

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 identify and advise and seek to address contemporary and future challenges to academic freedom and freedom of expression?
2. How can the university ensure it has the ability to horizon scan for future challenges to academic freedom & 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 and its communities.
2. seek to ensure the integrity of the University's expertise and knowledgebase by devising policies and approaches to challenges under the heading of disinformation and to protect its expertise.
3. explore ways to foster a culture which aims to eliminate academic (self-)censorship; securing an environment in which knowledge generation can flourish unfettered.
4. in liaison with the Legislation Work Stream, ensure that policies are legally informed, as appropriate; and with reference to the Institutional Support Task and Finish Group, as appropriate.
5. Inform the work of other Work Streams and Task and Finish Groups.
6. Support the Workstream Convenor & create a plan for the workstream, so that progress can be tracked and issues rectified.
7. 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 Challenges Work Stream reports to the Coordinating Group via the Work Stream Convenor.

