

Section:	Academic/Student (AC)
Subject:	Programs and Curriculum
Legislation:	
Effective:	November 17, 2015
Revision:	September 1, 2016 (reformatted)

APPROVED:

Chair, on Behalf of SAIT's Board of Governors

POLICY

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

PHILOSOPHY

SAIT is committed to the highest academic standards. Academic freedom is fundamental to the realization of SAIT's commitment to these standards of excellence, and to SAIT's achievement of its vision and mission.

SAIT recognizes that academic freedom creates and maintains opportunities for critical thought, independent thinking and expression, and open discussion in a post-secondary environment.

SAIT recognizes that members of the SAIT community are free to examine, question and express their views on academic issues, and to question and propose changes to SAIT's policies and procedures, free from institutional censorship and/or reprisal.

Finally, SAIT recognizes the freedom of its employees to carry out their academic activities and, where applicable and feasible, to carry out scholarly activity and applied research as approved and within the limits of SAIT's policies and procedures. However, academic freedom involves academic responsibilities, as outlined in this policy.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

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 taught as documented in the course outline, within the limits of acceptable classroom conduct; and
- c) The freedom to express ideas that challenge or question tradition, conventional thought and/or ideologies.

SAIT community

For the purpose of this procedure, the SAIT community includes SAIT's governors, employees, students, contractors, consultants, agents, and volunteers.

Scholarly activity

Scholarly activity in the polytechnic context is any activity that involves the intentional creation, integration and/or dissemination of knowledge with a view to informing professional practice, contributing to the state-of-practice within a field and/or impacting the broader external environment. Applied research is one form of scholarly activity at SAIT.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. This policy applies to all members of the SAIT community.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

2. Academic freedom carries with it the responsibility to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to carry out academic activities on the basis of an honest search for knowledge, and in accordance with SAIT's policies, procedures and ethical guidelines.
3. All members of the SAIT community have an obligation to use academic freedom in a respectful and responsible manner. Academic freedom does not imply or give the right to engage in any action that demeans the freedom or dignity of other members of the SAIT community. Academic freedom is based on mutual respect for other members of the SAIT community.
4. Members of the SAIT community are free to act and speak in their capacity as public citizens without institutional censorship and/or reprisal, subject to the obligations inherent in academic freedom set forth in this policy. They must, however, avoid creating the impression that they speak for SAIT, unless SAIT has expressly delegated them that responsibility.
5. Faculty members have the right to participate in the selection of course materials, course content and course methodology. Faculty members 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 subject to this policy.
6. All members of the SAIT community 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. Professional service refers to work 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.
7. Academic freedom does not relieve members of the SAIT community from their obligations or duties inherent in their roles at SAIT.
8. Academic freedom does not imply rights greater than those granted by applicable laws and regulations.
9. 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 members of the SAIT community that occur without SAIT's knowledge and express or implied concurrence.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.



PROCEDURE

1. Individuals who believe that their academic freedom has been infringed may apply to the vice president, academic, who shall call for an ad hoc committee to resolve the issue. This committee shall be comprised of one member appointed by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association, one member appointed by the vice president, academic, and with the 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 procedure may result in disciplinary action under procedure [AC.3.4.1 Student Code of Conduct](#), in the case of students, or under procedure [HR.4.4.1 Corrective Action Procedures](#) or applicable contracts, in the case of other members of the SAIT community.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.