

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression: Pastoral Support Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The primary objective of the Task and Finish Group is to review policies and approaches to supporting students and colleagues who encounter unwanted publicity or who are attacked due to their exercising of academic freedom and freedom of expression, or who experience distress due to somebody else's exercising of their academic freedom and freedom of expression.

Guiding Question(s)

1. How can the University effectively and consistently support and protect colleagues who encounter unwanted publicity, who are attacked, or who experience distress, due to their exercising of academic freedom and freedom of expression or due to somebody else's exercising of these rights?

Remit

The Task and Finish Group will:

1. review, amend, and create policies in support of the pastoral welfare of students (For example, Doctoral Students) and colleagues who encounter unwanted publicity, or who are attacked, due to their exercising of academic freedom and freedom of expression.
2. consider School-based and University-level pastoral support capacity.
3. devise educational training approaches to achieve consistency of support for individual academics across the University.
4. in liaison with the Legislation Work Stream, ensure that policies are legally-informed around relevant legal protections for individual colleagues.

Membership

The Task and Finish Group membership will comprise those with relevant academic and professional expertise and experience.

Membership will be by invitation, following discussion between the Task and Finish Group Convenor and Convenor/Deputy Convenor of the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Coordinating Group. However, the Group 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 Task and Finish Group 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 Pastoral Support Task and Finish Group reports to the Coordinating Group via the Task and Finish Group Convenor.