Approving University Official(s): Board of Governors
Responsible Unit: Provost
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Academic Freedom Policy

Purpose

The Academic Freedom Policy ("the Policy") establishes a clear and consistent framework to support Academic Freedom at Yorkville University ("Yorkville"). It provides guidance to ensure alignment with Yorkville's operational, academic, and regulatory obligations, and supports Yorkville's commitment to preserving and fostering the principles of Academic Freedom.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Yorkville Academic Members and Students engaging in Scholarly Activity.

Definitions

"Academic Freedom" is the freedom to engage in Scholarly Activity. Academic freedom protects the intellectual independence of Students engaged in Scholarly Activity, and of Academic Members who may pursue knowledge and express ideas based on reasoned discourse informed by evidence, in accordance with the highest professional standards of the relevant discipline.

"Academic Head" is the senior-most academic leader of an applicable campus.

"Academic Members" are Faculty Members, Academic Staff, and members of the academic leadership.

"Academic Staff" are employees working in an academic unit and supporting the academic mission of Yorkville, who are not Faculty Members.

"Faculty Member" is an employee appointed to a faculty role, with duties that include instructional delivery, student assessment and support, academic service, and scholarly activity. Faculty members may hold continuing or limited term appointments and may be full-time or part-time.

"Scholarly Activity" – Yorkville has adopted the definition of scholarly activities that encompass the four domains defined by Boyer's (1990) Model of Scholarship:

- *Scholarship of Discovery* means the complex application of activities seeking to satisfy curiosity and the quest for new knowledge.
- *Scholarship of Application* means the deployment of knowledge and expertise to address real-world problems and benefit society.
- *Scholarship of Integration* means synthesizing and connecting knowledge across disciplines, fields, or time.
- *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* means the systematic study of and development of methods to improve teaching effectiveness, curriculum development, and pedagogy.

"Student" is any person who is: registered in one or more courses (whether in-person or remotely) with full-time, part-time, or special student status in a Yorkville program of study; and/or is engaged in any academic work that leads to the assigning of a mark, grade, or statement of performance by the appropriate authority within Yorkville; and/or is between sessions or on an approved leave of absence from study.

Policy Statement

- In keeping, and consistent with Yorkville's dedication to practitioner-oriented professional education, maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity, assuring the curriculum offered stays current and relevant, and providing a learning option for people whose life circumstances might otherwise restrict their opportunity for academic and professional advancement, Yorkville is dedicated to preserving and fostering Academic Freedom.
- *Academic Freedom and Collegial Governance:* Through Yorkville's collegial governance model, Academic Members assume a predominant role in determining curriculum, assessment standards, and other academic matters and contribute to the governance of Yorkville in a reasoned and responsible manner fostering the best interests of the University. Yorkville remains responsible for selecting and appointing Academic Members and other employees, establishing and controlling curriculum, making organizational arrangements for the conduct of academic work, certifying completion of a program, and granting degrees.
- *Policy Violations:* Alleged violations of this policy may be reported to the Academic Head for review and resolution. The Academic Head may refer the matter to another Policy if it is applicable in the circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Academic Members** and Students engaging in Scholarly Activity are encouraged to search for, create, and share knowledge, truth and understanding, to foster independent thinking and expression, and to engage in Scholarly Activity. In doing so, they must be committed to the highest ethical standards in their teaching, research and scholarship and subject

their Scholarly Activity to rigorous review by peers who are experts in the field, and where appropriate, public review by experts in the field.

2. **Faculty Members** and **Yorkville's leadership** share an obligation to ensure that the human rights of Students are respected and that Students are encouraged to pursue their education according to the principles of Academic Freedom. They must also ensure that pressures from funding and other types of partnerships do not unduly influence the Scholarly Activity of the University.
3. **The Academic Head** of the applicable campus is responsible for receiving, reviewing and resolving reports of violations under this Policy, and for determining the appropriate Policy or Procedure to resolve the complaint.

Related Information

Related Policies:

- Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy
- Conducting Research at Yorkville University - Institutional Approval Policy.
- Conducting Research at Yorkville University - Institutional Approval Procedures
- Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Policy
- Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans Procedures
- Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Indigenous Knowledges Policy and Guidelines. (In development.)
- Research Policy
- Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities Policy. (In development.)
- Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities Procedures. (In development.)
- Student Conduct Policy
- Support for Scholarly Activities Committee Terms of Reference
- Support for Scholarly Activity Policy
- Support for Scholarly Activity Procedures

External References:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2, 2022)
- Universities Canada's Statement on Academic Freedom

Contacts

For questions regarding this policy, please contact:

Department/Office Name: Academic Governance Office
Email: academicgovernance@yorkvilleu.ca

Note: Names and structures of Yorkville offices or governing bodies may change over time. Such changes do not affect the validity of this policy. To confirm the current responsible office or body, contact the Office of Regulatory and Government Affairs at academicgovernance@yorkvilleu.ca.

Revision History

Version Code	Date	Summary of Changes	Authorized by (Title)
1.0	December 5, 2019	New policy created.	Board of Governors
1.1	December 10, 2025	Major revision for December 2025 Board approval.	Board of Governors