

Research Independence & Academic Freedom Policy



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Owner: Office of the Vice President for
Administration, Finance and Community
Engagement

POLICY & PROCEDURES:

Research Independence & Academic Freedom Policy

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Version Control & Sign-Off Sheet

Version Control			
Version	Change reference	Approval	Dates
1	Initial version	University Council	1 September 2024
		Next Review	31 August 2025

1. Purpose

This policy affirms Applied Science University's commitment to research independence and academic freedom as fundamental principles of higher education. It establishes the framework within which all members of the academic community may freely pursue knowledge, conduct research, and disseminate their findings.

2. Scope and Principles

This policy applies to all faculty members, researchers, postgraduate students, and visiting scholars at ASU. The University upholds the following principles:

- All members of the academic community are free to pursue knowledge, conduct research, and disseminate findings without institutional, political, religious, or external interference.
- Faculty members shall not be penalised for expressing academic opinions, publishing research findings, or engaging in scholarly debate, provided such activities are conducted ethically and in accordance with internationally recognised research standards.
- Academic freedom extends to teaching, research, publication, intramural speech, and extramural utterances on matters of public concern.
- The University shall protect researchers from external pressures that may seek to influence, suppress, or alter research findings.

3. Research Independence

Research at ASU shall be conducted with intellectual honesty and integrity. Faculty members have the right to select research topics, determine methodologies, and report results without undue influence from funding bodies, government agencies, or commercial interests.

The University shall not accept research funding that contains conditions restricting the publication or dissemination of research outcomes, except where legitimate confidentiality requirements apply (e.g., patent applications or national security considerations approved by the Research Ethics Committee).

4. Responsibilities

- The University Council is responsible for upholding and protecting academic freedom.
- The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall ensure that this policy is communicated to all academic staff and integrated into faculty induction programmes.
- The Institutional Ethics and Integrity Committee (IEIC) shall receive and investigate complaints related to infringements of academic freedom.
- Individual faculty members are responsible for exercising academic freedom in a manner consistent with professional ethics and the University's Code of Conduct.

5. Limitations

Academic freedom does not protect activities that constitute plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, harassment, incitement to violence, or violation of applicable laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Such matters are addressed through the University's disciplinary procedures and the IEIC.

6. Complaints

Any member of the academic community who believes their academic freedom has been infringed may submit a formal complaint to the IEIC via ethics@asu.edu.bh. The IEIC shall investigate all complaints within 30 working days and report findings to the University Council.

7. Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the IEIC, with recommendations submitted to the University Council for approval.