

Complete Policy Title:  
**Statement on Academic Freedom**

Policy Number (if applicable):  
**SPS E1**

Approved by:  
**Senate**  
**Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval:  
**December 14, 2011**  
**December 15, 2011**

Date of Original Approval(s):

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:  
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Responsible Executive:  
**University Secretariat**

Enquiries:  
[University Secretariat](#)

***DISCLAIMER:** If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails*

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McMaster University is dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. The University's faculty members<sup>1</sup> enjoy certain rights and privileges essential to these twin objectives. Central among these rights and privileges is the academic freedom, within the terms of their appointment, to pursue multiple avenues of inquiry; to teach and to learn unhindered by non-academic constraints; and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion. This freedom extends not only to members of the University faculty, but to all who are invited by faculty to participate in its academic fora. All faculty members of the University must recognize this fundamental principle and must share responsibility for supporting, safeguarding and preserving this central freedom. Behaviour that obstructs free and full academic and scholarly pursuit, not only of ideas which are safe and accepted but of those which may be unpopular or even abhorrent, vitally threatens the integrity of the University, and cannot be tolerated.

Suppression of academic freedom would prevent the University from carrying out its primary functions. In particular, as an autonomous institution McMaster University will protect its faculty from any efforts, from whatever source, to limit or suppress academic freedom.

Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a responsible and professional manner consistent with the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> University faculty members are defined as those current or retired academic staff who are/were covered by the terms and conditions of the McMaster University Revised Policy And Regulations With Respect To Academic Appointment, Tenure And Promotion