AMITY UNIVERSITY
RAJASTHAN

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Policy on academic freedom

Date: 03/12/2024

1. Purpose

Academic freedom is fundamental to the mission of Amity University Rajasthan in creating, advancing and disseminating knowledge. The institution commits to providing an environment in which faculty, staff and students can teach, learn, research and engage in public discourse without undue interference, while fulfilling their responsibilities to the academic community and society.

2. Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all faculty (tenure, tenure-track, contract), academic staff, librarians, researchers and other University personnel with teaching, research, or scholarly service responsibilities. It also affirms the AUR's obligations to support students' learning, expression and academic growth in a free environment.

3. Principles of Academic Freedom

a. **Freedom in Teaching & Learning**
   - Faculty shall have freedom to design curricula, choose teaching methods and select materials appropriate to the discipline, subject to departmental, regulatory, accreditation and institutional standards.
   - Students shall have the freedom to engage in inquiry, voice reasoned viewpoints and access relevant academic resources.
   - Faculty and students are expected to foster environments of respectful dialogue, critical thinking and openness to diverse perspectives.

b. **Freedom in Research, Scholarship & Publication**
   - Scholars shall have freedom to undertake research and inquiries on topics within their expertise, including interdisciplinary work, and to disseminate findings through publication or other appropriate media.
   - Institutional governance shall not impose censorship or prior restraint on publication, provided the work meets scholarly standards, ethical norms, and applicable laws.
   - Research collaborations, funding agreements and contracts shall not impose restrictions incompatible with scholarly freedom, except as mandated by law or agreed in full transparency.

c. **Expression & Institutional Critique**
   - Faculty and academic staff have the right to express reasoned opinions on matters of educational policy, governance, curriculum, academic standards, and the institution's

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functioning, without fear of institutional sanction, provided they respect the rights and responsibilities of others.

- Such expression does not absolve the individual from professional responsibility: public statements should distinguish personal views from institutional endorsement and should maintain civility and respect for others.

d. **Institutional Autonomy & Academic Governance**

- The university shall safeguard its academic autonomy: the ability to determine its mission, governance, curricula, faculty appointments, research priorities and academic standards without undue external interference (political, commercial or ideological).
- Faculty shall participate meaningfully in academic decision-making (curriculum design, research priorities, resource allocation, evaluation) through appropriate committees and bodies.

4. Responsibilities & Professional Conduct

- Faculty and researchers must maintain scholarly integrity, adhere to ethical and legal standards in teaching, research, publication and interactions.
- They should avoid introducing irrelevant material in teaching that is unrelated to the course content, avoid misrepresentation of data, and respect confidentiality and intellectual property rights.
- While exercising academic freedom, individuals must recognize that freedom comes with responsibility: their conduct influences the reputation of their discipline, department and the university.
- Amity University Rajasthan expects academic staff to engage in continuous professional development, maintain competence in their fields, and show dedication in contributing to already set mission.

5. Curriculum Development, Teaching & Evaluation

- Faculty (in consultation with domain experts, industry bodies and peers) shall have freedom to design programs and syllabi aligning with institutional mission, regulatory frameworks (such as national education policy), and emerging disciplinary developments.
- The University shall establish transparent processes for curriculum review, course-approval, assessment and evaluation, ensuring academic rigor, relevance and fairness.
- Teaching materials and assessments shall support students in developing independent thinking, critical reasoning, and the ability to form their own judgments.

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6. Research & Development

- AUR recognizes its faculty, and researchers are free to initiate research in their domain, in national, regional and global contexts, consistent with ethical, legal, environmental and social responsibility frameworks.
- Research projects undertaken under university auspices shall comply with institutional policies, agreements (with external agencies) and applicable laws, but shall not prohibit publication or dissemination of results unless necessary for legitimate confidentiality, intellectual property or national security reasons.
- The University Library and allied resource systems shall support access to relevant scholarly materials and facilitate the free flow of ideas and data required for teaching, research and learning.

7. Free Expression and Campus Engagement

- Amity University Rajasthan supports an environment in which faculty, staff and students may engage in reasoned inquiry, debate, and public dialogue on academic, scientific, social, cultural and institutional issues.
- AUR set reasonable rules about time, place and manner of gatherings, demonstrations or invite speakers to ensure safety, order and respect for the rights of other members of the community—but such rules must not unduly restrict expression or inquiry.
- Harassment, incitement of violence, defamation, or actions that materially disrupt the academic mission are not protected under academic freedom.

8. Safeguards and Limitations

- Academic freedom does not imply freedom from accountability. Faculty and researchers are accountable through peer review, departmental oversight, institutional governance and external accreditation.
- Institutional policies on research ethics, conflict of interest, intellectual property, data management, human subjects (or animal subjects) research must be respected.
- The University may impose appropriate disciplinary action for conduct that violates professional standards, academic integrity or institutional policies—but cannot punish faculty or staff solely because of the content of their scholarly views or teaching within their discipline.
- The University reserves the right to adopt legitimate restrictions (e.g., ensuring national security, legal compliance, protection of minors, confidentiality obligations) but such restrictions must be transparent, narrowly defined, proportionate, and subject to review.

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9. Implementation & Review

- The University shall disseminate this policy widely among faculty, research staff, students and administrative staff.
- Academic units (departments, schools) shall develop guidelines consistent with this policy that support academic freedom and institutional responsibilities.
- The University shall review this policy periodically (e.g., every 3 – 5 years) to ensure alignment with evolving regulatory frameworks (such as the National Education Policy 2020), best practices, institutional mission, and internal stakeholder feedback.
- Grievance mechanisms shall be put in place for alleged violations of academic freedom (e.g., undue interference, censorship, retaliation) and for disputes involving academic decision-making.

10. Governance & Accountability

- The University's governing bodies (such as the Senate, Academic Council, Board of Studies) ensure that decisions affecting teaching, research and academic governance respect the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- Faculty involvement is central: faculty committees shall participate in decisions regarding research assessment, curriculum matters and evaluation standards.
- The University shall maintain transparent records of academic policies, curriculum decisions, and research guidelines, and shall monitor whether academic freedom is being upheld in practice.