

Leaders Institute Response to the Draft Model Code on Freedom of Speech in Higher Education Providers

Introduction

Leaders Institute generally supports the Draft Model Code on Freedom of Speech in Higher Education Providers. It protects freedom of speech in relation to teaching, subjects of study and research. There is one area included in the definition of academic freedom that might be improved by deletion or amendment.

A suggested change to the definition

The definition of academic freedom includes, ‘the freedom of academic staff and students to make public comment on any issue in their personal capacities, not speaking either on behalf of the university or as an officer of the university’. This freedom strays from the constraint of ‘their subjects of study and research’ and goes against the current policy of many institutions which restricts public comment on ‘university management issues’ to those staff authorised by the Vice-Chancellor. Furthermore, this part of the definition creates a right for academic staff and students that is not accorded to administrative staff.

Leaders Institute submits that this part of the definition should either be deleted or modified by the inclusion of the italicised phrase, ‘the freedom of academic staff and students to make public comment on any issue *related to their subjects of study and research* in their personal capacities, not speaking either on behalf of the university or as an officer of the university’. The part of the definition that provides a right to ‘express their opinions in relation to the university in which they work or are enrolled’ establishes a broad right to comment about the university.

Signed



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