

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Approval Authority: Board of Directors / Senate endorsement

Established On: 2003 12 02

Amendments: 2013 11 29, 2019 02 20, 2026 05 13

For more information and answers to common questions, please see NOSM University's Academic Freedom webpage [<https://www.nosm.ca/about/governance/board/academic-freedom/>].

At NOSM University, the pursuit of knowledge, discovery, and the advancement of learning are fundamental to our mission. Academic Freedom and collegial governance are essential to these purposes. Academic Freedom ensures that inquiry, teaching, scholarly activities, publication, debate, and participation in the affairs of the University and community can take place without interference. Collegial governance provides the framework of shared responsibility that protects and upholds academic freedom and is the way in which that academic staff can play the decisive role in the governance of academic affairs through such bodies as the Senate. Together, academic freedom and collegial governance safeguard the integrity of the University's academic mission and its capacity to support and sponsor scholarly research.

The common good of society depends upon the search for knowledge and its free exposition. Academic Freedom is the freedom to examine, question, teach, discuss, and learn, and it involves the right to investigate, speculate, and comment without reference to prescribed doctrine. Academic Freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual; on the contrary, Academic Freedom makes commitment to a position or course of action possible.

NOSM University is dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Its members enjoy certain rights and privileges essential to these twin objectives. Central among these rights and privileges is the freedom within the law to pursue what in their opinion are fruitful avenues of inquiry, to teach and to learn in an environment unhindered by external or non-academic constraints, and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion.

This freedom extends to members of NOSM University and to all who are invited to participate in its activities. All members of NOSM University are deemed to recognize this fundamental principle and are deemed to share responsibility for its support, its safeguard and preservation. Behaviour obstructing free and full discussion of ideas which are safe and accepted and those which may be unpopular or abhorrent threatens the integrity of NOSM University and shall not be tolerated.

Suppression of Academic Freedom will prevent NOSM University from carrying out its primary functions. In particular, as an autonomous institution NOSM University shall shield and protect its members from any efforts by the state or its agents, the officers of NOSM University or its agents, its members, private individuals, corporations and other entities to limit or suppress Academic Freedom.

NOSM University is committed to supporting ethical and independent scholarly inquiry, consistent with the professional, regulatory, and research ethics standards that guide responsible academic and clinical research.

With respect to Academic Freedom and risks associated with research involving human subjects, all contracts, protocols or investigator agreements for industrial sponsorship of clinical trials or for participation in such clinical trials shall be deemed to provide that the clinical investigators shall not be prevented by the sponsor or anyone else from informing participants in the study, members of the research group, other physicians administering the treatment, research ethics boards, regulatory agencies and the scientific community, of risks to participants that the investigators identify during the research. These provisions also apply to any risks from a treatment so identified following the conclusion of a trial if there are patients being administered the treatment in a non-trial setting. The term “risk” includes but is not limited to the inefficacy of the treatment and direct safety concerns.

This declaration shall apply to all contracts, protocols or investigator agreements for industrial sponsorship of clinical trials or for participation in such clinical trials.

Should any provision in this policy limit academic and professional staff rights under collective agreement provisions, the collective agreement provisions prevail.

Review and Revision History

Review Period: 5 years or as needed.

Date for Next Review: 2031/01