

SUBJECT	ACADEMIC FREEDOM – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
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BACKGROUND

This policy defines the rights, obligations and limitations related to academic freedom when applied to scholarly activities and research conducted by Northern College faculty members in the course of their academic appointment and by those researchers and persons who are similarly authorized in writing by the College for the purposes of research and scholarly activities.

The rights and benefits associated with the Policy for Academic Freedom applies only where scholarly activity and/or research are occurring.

Academic Freedom is not an absolute freedom. Individual members of institutions are limited by the degree of autonomy available within the institution, and are subject to legal parameters, professional requirements and peer review. The autonomy of an Ontario college is limited by statute, the Colleges’ charter, policies established by the Government of Ontario, ethical review boards, Boards of Governors, and oversight committees.

Academic freedom, as appropriate to an individual’s college appointment, implies protection of the individual by the college from pressure intended to censure or restrict such individual from otherwise pursuing scholarly activities and research interests and communicating the results to students, academic colleagues and the community at large. In this context, individuals are entitled to freedom in research and inquiry and in the publication or dissemination of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties and adherence to College policies and procedures, and respecting the rights and academic freedom of other college community members

Academic Freedom at Northern College has corresponding obligations which include respect for evidence; integrity in the research in accordance with the conventions of the discipline; impartial reasoning; and honesty in reporting both the underlying assumptions and the results of the inquiry.

Research, and scholarly activities are integral elements and essential functions at Northern College. Faculty members and others engaged in research activities authorized by the College are encouraged to engage in scholarship in order to generate new knowledge, to evaluate, apply and extend knowledge, and to express new ideas through integrity in research and scholarly activities.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	MANDATORY REVISION DATE	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF
2020-06-01	2013-10-28	2025-06-01		VPA	1 4

SUBJECT	ACADEMIC FREEDOM – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
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POLICY

Academic Freedom at Northern College is the right to enquire about, to investigate without restriction, and to pursue controversial issues and speak freely about scholarship and research activities without fear of impairment to position or other reprisal; however, the policy is implemented in accordance with the guidelines included below.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees at Northern College

DEFINITIONS

Academic Freedom: The ability of an employee to engage freely and openly in scholarship, research and scholarly activities. It includes the right to question and challenge traditional norms, and the freedom to define research questions, to pursue answers to those questions by way of unrestricted but proper investigative techniques and to disseminate the knowledge gained to students, academic colleagues and society as a whole. Academic freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual; rather, the expectation for academic freedom is to make intellectual scholarship, discourse and critique possible without reprisal or repression by the institution, the government or any other person or entity.

Intellectual property: Intellectual property includes intangible assets that are the results of human creativity. It includes patents, trademarks, innovative design and copyrights as well as types of innovative works that have commercial value or might be useful within college.

Research: An undertaking designed to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation. It is the advancement of knowledge through scholarly, scientific and creative activity. Research within college covers a broad range including applied research, developmental research, discipline based research and educational research.

Scholarship: Encompasses a range of intellectual and creative activities that include the generation, validation, and synthesis to advance research. It is associated with achievement of excellence, rigorous inquiries, reflective thought, and openness to peer review. It includes inquiries that build a scientific body of discipline knowledge.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	MANDATORY REVISION DATE	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2020-06-01	2013-10-28	2025-06-01		VPA	2	4

SUBJECT	ACADEMIC FREEDOM – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
----------------	---

Scholarly Activities: A comprehensive term, referring to the process of scientific inquiry and communication. This could include but is not limited to any internally or externally funded scientific activities such as:

- Activities leading to the publication of books, monographs, and contributions in edited books;
- Preparation of papers for submission to refereed and non- refereed journals, and those delivered at professional meetings;
- Consulting and contract work under the auspices of the College and other professional activities involving research;
- Participation on panels;
- Unpublished research including works in progress;
- Editorial and refereeing duties; and
- Creative works and performances

Policy Guidelines

- Within its means, Northern College seeks to provide the opportunities, infrastructure, facilities and academic freedom necessary to support and maintain a high level of scholarship and research.
- All research, scholarship and scholarly activities must be conducted ethically and in ways that fully respect human rights as defined in law. Individuals are expected to use their right to academic freedom responsibly, with respect for the rights of others, and in a manner that is appropriate to and consistent with the individual’s college appointment.
- College faculty members, staff, administration, and those researchers appointed by the College are members of an educational institution whose special position in the community imposes unique obligations, and as such, as a group, must be cognizant of their position as institutional representatives. When such persons exercise their rights for academic freedom or through individual rights as independent citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but recognize that the public may judge not only their personal credibility but also their profession and their institution by statements, publications or public pronouncements. Hence, faculty and researchers shall be accurate; shall exercise appropriate respect for the opinions of others; shall clearly indicate whether they are presenting personal rather than institutional views, as the former opinions clearly fall outside the purview of rights associated with academic freedom. The College affirms that faculty shall be free to act and speak in their capacity as public citizens provided they indicate they are speaking as individuals and not acting as representatives of the College.
- Academic freedom does not confer legal immunity from either criminal prosecution or from a civil action, whether from a claim in damages by a third party or seeking of indemnification and recovery by the College, nor does it prevent peer evaluation as

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	MANDATORY REVISION DATE	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF
2020-06-01	2013-10-28	2025-06-01		VPA	3 4

SUBJECT	ACADEMIC FREEDOM – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
----------------	---

conducted or approved by the College or by other academic, research or professional bodies in the researcher’s field, whether within or outside the College.

- All members of the Northern College community who are engaged in research in the course of their academic appointment, or who are otherwise authorized in writing by the College for purposes of research and scholarly activities as governed by this policy are individually accountable to comply with this policy, and these elaborations.
- The College will take appropriate action for breaching this policy. An example of such a breach could include but would not be limited to situations where individuals:
 - Do not exercise mutual respect for the opinions of others.
 - Represent personal views as institutional views
 - Do not adhere to college policies and procedures.

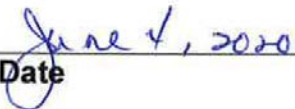
RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all faculty, administrators and staff to identify academic freedom issues, as they arise.

APPROVED BY PRESIDENT



Fred Gibbons



Date

REFERENCES

- Applied Research Policy AR-4 – Intellectual Property
 Criminal Code of Canada
 Ontario Human Rights Code
 Academic Employees Collective Agreement available at College Employer Council
<https://thecouncil.on.ca/>
 Northern College Discipline Procedure Policy
 Northern College Human Resource Services [Respectful College Community Policy](#)
 Northern College Student Code of Conduct, published in the [Northern College Student Handbook](#)
 Award of Arbitrator Kaplan OPSEU and College Employer Council Dec 2017
 Northern College [Vision/Mission](#) and Values Statement

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	MANDATORY REVISION DATE	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF
2020-06-01	2013-10-28	2025-06-01		VPA	4 4