects, portfolios, and exams, will be employed to measure students' attainment of the specified learning outcomes.

Responsibilities:

Students are responsible for actively engaging in their learning, understanding the expected learning outcomes for their programs and courses, and seeking assistance when needed to meet those outcomes.

Faculty members are responsible for designing and delivering courses that align with OBE principles, emphasizing clear learning outcomes, and employing effective teaching strategies.

The administration is responsible for providing the necessary resources, including qualified instructors, facilities, and course materials, to support the attainment of learning outcomes.

g) Interdisciplinary, Multi-Disciplinary, and Transdisciplinary Education:

Procedure:

Academic programs and courses are designed to incorporate interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches that allow students to explore a wide range of subjects and problem-solving methods. Faculty members from various departments are encouraged to collaborate in designing and delivering interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses and projects. Students have the freedom to select from a variety of interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and transdisciplinary courses and programs that align with their academic and career goals.

VU_ Academic Freedom Policy

Responsibilities:

Students are responsible for actively participating in the course selection process, considering their interests and academic goals.

Faculty members are responsible for designing and delivering courses that align with interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and transdisciplinary principles, encouraging diverse perspectives and collaboration.

The administration is responsible for providing the necessary resources, including qualified instructors, facilities, and course materials, to support interdisciplinary and collaborative learning activities

h) Feedback Mechanism:

Procedure: Anonymous feedback options are made available to encourage honest and open responses. Feedback collection occurs at appropriate intervals, allowing for both ongoing formative feedback and summative feedback at the end of courses or academic terms. Collected feedback will be analyzed and categorized to identify trends, common themes, and areas of improvement. Feedback, both positive and constructive, is presented in a manner that makes it actionable. Recommendations for improvement will be clear and specific.

Responsibilities:

Students are encouraged for providing constructive, honest, and respectful feedback about their learning experiences. Faculty members are responsible for creating an environment that encourages students to provide feedback without fear of retribution. The administration is responsible for establishing and maintaining the feedback mechanism, including the necessary platforms and processes for data collection and analysis.

E. Policy Custodian

Director, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

F. Approval Body

This revised policy is approved on the 17th Day of January month in the Year 2024 by the Vice Chancellor of Vishwakarma University and is in effect from the 17th Day of January month in the Year 2024.

G. Responsibility for Administration of Policy

The office of the Director, CTL will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The office of the Vice Chancellor will be responsible for administering the implementation of this policy.

Sign:	Sign:	Sign:
-------	-------	-------

vU_ Academic Freedom Policy

Name:	Name:	Name:
Date:	Date:	Date:
Prepared by	Verified by	Approved by