

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY

Key Information

Owner:	Circomedia
Author:	Academic Team
Date agreed by SMT/Board:	2 nd January 2024
Version:	1.0
Date of last review:	11 th December 2023
Date of next review:	11 th December 2025

Changes to document:

Key Information.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Academic freedom.....	1
Freedom of Speech.....	2
Implementation.....	2
Conclusion.....	3

Introduction

Circomedia is committed to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech as fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking. Circomedia is committed to adherence to Section 43 of the Education Act (No. 2) 1896. This policy is to be read in accordance with the partnership agreement between Circomedia and Bath Spa University.

Academic freedom

Circomedia supports academic freedom, which is the freedom of scholars, teachers, and students to pursue and disseminate knowledge, research, and ideas without interference, censorship, or reprisal. Academic freedom includes the following principles:

1. Freedom of inquiry: Scholars, teachers, and students have the right to pursue and disseminate knowledge and ideas without fear of censorship, repression, or retaliation.

2. Freedom of expression: Scholars, teachers, and students have the right to express their opinions, beliefs, and ideas without fear of censorship, repression, or retaliation.
3. Freedom of association: Scholars, teachers, and students have the right to form and join academic associations and organizations without fear of censorship, repression, or retaliation.
4. Freedom from discrimination: Scholars, teachers, and students have the right to be free from discrimination based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or other characteristics that are irrelevant to their academic qualifications and contributions.

Freedom of Speech

Circomedia also supports freedom of speech, which is the right to express one's opinions, beliefs, and ideas without fear of censorship, repression, or retaliation. Freedom of speech includes the following principles:

1. Respect for diversity: All members of the Circomedia community have the right to express their opinions, beliefs, and ideas, and must also respect the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the community.
2. Civility and responsibility: All members of the Circomedia community must express their opinions, beliefs, and ideas in a civil and responsible manner, and must not engage in harassment, bullying, or other forms of abusive behaviour.
3. Protection of vulnerable groups: All members of the Circomedia community must be aware of the potential impact of their speech on vulnerable groups, such as marginalized communities, and must take steps to ensure that their speech does not harm or discriminate against such groups.
4. Academic integrity: All members of the Circomedia community must adhere to academic standards of honesty, accuracy, and rigor in their speech, and must not engage in plagiarism, fabrication, or other forms of academic misconduct.

Implementation

Circomedia is committed to implementing this policy through the following measures:

1. Education and training: All members of the Circomedia community will receive education and training on academic freedom and freedom of speech, including the principles and values underlying these concepts, and their practical implications for research, teaching, and learning.
2. Grievance procedures: Circomedia has grievance procedures to address complaints related to violations of academic freedom and freedom of speech, including harassment, discrimination, and other forms of abusive behaviour.
3. Review and revision: Circomedia will regularly review and revise this policy in light of new developments, emerging issues, and feedback from the community, and will communicate any changes to the community in a timely and transparent manner.

Conclusion

Circomedia is committed to upholding the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech, and to fostering an environment that is conducive to the pursuit of knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking. This policy reflects our values and our commitment to the partnership with Bath Spa University, and our determination to maintain a culture of open inquiry, robust debate, and mutual respect within the Circomedia community.