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| Section:     | Academic/Student (AC)                                              |
| Subject:     | Programs and Curriculum                                            |
| Legislation: |                                                                    |
| Effective:   | November 17, 2015                                                  |
| Revision:    | September 1, 2016 (reformatted); December 13, 2019; March 12, 2025 |

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chair, on Behalf of SAIT's Board of Governors**

## **POLICY**

The policy of the Board of Governors is to ensure that SAIT protects and promotes academic freedom and to recognize that academic freedom is essential to SAIT's academic activities.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Academic activities**

Teaching, program and course development, program and course delivery, learning, scholarly activity and applied research, academic administration and governance, and academic advising.

**Academic freedom**

Academic freedom includes:

- a) The freedom to teach and, where feasible and applicable, to conduct scholarly activity and applied research as appropriate to one's discipline and to publish the results of this activity and research, within the limits of SAIT's policies and procedures.
- b) The freedom to engage in discourse in the classroom and to discuss topics that are pertinent to the students' achievement of the learning outcomes of the course being

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taught as documented in the course outline, within the limits of acceptable classroom conduct.

- c) The freedom to express ideas that challenge or question tradition, conventional thought and/or ideologies.

**Professional service**

Work that is done in support of one's academic discipline and includes but is not limited to activities such as serving on committees and boards of professional organizations, organizing or chairing sessions at national or international meetings, or editing or reading manuscripts for professional journals.

**SAIT campus**

SAIT's main campus and all satellite campuses, including virtual/digital campuses.

**Scholarly activity**

Any activity that involves the intentional creation, integration and/or transmission of knowledge and is subject to peer review. Scholarly activity intends to inform professional practice, contributing to the state-of-practice within a field and/or impacting the broader external environment.

**GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

1. This policy applies to instructors and students.
2. Academic freedom creates and maintains opportunities for critical thought. SAIT is a place of free and open inquiry in all matters, and instructors and students are guaranteed the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn. SAIT acknowledges that instructors and students engaged in scholarly activity and applied research have a right to academic freedom without fear of reprisal.
3. Academic freedom is not an absolute right, but is subject to the following constraints and responsibilities:
  - a) Academic freedom carries with it the responsibility to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the obligation to carry out academic activities and scholarly activities on the basis of an honest search for knowledge, and in accordance with SAIT's policies, procedures and ethical guidelines.

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- b) Instructors and students have an obligation to use their academic freedom in a responsible manner. This means that instructors and students have the right to criticize and question other views expressed on the SAIT campus, but cannot obstruct or interfere with another individual's academic freedom.
- c) Academic freedom will be restricted where it:
  - i) Violates municipal, provincial or federal law,
  - ii) Defames an individual or constitutes a genuine threat or harassment that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality of interests,
  - iii) Violates SAIT's policies and procedures, including but not limited to procedures [HR.4.10.1 Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment](#), [HS.1.2.1 Prevention of Violence](#), [AC.3.4.4 Student Non-Academic Conduct](#), [AD.2.11 Third-Party Advertising on Campus](#), and/or [AD.4.7.1 Use of SAIT's Facilities for Non-Academic Purposes](#),
  - iv) Breaches the terms of SAIT's employment and collective agreements,
  - v) Is incompatible with or disrupts SAIT's functioning as a polytechnic institution, and/or
  - vi) Endangers the safety of others.
- 4. Instructors and students are free to act and speak in their capacity as public citizens without institutional censorship and/or reprisal, subject to the constraints and responsibilities inherent in academic freedom that are set out in this policy. They must, however, avoid creating the impression that they speak for SAIT, unless SAIT has expressly delegated them that responsibility.
- 5. Instructors have the right to participate in the selection of course materials, course content and course methodology. Instructors have an associated responsibility to deliver their courses in a manner consistent with the course outlines established by the program responsible for delivering that course, and in accordance with the expectations established through the performance planning review process and as set out in this policy.
- 6. Instructors have the freedom to pursue and participate in internal and external institutional and professional service, subject to the obligations or duties inherent in their roles and positions at SAIT.

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7. Academic freedom does not relieve instructors from their obligations or duties inherent in their roles at SAIT, and does not imply rights greater than those granted by applicable laws and regulations.
8. SAIT is not accountable for infringements of academic freedom originating beyond SAIT's control, including but not limited to legislation. SAIT is also not accountable for infringements of academic freedom by instructors or students that occur without SAIT's knowledge and express or implied concurrence.

## PROCEDURE

1. Instructors or students who believe that their academic freedom has been infringed may apply to the vice president, academic, who shall establish an ad hoc committee to resolve the issue.
  - a) In the case of an instructor who believes that their academic freedom has been infringed, this committee shall be comprised of one member appointed by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA), one member appointed by the vice president, academic, and with those two members to decide on a third member from within the SAIT community.
  - b) In the case of a student who believes that their academic freedom has been infringed, this committee shall be comprised of one member appointed by the SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa), one member appointed by the vice president, academic, and with those two members to decide on a third member from within the SAIT community.

The committee chair shall be selected from among the three members. The committee's decision shall be delivered by the chair in writing to the vice president, academic. The vice president, academic shall communicate the decision to all affected parties. The committee's decision is final and binding.

2. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under procedure [AC.3.4.4 Student Non-Academic Conduct](#), in the case of students, or under procedure [HR.4.4.1 Corrective Action Procedures](#) or applicable contracts, in the case of instructors.

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## DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. SAIT's president and CEO may approve procedures that are consistent with and supplemental to this policy, including those that interpret or provide examples of expectations as described in this policy; establish additional expectations to supplement those described in this policy; establish processes for reporting, investigating and determining allegations; specify sanctions; and/or provide avenues of appeal.

POLICY

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