Freedom of Expression Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to confirm the commitment of Victoria University (VU) to lawful and respectful freedom of expression by staff, students and persons invited to speak at VU premises.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies across VU, including:

a. all VU Staff;
b. all VU students; and
c. all visitors, including persons invited to speak on VU premises.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) In accordance with Section 5(e)(iii) of the Victoria University Act 2010 (Vic), VU serves the Victorian, Australian and international communities and the public interest by promoting critical and free inquiry, informed intellectual discourse and public debate within VU and in the wider society.

(4) The right to academic/intellectual freedom is supported and encouraged by VU and is set out separately in Section 5, Part H of VU's Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy. For the purposes of this Policy freedom of expression includes academic/intellectual freedom.

(5) VU supports and encourages lawful and respectful freedom of expression by VU staff, students and persons invited to speak on VU premises.

(6) VU values the benefit of a diversity of views in public debate, and expects all persons subject to this Policy to respect the right of others to lawful and respectful freedom of expression under this Policy.

(7) A person does not lose the benefit of protection afforded by this Policy simply because others may find that person's views or opinions to be controversial, offensive or distasteful.

(8) VU will not accept or tolerate abuse or intimidation of, or discrimination or other adverse action against a person who has exercised their right to freedom of expression under this Policy.

(9) A person who otherwise complies with this Policy will not be refused permission to speak on VU premises on the basis only of that person's views or opinions.

(10) Contracts or arrangements entered into between VU and third parties will not unreasonably restrict freedom of expression.

(11) A person's right to freedom of expression under this Policy is subject to VU's responsibility to manage its operations and activities in the best interest of all of its stakeholders.

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(12) Notwithstanding VU's commitment to freedom of expression as outlined in this Policy, VU does not support any form of expression, the content of which, or which in its exercise, is:

a. unlawful, including unlawful discrimination;
b. intimidating, harassing, defamatory, threatening or vilifying; or
c. disruptive of or detrimental to VU's operations, activities or character as an institution of higher learning.

(13) This Policy is complementary of and is to be read in conjunction with other VU statutes, policies and instruments, including:

a. Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy
b. Student Charter
c. Student Conduct Policy
d. Hire of University Facilities Policy
e. Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy
f. Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Policy
g. Victoria University Enterprise Agreement 2025 (and any subsequent Enterprise Agreement)
h. A Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers

Section 4 - Procedures

(14) Nil.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(15) HESF: Standard 2.2 Diversity and Equity; 6.1.4 Corporate Governance.

(16) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 2.5 Diversity and Inclusion. Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 20 Compliance with Laws.

Section 6 - Definitions

(17) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	5th June 2020
Review Date	31st December 2026
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	5th June 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Adam Shoemaker Vice-Chancellor +61 3 9919 4011
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