

## Statement on Freedom of Expression

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<b>Approval Authority   Mana Whakaae</b>	University Council
<b>Contact Officer   Āpiha Whakapā</b>	General Counsel   Registrar

### Introduction

This statement sets out how the University intends to promote and preserve freedom of expression for its community, in accordance with section 281A of the Education and Training Act 2020.

### Definitions

**Academic Freedom** – has the same meaning as [section 267 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#).

**Official Spokesperson(s)** – a person appointed, in accordance with the University's Delegation of Authority policy, to act as an official spokesperson for the University, on University matters.

**Staff or Staff Member(s)** – person/s engaged for paid employment with the University by way of an employment agreement. For the avoidance of doubt, Professor Emeritus / Emerita; Adjuncts; Erskine and Canterbury Fellows are treated as Staff Members in accordance with this statement.

**Student** – a person who is currently enrolled as a student at the University, either directly or through official arrangements with another organisation.

**University** – refers to the institution Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury (also, 'We' or 'Our'), the body corporate as defined by the University of Canterbury Act 1961, governed in accordance with the Education and Training Act.

## Statement

Freedom of expression is central to the mission of the University. As an institution, our strength lies in our willingness to engage with complex issues, listen to different perspectives and test ideas with curiosity and integrity.

Through the following statement, the University reaffirms its commitment to fostering a learning environment that befits our vibrant, open-minded and intellectually courageous community.

The University fosters an environment where all members of its community – including Students and Staff – are free to express themselves. Within this environment, ideas can be challenged, controversial issues discussed, and diverse opinions expressed.

Creating such an environment is the shared responsibility of all members of the University's community. The University serves as home to a diverse academic community, who share their knowledge, experience and insight for the advancement of learning and the betterment of society.

The promotion of free expression is critical to maintaining the academic freedom of that community. While individuals are free to criticise and contest views that they disagree with, they should not attempt to obstruct, disrupt or otherwise interfere with the free expression of others.

The University may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of any expression, so long as these restrictions are consistently applied, and do not undermine the University's commitment to the free and open discussion of ideas. The University may also restrict expression that:

- (a) is likely to be unlawful; or
- (b) is likely to disrupt the ordinary activities of the University.

In any circumstance, the University shall not deny access to or use of its facilities solely because of an individual's beliefs or opinions. This commitment extends not just to the University's Staff and Students, but also to any speaker invited by a Staff Member or affiliated student association or club.

The University's commitment to free expression does not suggest that it endorses or supports any view which may be expressed on campus or in connection with the University. Consistent with our obligations at law, the University adopts a position of institutional neutrality – the commitment to not take public positions on matters that do not directly concern its role or functions. Only Official Spokespersons may present the University's public position on any matter or topic.

The University refrains from addressing other matters not to diminish the importance of those subjects, but because we best serve society by affording our community with the freedom to investigate, debate and speak on such concerns.

By promoting freedom of expression, we enable discovery, encourage critical thinking, and prepare Students to contribute with confidence and good judgement in a rapidly changing world. We do this not only to serve our community, but to enrich our culture, strengthen our democracy, and to expand the knowledge and expertise that drives our society forward.

## Statement Review

This statement will be reviewed by the University Council in consultation with Academic Board every 4 years or earlier if deemed appropriate by Council.

## Related Documents and Information

### Legislation

- [Education and Training Act 2020](#)
  - [s 267 Academic freedom and institutional autonomy of institutions](#)
  - [s 281A Requirement for university council to adopt statement on freedom of expression](#)
  - [s 281B Requirement for university council to establish complaints procedure relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression](#)

### UC Policy Library

- [Critic and Conscience of Society and Academic Freedom Principles and Policy](#)
- [Delegations of Authority](#) (refer: Governance Delegations Schedule: G60)

### Links

- [UC Concerns \(complaints procedure for UC Students and Visitors\)](#)
- [UC Intranet \(complaints procedure for UC Staff\)](#)

Document History and Version Control Table			
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