

FREE INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY POLICY

This policy is aligned with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards 2015 that the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) should have ‘a clearly articulated higher education purpose that includes a commitment to and support for free intellectual inquiry in its academic endeavours’ (HES B.1.1.3) and that ‘freedom of intellectual inquiry is upheld and protected’ (HES 6.1.4).

1. The SCD supports implementation of the principle of free intellectual inquiry in teaching, research and scholarship associated with the delivery of all its awards, whether coursework or research awards. All SCD staff are required to embrace and enact this principle and to encourage their students to do likewise.
2. The mission of the SCD concerns the advancement of learning about, research into, and appreciation of Christian tenets and values, and adherence to the academic integrity of the discipline in all areas is regarded as entirely compatible with this mission.
3. The intentionally ecumenical ethos of the SCD is regarded as supportive of the principle of free intellectual inquiry.
4. All staff and students are expected to show respect for all Christian traditions.
5. The SCD will ensure that the staff employed by the SCD and by Member Institutions for the purpose of delivery of SCD awards understand this policy and are equipped to implement it.
6. Admission of students to SCD award programs is open and dependent entirely on academic preparedness. No statement of faith is required as a condition of enrolment or in fulfilment of any assessment task or other academic requirement.
7. Students who are directed to SCD award programs by sponsors may pursue patterns of study required by their sponsors, but their learning and completion of assessment tasks will be carried out with due regard for the principle of free intellectual inquiry in pursuit of academic excellence, and they will not be penalized for expressing particular opinions.
8. Staff and students are encouraged to appreciate the respective roles of faith and reason in an academic context.
9. Academic staff are free to make public comment on issues that lie within their academic expertise.

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