



Medicine Hat College Policy ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy #:	AC-02
Policy Authority:	Faculty Association represented by the Faculty Association President
Executive Sponsor:	Vice President, Academic
Approved by:	President and CEO
Effective Date:	February 4, 2015
Next Mandatory Review Date:	February 4, 2020
Frequency of Review:	Every five years

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Academic Freedom and Responsibilities policy is to define academic freedom and outline what this means at Medicine Hat College (MHC).

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the MHC community.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Post-secondary educational institutions serve the common good of a democratic society through searching for and disseminating knowledge, truth, and understanding as well as fostering independent thinking and expression. These ends cannot be achieved without academic freedom. Members of the MHC community have all the rights to academic freedom as specified below.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic freedom:** Academic freedom is the freedom to engage in teaching, learning, research, or other creative work in order to expand knowledge and to do so in an atmosphere of free inquiry and discourse. It includes the right to examine, question, research, teach, and learn in an environment that supports the need to investigate, speculate, and comment without penalty or sanction. Researchers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results.
- **Faculty:** An academic staff member employed by the College pursuant to the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.
- **Medicine Hat College Community:** A member of the Medicine Hat College community means any person who utilizes the services or facilities of MHC. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - (a) **Employee:** any person who is employed by MHC or who provides services to MHC under an employment contract.

- (b) Student: any person enrolled in study at MHC.
- (c) Visitor: any person accessing MHC facilities who is not an employee, volunteer or contractor.
- (d) Volunteer: any person performing work for MHC in an unpaid capacity.
- (e) Contractor: an individual or company (and their employees) who provides services to MHC under a service contract (i.e. a non-employee-employer relationship).
- (f) Partner: any person in a joint venture or partnership with MHC, whether it be in the form of a business, academic partnership or external community member.
- (g) International Entity: any international entity that represents MHC.

5. PRINCIPLES

MHC will ensure a teaching, learning, and research environment that supports academic freedom. The MHC community members have rights and privileges to engage in independent thinking and expression, to pursue avenues of inquiry, and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any idea. These rights carry with them the duty and responsibility to use that freedom in a way that is consistent with the educational and scholarly pursuit for truth, knowledge, and understanding.

- 5.1 Faculty and other College employees have academic freedom to pursue the following, without institutional censorship or reprisal:
 - (a) conduct teaching and related discussion;
 - (b) express opinions freely on matters related to teaching and curricular responsibilities;
 - (c) carry out research and disseminate the results;
 - (d) produce and perform creative works;
 - (e) engage in service to the institution and community;
 - (f) acquire, preserve and provide access to the widest range of materials in all formats; and
 - (g) participate in professional and representative academic bodies.
- 5.2 Students have academic freedom to pursue the following, without institutional censorship or reprisal:
 - (a) raise for discussion in a class aspects of a topic pertinent to the subject matter of that class;
 - (b) meet on campus to discuss topics or issues;
 - (c) carry out research under the guidance of faculty or other College employee and disseminate the results;
 - (d) produce and perform creative works, under the guidance of faculty or other College employee;
 - (e) engage in service to the institution and community; and
 - (f) express opinions freely about the institution and matters related to their courses of study.
- 5.3 The rights of the MHC community to exercise their academic freedom do not vary according to the medium or place in which they are exercised. These

rights are as essential to academic activities undertaken electronically as those undertaken in speech, writing, and/or other media.

- 5.4 The MHC community has the responsibility to foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry, and free expression of ideas.
- 5.5 Teaching and academic inquiry often involves controversial matters; faculty and other College employees are authorized to conduct frank discussion of controversial matters and to conduct research and other forms of enquiry into them.
- 5.6 As professionals, College employees may choose or be called upon to speak publicly in an area of expertise. In these cases, it is appropriate for them to identify themselves as College employees, but they should not present their views as the official position of the MHC.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

MHC community members are responsible for ensuring academic freedom is maintained within the institution. They are obliged to respect others in the College community and to maintain accuracy, integrity, and academic honesty in the fulfillment of their role.

7. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

- *Criminal Code of Canada*
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Post-Secondary Learning Act*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

8. RELATED POLICIES

- *Code of Conduct*
- *Discrimination and Harassment Prevention*
- *Integrity in Research and Scholarship*
- *Intellectual Property and Copyright*
- *Copyright Compliance*
- *Ethical Conduct Involving Human Participants*
- *Applied Research*

9. RELATED INFORMATION REGULATIONS

- 1940 AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, with 1970 interpretive comments.
(<http://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure>)

- Canadian Library Association Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom, 1985. (http://www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Position_Statements&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=3047)

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Denise Henning
President and CEO

February 5, 2015

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Michael Gillespie
Acting Vice-President, Academic

February 5, 2015

DOCUMENT HISTORY

- February 2015 Policy approved