

Effective Date: December 1st 2020

Date of Next Review: January 1st 2022

Responsible University Office:

Vice Chancellor Office

Responsible University Administrator:

Registrar, BRAC University

BRAC University Academic Freedom Policy

A university "must be sufficiently stable to sustain the ideal which gave it birth and sufficiently responsive to remain relevant to the society which supports it" (ASHBY, E. (1966) *Universities, British, Indian, African*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

In a university, academic freedom applies to all of its active members, including faculty, students, librarian, and all other support staff. In embracing academic freedom, Brac University (BU) wants its members to give the right to express their views in speech, writing, and through electronic communication, both on and off-campus without fear of sanction. BU is also committed to ensuring the maintenance of freedom of its members to teach and conduct research, learn and serve, maintain quality, and ensure the institution's freedom from any outside interference with integrity. We pursue creating an enabling environment where the faculty, students, and staff can exercise truth-based pursuits based on ethics, scientific robustness, and quality. We seek the truth according to the best methods and practices of the respective discipline.

Academic freedom to pursue the truth must involve tolerance for students and faculty to make mistakes of inquiry. In embracing academic freedom, BU pledges to defend this quest for truth by its faculty, staff, and students. Furthermore, we are committed to creating an enabling environment so that faculty and students can practice their academic goals. BU wishes to encourage its members to pursue a free search for truth and its exposition.

Academic freedom is integral to excellence in education. Through this endeavor, society benefits from receiving objective and independent criticism. The BU member can inquire about any relevant scientific, socio-economic, and political questions without any fear imposed by any influential entity. However, the core principle of academic freedom also entitles the responsibility of protecting the faculty, students, and staff's rights regardless of employment status.

The librarians' professional conduct and responsibilities are also part of academic practice. No censorship shall be imposed on the librarian's freedom to select and make available materials supporting the teaching, research, and general learning functions of the faculty, researchers, and students.

Faculty and researcher are eligible for full freedom in research and disseminate their findings conditional to their adequate performance in their academic and administrative responsibilities. The faculty should also be very careful in not introducing any controversial or personal opinion damaging to the vision of the university, which has no relation to the content of the teaching. The faculty members and students can engage in intellectual debate about any disputable topic without fear of censorship or retaliation.

As a citizen, faculty, researchers, the staff can express their opinion in the public sphere. Still, their unique position in society also demands distinct obligation, a commitment to honesty and integrity. Hence, the view or statement needs to be accurate, appropriately restrained and sensible related to politics and religion, and respectful to their institution's established policy. Most importantly, while adequately identifying themselves as citizens of the country or member of the university, they must indicate that they are not institutional spokesperson unless specifically commissioned to serve in such a capacity.

However, BU will undertake action if the manner of expression substantially impairs others' rights. In the case of faculty members, those views demonstrate that they are professionally ignorant, incompetent, or dishonest concerning their discipline or fields of expertise. A second written warning will follow the first written warning if the practice continued and be added to the personal file. This information will be considered for further promotion, contract renewal, other academic opportunities. Similarly, the member of the university will have the right to seek redress or request a hearing if they believe their rights have been violated.

Finally, this policy does not override promotion and tenure guidelines, nor other university policies concerning academic ethics and misconduct.