

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression: Challenges Work Stream

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of this work stream is to address challenges to Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression including, for example, disinformation, (self-)censorship, online harassment (from a preventative perspective), and forms of interference.

Guiding Question(s)

1. How can the university proactively address contemporary and future challenges to academic freedom and freedom of expression?

Remit

The Work Stream will:

1. identify emerging challenges to academic freedom and freedom of expression with a view to protecting the University.
2. seek to ensure the integrity of the University's expertise and knowledge-base by devising policies and approaches to repel disinformation and to protect its expertise.
3. explore ways to foster a culture in which academic (self-)censorship is eliminated; securing an environment in which knowledge generation can flourish.
4. in liaison with the Legislation Work Stream, ensure that policies are legally-informed, as appropriate; and with reference to the Pastoral Support Task and Finish Group, as appropriate.
5. Inform the work of other Work Streams and Task and Finish Groups.

Membership

The Work Stream membership will comprise those with relevant academic and professional expertise and experience.

Membership will be by invitation, following discussion between the Work Stream Group Convenor and Convenor/Deputy Convenor of the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Coordinating Group. However, the Work Stream will be inclusive and will wish to engage a wide variety of stakeholders and contributions to develop its proposals and take forward and deliver the outcomes of the work.

Timescale and meeting arrangements

The number, frequency and format of meetings will be ordinarily monthly. However, additional meetings may be scheduled in support of the milestones and key deliverables. To ensure maximum participation, meetings may be online unless the purpose of the meeting would be better supported by a different mode.

The meeting agenda and any papers will normally be circulated via email, at least 5 working days prior to each meeting, and a note of actions will be circulated within 5 working days of each meeting.

Each Work Stream member is responsible for contributing opinions and relevant examples of experience for discussion at the group. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they will be invited to submit a written contribution to the group, to ensure their views are considered in their absence.

Reporting

The Work Stream will report regularly on its progress to the Coordinating Group and will support the achievement of deliverables within its focus area.

Governance and Operation

The Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Disinformation Work Stream reports to the Coordinating Group via the Work Stream Convenor.