



Media and Freedom of Expression Policy

1. Purpose

King's Own Institute (KOI) is committed to free and open enquiry in all matters. Except where there are limitations required by law or by the functioning of KOI, KOI respects and supports the freedom of all members of its community to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn.¹

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Student and Staff Codes of Conduct, Provision and Acceptable Use of IT Policy, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Privacy Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all decision-making bodies in KOI and to all members of the KOI community – students, staff, contractors, partners and visitors.

3. Definitions

Academic freedom means

- the freedom of academic staff to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research
- the freedom of academic staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research
- the freedom of academic staff and students to express their opinions in relation to KOI through lawful forms of expression

Speech extends to all forms of expressive conduct including communication using social media. Social media means any facility for online publication and commentary through and on the internet.

The duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students

- includes the duty to ensure that no member of staff or student suffers unfair disadvantage or unfair adverse discrimination on any basis recognised at law including race, gender, sexuality, religion and political belief
- includes the duty to ensure that no member of staff or student is subject to threatening or intimidating behaviour by another person or persons on account of anything they have said or proposed to say in exercising their freedom of speech
- supports reasonable and proportionate measures to prevent any person from using lawful speech which a reasonable person would regard, in the circumstances, as likely to humiliate or intimidate other persons and which is intended to have either or both of those effects
- does not extend to a duty to protect any person from feeling offended or shocked or insulted by the lawful speech of another.

4. Principles²

Every member of staff and every student enjoys academic freedom and freedom of speech exercised at KOI or in connection with KOI subject only to restraints imposed by:

- law
- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct necessary to the discharge of the institute's teaching and research activities
- the right and freedom of others to express themselves and to hear and receive information and opinions

¹ Based on the Chicago Principles ['Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression', University of Chicago]

² Based on the Model Code on Freedom of Speech [Justice Robert French, March 2019]



- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct to enable KOI to fulfil its duty to foster the wellbeing of students and staff
- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct necessary to enable KOI to give effect to its legal duties including its duties to visitors to KOI.

KOI values civility and all members of the KOI community share in the responsibility of maintaining a climate of mutual respect. The freedom to discuss ideas does not mean that individuals can say whatever they wish, whenever they wish. However, all staff have a professional responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional manner when engaging with the media and making public comment in the name of KOI and to uphold the good reputation of KOI.

Discussion of ideas may not be suppressed because the ideas are thought by some members of the KOI community to be offensive. As a consequence, members of the KOI community must not interfere with the freedom of others whose views they reject.

Academic staff must comply with any policies and rules supporting KOI's duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students. They are not precluded from including content in their teaching solely on the ground that it may offend or shock any student or class of students.

Staff are expected to act in good faith when providing media, social media and public comment and not misrepresent their expertise.

KOI has the right and the responsibility to determine the terms and conditions on which it shall permit visitors to use KOI facilities and speak at KOI.

KOI encourages staff and students to use its complaint resolution processes – the Complaints and Appeals Policy for students and the Complaints Policy for staff – to resolve complaints which may arise from the exercise of freedom of expression and academic freedom.

This policy does not detract from the rights of students, staff and KOI to pursue legal remedies.

5. Social media

There is a distinction between *official* and *unofficial* use of social media:

- *Official* use is the use of social media under the banner of KOI
- *Unofficial* use is the personal use of social media outside the realms of KOI and not for the purpose of KOI.

However, it is important to note that staff and students may be held accountable for discussion of matters relating to KOI in the public space that breach KOI policies and procedures. Content on a KOI related topic should be accompanied by a standard disclaimer such as 'The postings on this site are my own opinions and views and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of KOI'.

Comments that contravene the limits set out in this policy will be removed (where possible), or requested to be removed, and followed up with the person posting the comment. Depending on the nature of the inappropriate comment, further action may be required in accordance with KOI policies.

Staff and students should not post, or seek to post, content that includes material that is not their original work or that in any way infringes copyright or the intellectual property of another person without proper due reference and/or acknowledgment of that work.

The Marketing Director must approve official social media sites and these sites must adhere to KOI branding guidelines. Staff and students who manage official social media sites must attend training in management and reporting requirements.

The Marketing Director will examine any posting on any external social media or other website of which they become aware that threatens or incites harm to its staff, students or facilities, or any posting or website that threatens the KOI's reputation. KOI will take action where it believes a posting or a website breaches its policies.

Staff or students who believe that content posted on a KOI site has in some way breached KOI policies should contact the Marketing Director so that the content can be reviewed. Depending on the nature of the content,



- KOI may monitor the activity,
- The Marketing Director may contact the author or the site and ask for the material to be removed,
- After careful consideration and appropriate advice, the Marketing Director may respond to the posting
- Where the posting contravenes KOI policy, KOI will take appropriate action
- KOI will not tolerate any posting that threatens or incites harm to its staff, students or facilities. Such threats are taken seriously and will be referred to the police, even if the posting is anonymous.

6. Media enquiries

Media enquiries must be formally managed by authorised persons within KOI to ensure consistent and approved information is provided.

All media inquiries are to be directed to the CEO and President, with details of the time, date, name of media representative, organisation represented and nature of inquiry.

The CEO and President will determine whether a response to the enquiry is appropriate and who will make the response. For any response or communication, a draft written note containing relevant points must be prepared and approved by the CEO and President.

Document control

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*****END OF POLICY*****