

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression: Curriculum and Education (Learning and Teaching) Work Stream

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of this Work Stream is to consider aspects of academic freedom and freedom of expression in the context of curriculum and education (learning, and teaching), with the aim of fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue, critical thinking, and the respectful exchange of diverse perspectives.

Guiding Question(s)

1. How can we support our educators and students to become knowledgeable and skilled, and understand their rights and responsibilities, to participate as citizens in society's contested space

Remit

The Work Stream will:

1. liaise with the Curriculum Transformation Project team to engage with the development of critical skills of listening, dialogue, disagreeing well, and empathy, as key aspects of the Edinburgh curriculum.
2. provide guidance, including tools, frameworks, to help our academic community to engage constructively in discussions around academic freedom, freedom of expression.
3. Develop guidance, and where relevant training, for teaching staff, to help them produce materials and promote constructive conversations in all teaching formats:
 - a. including Postgraduate Tutors,
 - b. And those chairing educational events on challenging topics.
 - c. consider any gaps in existing University processes and training; e.g., support for staff in relation to the use of social media, guidance for Heads of School in facilitating and handling the expression of controversial views, and making recommendations informed by experience in other Higher Education contexts, and the lived experience of staff and students, reflecting a range of views across the University community, in respect of these.
4. Update or develop policies when sensible or needed.
5. Support the Workstream Convenor & create a plan for the workstream, so that progress can be tracked and issues rectified.

6. Use their expertise and understanding to support the co ordinating group to identify and plan communications that are needed to support any new policies, procedures or guidance, or other deliverables

Membership

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

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.

Reporting

The Work Stream will report monthly (using the standard reporting template) 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 Curriculum and Education (Learning and Teaching) Work Stream reports to the Coordinating Group via the Work Stream Convenor.

