

CHAMPIONING ACADEMIC FREEDOM: URDANETA CITY UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL AND TRANSPARENT SCHOLARSHIP

In alignment with **Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16)**—Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions—**Urdaneta City University (UCU)** firmly upholds **academic freedom** as a cornerstone of its educational philosophy. The university has established policies that protect the **freedom of faculty and researchers to pursue scholarly inquiries, select research areas, and share their findings publicly**, ensuring an environment where knowledge and truth can flourish without fear or bias.

UCU's governance framework recognizes that innovation and progress stem from unrestricted intellectual exploration. Through its institutional research guidelines and ethical standards, the university empowers faculty members and students to engage in research that addresses pressing societal, technological, and cultural issues while maintaining responsibility, integrity, and respect for academic ethics.

The **Research and Development Office (RDO)** plays a vital role in safeguarding this freedom by providing oversight, technical assistance, and ethical review of research projects. It ensures that researchers are supported in disseminating their work through conferences, publications, and community-based projects that contribute to national and global development goals.

In sustaining its commitment to SDG 16, **UCU continues to innovate programs** that foster critical thinking, intellectual honesty, and responsible expression. These include research training workshops, scholarly forums, and interdisciplinary collaborations that encourage diverse voices and perspectives in academia.

By enshrining academic freedom in its institutional policies, **Urdaneta City University** reaffirms its role as a champion of truth, justice, and innovation. Through responsible scholarship and ethical governance, the university continues to create a culture of peace, transparency, and intellectual integrity—true to the essence of SDG 16.

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Policy on Academic Freedom in Research and Public Discourse

Effective Date: July 1, 2023

Review Date: July 30, 2023

1. Purpose

This policy affirms Urdaneta City University's commitment to protecting academic freedom. The university empowers faculty members, researchers, and scholars to freely determine their areas of research and to openly communicate and share their expertise with the academic community and the public. UCU recognizes that academic freedom is essential to advancing knowledge, innovation, and intellectual growth.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all faculty members, researchers, and scholars of UCU engaged in teaching, research, creative work, and public intellectual activities.

3. Policy Statement

Urdaneta City University upholds academic freedom as a core institutional value. Faculty members and researchers have the right to select research topics based on their scholarly interests and expertise and to publicly present, teach, or publish their work, provided that ethical research standards and UCU's values are upheld.

4. Key Principles

4.1 Freedom to Choose Research Areas

- Faculty and researchers may independently select their research topics without undue restriction, as long as the proposed studies meet ethical requirements and align with the university's research agenda.
- UCU supports interdisciplinary, innovative, and emerging research directions that contribute to knowledge creation and societal development.

4.2 Freedom to Teach, Publish, and Share Research Publicly

- Faculty members and researchers have the right to teach, present, and publish their work in academic and public platforms, both locally and internationally.
- When engaging in public discourse, faculty and researchers are expected to communicate professionally and in a manner consistent with the university's mission.

4.3 Commitment to Ethical Conduct and Research Integrity

- All research activities must be guided by honesty, rigor, transparency, and accountability.
- Public statements or publications must be based on verified data and sound methodology, avoiding misinterpretation or exaggeration of results.

4.4 Protection Against Retaliation

UCU ensures that faculty members and researchers are protected from retaliation or negative consequences arising from their choice of research topics or public dissemination of scholarly work, provided activities remain within professional and ethical standards.

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5. Procedures

5.1 Research Topic Approval

- Faculty members and researchers shall submit their research topics to their respective departments for review to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and ethical standards.
- Once approved, researchers may pursue their work without interference, within available institutional resources.
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5.2 Sharing and Publication of Research

- Researchers may share findings through conferences, journals, and public communication platforms, provided they follow institutional guidelines and clarify when views expressed are personal and not official university positions.
- When necessary, the Office of Communications may assist in ensuring responsible public representation.
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5.3 Conflict Resolution

- Concerns or disputes involving academic freedom may be formally elevated to the Academic Freedom Review Committee.
- The Committee shall assess concerns objectively and ensure that academic freedom is upheld while balancing the interests of the institution.
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6. Responsibilities

- **Faculty and Researchers:** Conduct research responsibly and follow ethical and professional standards in dissemination.
- **Department Heads:** Support the development and review of research proposals and facilitate scholarly activities.
- **Office of Communications:** Assists in responsible public sharing of research outputs.
- **Academic Freedom Review Committee:** Ensures protection of academic freedom and resolves related concerns.
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7. Review and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed annually to maintain alignment with evolving academic and societal needs. All faculty and researchers are expected to uphold this policy to sustain an environment that encourages intellectual freedom, responsibility, and excellence.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P9qsrWGKCYmQ046Ac2MmTgJazMjnv4vz/view?usp=sharing>

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