

Conscientious Objection in Teaching and Assessment Policy

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| Purpose: | To provide guidance to students and staff dealing with situations where conscientious belief conflicts with unit requirements. | | |
| Audience: | Staff, Students | | |
| Supporting Procedures: | <i>Conscientious Objection Procedure</i> | | |
| Contact Officer: | Secretary to Academic Council | Phone: | See Campus Directory |

Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy in Policy and Procedure Manager™ [the electronic policy management system (EPMS)] to ensure you are referring to the latest version.

Preamble:

The University recognises that some students may have a conscientious belief which is in conflict with learning activities, including those for assessment, in one or more units in which they enrol. The University shall endeavour to make reasonable accommodations to meet such beliefs.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, the University will not act in any way that violates Commonwealth or State law and the University is not obliged to accommodate a conscientious belief which puts it at risk of violating a law (e.g. a belief based on racism).

Objectives:

1. To provide a framework for the management of conscientious objection in teaching and assessment.

Policy:

Conscientious objection in teaching

1. In cases where Unit Coordinators can foresee students having problems of belief in their unit, the unit study guide should mention these and advise any students with problems about this to see the Unit Coordinator.
2. Teaching staff who have a conscientious objection in relation to teaching activities they are required to conduct should raise these concerns in accordance with the *Conscientious Objection Procedure*.
 - 2.1. Deans Learning and Teaching are responsible for ensuring that any conscientious objection to teaching activities be considered without disadvantage to the teaching staff.

Conscientious objection in learning activities

3. A student must take the initiative in identifying a conscientious difficulty with a learning activity, including those for assessment and draw this to the attention of the University before undertaking such practice.
4. Students with a conscientious objection to a particular learning activity, including those for assessment, should not simply be excused from an activity, but instead be

given an alternative that meets the same learning outcomes. Alternatives made available to students with a conscientious objection do not have to be made available to all other students in the unit.

5. The student can request that there be a suitable alternative, but has no right to demand that the alternative take a particular form. There are also countervailing factors to be taken into account in deciding whether and (if so) how to meet the student's concerns, including:
 - 5.1. professional requirements: those of external registration bodies, and staff concerns to be able to certify that graduates have met the course learning outcomes and basic professional competencies. This requires a careful consideration of whether or not the learning activity or assessment at issue is essential for the training of practitioners in that profession;
 - 5.2. whether it is a required or an elective unit (the case for expensive alternative arrangements in an elective unit is much weaker);
 - 5.3. whether there is time to put alternative arrangements in place;
 - 5.4. whether it would result in the University breaching its equal opportunity obligations;
 - 5.5. whether other students would be disadvantaged in the quality of their education; and/or
 - 5.6. available resources.
6. Unit Coordinators should ensure that the alternative arrangements made for similar conscientious objections are consistent.
7. A student who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Unit Coordinator may request the Head of Discipline to review the decision and thereafter appeal to the Student Appeals Committee.

Supporting Procedures:

Academic Council is authorised to approve all supporting procedures.

Supporting Guidelines:

There are no supporting guidelines.

Supporting Standards:

There are no supporting standards.

Performance Indicators:

There are no performance indicators.

Definitions:

The definition of these terms appears in the "Dictionary of Terms". Please refer to the "Dictionary of Terms" in Policy and Procedure Manager™ to ensure you are referring to the latest version.

There are no key terms.

Related Documents:

[Conscientious Objection Procedure](#)

[Coursework Regulations: Effective from 1 January 2018](#)

[Assessment Policy 2016 August 01](#)

[Assessment Policy 2016 January 01](#)

[Student Appeals Policy](#)

References:

There are no references.

Approval and Implementation:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Approval Authority: | Academic Council |
| Responsible Officer(s): | Secretary to Academic Council |

Revision History:

| Version | Date Approved | Effective Date (if later than 'Date Approved') | Next Review Date | Resolution No. (if applicable) |
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