



ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Introduction

Academic freedom is necessary for the effective discharge of the duty of a university which, expressed in the words of the Charter, is " ... *to advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research.*" (Charter § 2)

Over the centuries universities have had to struggle to establish, to maintain, and often to re-establish academic freedom, not for the comfort of academic staff, but for the health of the university. Where academic freedom has been suppressed the spirit of the university has suffered.

Like many qualities which are difficult to describe precisely, but which are nonetheless real (e.g excellence, virtue), academic freedom is not easy to define. However, stimulated by the passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act, Academic Assembly set up a number of meetings which led to the formulation of the following code on *Academic Freedom and Corresponding Responsibilities*. After acceptance by Academic Assembly, it was approved by Senate on 2 November 1988, and by Council on 25 November 1988.

Academic Freedom and Corresponding Responsibilities

The Institution

Freedom

To govern its own affairs, in particular, in teaching and research.

Corresponding responsibility

To maintain academic standards and independence of judgement.

Members of the University

Freedom

Within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions.

Corresponding responsibility

To support the same freedoms for those of differing views.

Freedom

To discuss the University's affairs, in appropriate media.

Corresponding responsibility

To enter into such discussion with integrity and charity, not representing personal opinions as those of the University.

Academic Staff

Freedom

To take an active part in the governance of the University.

Corresponding responsibility

To accept decisions properly arrived at.

Freedom

To select methods of teaching course elements which have been properly agreed.

Corresponding responsibility

To take full cognizance of (i) the intellectual and professional needs of students and (ii) requirement for the integrity and coherence of an academic course.

Freedom

To select one's area of research, subject to constraints on the resources available; to publish subject to academic judgement.

Corresponding responsibility

To maintain high standards of scholarship and to be responsive to reasoned discussion.

Freedom

Not to take part in research which is morally repugnant to the individual.

Corresponding responsibility

Not to use such freedom in a fickle way.