

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY**

### **1. Policy Title - Academic Freedom and Responsibilities Policy**

### **2. Policy Number - DU-AC-14 - V1**

### **3. Effective Date - September 2022**

### **4. Next Review Date - Spring 2026-2027**

### **5. Purpose and Need**

Academic freedom is central to the University's mission which includes providing quality teaching, assurance of learning and conducting research in an inspiring environment conducive to creativity and innovation, and engagement with the community. Academic Freedom is the right of all faculty members to freely study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish as appropriate to their respective roles and responsibilities. Because the common good depends upon the free search for and exposition of truth and understanding, full freedom in research and publication is essential, and so is the freedom to discuss scholarly subjects in the classroom.

### **6. Scope of Application**

This policy shall apply to all faculty, staff and students at Dhofar University.

### **7. Policy Statement**

Outlines the meaning of academic freedom, types and philosophy, including academic responsibilities of the faculty members and thereby uphold and support the United Nations SDG-4 (Quality Education).

### **8. Procedure**

#### **8.1. Within the scope of this policy, academic freedom implies that faculty are:**

- 1) entitled to freedom, through a professionally responsible manner, in the classroom in discussing their courses in a way that enhance learning and promote student creativity and intellectual development;
- 2) entitled to full freedom undertaking research and in the publication of their findings, in full adherence ethical standards and acceptable practices of conducting and publishing research;
- 3) recognize their special stature of great respect as academic in the eyes of the community and therefore they are expected to demonstrate accuracy in presenting ideas and facts, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show

respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not necessarily representing the views of the institution;

**8.2. In exercising their academic freedom, faculty should realize that:**

- 1) Academic freedom does not exempt a faculty member from acting responsibly and carrying the responsibilities and duties defined in University bylaws, regulations, and policies.
- 2) A faculty member should recognize that the right of academic freedom is enjoyed by all members of the academic community. The faculty member should be prepared at all times to support actively the right of the individual to freedom of research and communication.
- 3) A faculty member should maintain the mutual respect and confidence of his/her colleagues. He or she should endeavor to understand the customs and traditions of the academic community. He (she) should also respect the culture and traditions of Sultanate of Oman.
- 4) A faculty member enjoys the same freedom as defined in the basic law of Oman and other laws applicable in the country.
- 5) Without appropriate approval, all faculty and staff members must avoid any action which appears to commit the University to a position on any issue and they are under obligation to make clear that they are or their views expressed, does not represent Dhofar University or its board.

**8.3. Scope of academic freedom for students:**

The aim of the university is to equip its graduates with contemporary knowledge, creativity, critical thinking and respect for diverse opinions making a balance between student's religious values and cultural background with the goal that they are prepared to take up responsible roles in the global society.

Although students may encounter ideas or images that fall outside their own value system or frame of reference at times during their education, the goal is not to alter their religious beliefs or values but rather to produce responsible graduates with the capacity for independent critical judgment, an understanding of diverse points of view and a tolerance for perspectives different from their own.

**8.4. Academic duties and responsibilities of faculty members**

Academic responsibilities include activities that aim at ensuring and safeguarding an environment in which high quality education may flourish within the rules and regulations of the Sultanate of Oman, Dhofar region, and Dhofar University.

**These include but not limited to:**

- 1) Teaching and maintaining conditions conducive to learning by encouraging free inquiry and free expression of knowledge by students

- 2) Conducting research for the purpose of keeping abreast with current knowledge in own field
- 3) Extending service to the various sections of the University and to the community in the city of Salalah, Dhofar region, and the Sultanate at large.
- 4) Insuring that all theoretical and practical teaching activities would lead to measurable learning achievements by students according to previously specified learning outcome.
- 5) Conducting scientific/literary research in own field that would lead to publishing in refereed academic journals or refereed professional conferences.
- 6) Advising students in their own field. Student advising should encompass all aspects of academic advising, including selection of electives, counseling on any academic difficulties or problems, and monitoring the academic progress of advisees.
- 7) Presenting a syllabus to the students and to the administration at the beginning of the term describing the course and clearly demonstrating the course plan, objectives, the expected learning outcomes, schedule of study, assignments, methods of study, method of learning evaluation, and reading materials.
- 8) Evaluating students work in relation to the course learning outcomes and on the basis of evidence of independent learning, mastery of course material, and ability to think and communicate clearly.
- 9) Producing materials such as handouts and computerized/traditional presentations to organize the learning activities.
- 10) Providing adequate time slots for office hours during which the faculty members should be able to meet students in his/her office throughout the term in addition to the regular class time.
- 11) Selecting the appropriate method of discussing the subject being taught with care to avoiding controversial matters that have no relation to that subject.
- 12) Using audio-visual materials, computerized and traditional, to demonstrate concepts and procedures whenever is needed.
- 13) Making it known to students at the beginning of each term that students are expected to attend all class sessions, and missed class sessions will be recorded.
- 14) Engaging in outside scientific and professional consulting, giving lectures, and participating in seminars within the University rules and regulations pertaining to outside consulting activities.
- 15) Uphold the academic integrity by strictly abiding to the "Academic Integrity policy, and "intellectual property Policy".

#### **8.5. Addressing Academic Freedom Concerns:**

- 1) Any questions or concerns with issues of intellectual or academic freedom at Dhofar University should be addressed through academic channels.
- 2) A student, faculty or staff member who finds instructionally related material, resources or activity objectionable may request its review by submitting a written statement to the College Dean indicating the reason for the objection.
- 3) In case the concern unit is the Dean's Office, then the written concern shall be submitted to the Deputy Vice Chancellor's Office.

#### **9. Guidelines**

- 1) Academic Freedom is the right bestowed on the faculty but needs to be used judiciously and in the overall interest of the stakeholders.
- 2) Academic Freedom should not contradict with the duties and responsibilities of the faculty.
- 3) Academic Freedom needs to be used within the framework of National Laws and University Bylaws.

#### **10. Custodian**

DVC

#### **11. Responsibility for implementation**

College Deans, Director FP and DVC

#### **12. Contact Person for answering queries**

DVC

#### **13. Key Stakeholders consulted**

DVC, College Deans, Director FP, UAC

#### **14. Approval details**

##### **14.1. Approval by University Council**

UC Meeting number: 2022-2023/1

Meeting date: 27/09/2022

##### **14.2. Approval by Board of Directors**

Not Required