

Academic Freedom Code of Practice & Policy

1. Purpose

iQualify UK sees academic freedom at the forefront of its teaching and learning and one that compliments its ethos of each student, staff and faculty member as an individual. For this reason, opinion and debate in an educational context is of paramount importance whether those views presented are agreed with or not. This is further endorsed through the College's commitment to ensuring that faculty members along with visiting tutors and lecturers of iQualify UK have freedom within the law to question and challenge received wisdom.

Furthermore, the College encourages academic freedom among faculty members to research, teach or communicate ideas or facts without being targeted for repression, job loss, or detriment, recognising this as essential to the principles of academia. However, academic freedom must remain mindful of the Prevent and Safeguarding policies and the law. In particular faculty members are encouraged to avoid controversial issues not related directly to their fields of study and if communicating in public they should indicate clearly that they are not speaking for iQualify UK unless they are authorised to do so.

2. Responsibilities of staff undertaking academic activities

Staff undertaking academic activities should recognise that the exercise of rights carries with it special duties and responsibilities, including the obligation to respect the academic freedom of other members of the academic community and to ensure the fair discussion of contrary views.

Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research on an honest search for truth. Teaching and research should be conducted in full accordance with ethical and professional standards.

In particular, the individual responsibilities of staff undertaking academic activities, as appropriate to their terms and conditions of employment, inherent in their academic freedom are:

- I. to seek to achieve the highest possible standards in their professional work;
- II. to teach students effectively within the means provided by the institution;
- III. to ensure, where necessary, that the minimum content defined in the aims and objectives for each subject is covered;
- IV. to be fair and equitable to male and female students and treat those of all races and religions, as well as those with disabilities, equally;
- V. to encourage the free exchange of ideas between themselves and their students, and to be available to them for guidance in their studies;
- VI. to conduct research and to disseminate the results of such research;
- VII. to base their research on an honest search for knowledge with due respect for evidence, impartial reasoning and honesty in reporting;
- VIII. to avoid conflicts of interest and to resolve them through appropriate disclosure and full consultation with iQualify UK, so that they have approval;
- IX. to be fair and impartial when presenting a professional appraisal of academic colleagues and students;

- X. to undertake such appropriate duties as are required for the College or those associated from professional and regulatory bodies.

3. Scope

iQualify UK ensures that academic freedom and decisions taken by faculty and academic staff are compliant with our own internal terms of reference, along with those of the College's regulators and validators. This is carried out by;

- I. Supporting a forum within the faculty which includes but is not restricted to the Tutor, The Tutor Meeting, Academic Team and Board and the Academic Assessment Board whereby providing forums, and a two-way channel of communication between management and staff and the faculty.
- I. Encouraging regular staff engagement in initiating, adapting and developing courses and qualifications and the content and assessment included in them.
- II. Canvassing members of the College to contribute to decision making, either directly, through participation in meetings or indirectly with management, student representative or with external advisors and bodies.
- III. Making all meeting minutes and supporting documentation available to the Faculty subject only to confidentiality considerations.
- IV. Although iQualify UK's management will strive to consult as widely as they are able to – and to be as open and transparent as possible – about the development of strategy and policy, they will take into account all views expressed through consultations, it will not always be possible or practicable to defer decisions until all interested parties have expressed views.

4. Coverage

This Code and policy applies to all Faculty and Academic staff members of iQualify UK, whether employed permanently, temporarily or in an advisory manner.

5. Code of Practice

In relation to academic freedom, a faculty or academic staff member is entitled to expressions of opinions which may be deemed annoying, offensive, in bad taste, or ill-mannered, but which are not per se unlawful and if deemed appropriate for the course or qualification. It shall be contrary to the code for any person or body to whom this code applies to take any action (other than reasonable and peaceful persuasion or peaceful protest).

Should academic freedom contravene or conflict with such legislation as the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, or the Equality Act 2010, The Principal may as necessary consult with the SMT (Operational) or the College's regulators and validators for guidance. This will follow an initial assessment and report should complaints arise and will follow guidelines as set out in the Employee Handbook and Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy & Policy.