



Policy Statement

Academic freedom and collegiality

Academic freedom

The University sees respect for academic freedom as a primary value without which no university can exist. Through its commitment to academic freedom, the University is committed to ensuring that academic staff, students and other members of the University have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.

It is similarly committed to ensuring that staff have the right to criticise the functioning of higher education institutions, including their own, without placing themselves in jeopardy.

The University believes that the academic freedom of faculty members to research, teach or communicate ideas or facts (including those that are inconvenient to external political groups or to authorities) without being targeted for repression, job loss, or detriment is essential to the principles of academia.

However, academic freedom must be applied carefully and has limitations in practice. Academic staff should never make statements that are at variance with the institutional values of the university, which they have contractually agreed to support. In particular staff must be careful to ensure that they apply mutual respect to colleagues and opponents in debate and not promote views which can be interpreted as discriminatory in terms of gender, racial background, sexual orientation, age or any other personal characteristics. They 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 Regent's University London unless they are authorized to do so.

Collegiality

Through its commitment to collegiality, the University is committed to ensuring that members of staff have the opportunity to make their voice heard, directly or indirectly, on any matter of concern to them, and in particular to ensuring that they are consulted on the development of strategy and on matters of policy and principle, including the basis on which resources are allocated. Specifically, the University is committed to principles including but not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring that academic decisions are taken by academic bodies;
- (b) Maintaining and where appropriate, introducing elected seats on the Senate, the Board of trustees and all policy boards.
- (c) Supporting a forum within each faculty (the faculty board or equivalent) which can act as a two way channel of communication between staff in the faculty and the faculty's management committee;
- (d) Encouraging regular and effective staff meetings in schools and professional support departments and to encourage staff engagement in the development of strategy and policy issues;
- (e) Canvassing members of the University to contribute to decision-making, either directly (through participation in staff meetings or through election to relevant University authorities and key committees) or indirectly (through representative bodies such as the JCC);
- (f) Making all Directorate, Senate and Board of Trustee papers and committee papers available to members of the University (typically through the Intranet and through the web site), subject only to confidentiality considerations as defined in this Code. Although University authorities and the University management will strive to consult as widely as possible – and to be as open and transparent as possible – about the development of strategy and policy and will take into account all views expressed through such consultations, it will not always be possible or practicable to defer decisions until all interested parties have expressed views.