



**Freedom of Speech and Academic
Freedom Code of Practice**

2025

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Code of Practice

This Code is applicable to Hult International Business School London Campuses and Ashridge (Bonar Law Memorial) Trust.

Purpose and Scope

This Code should be read in conjunction with the School's Statement of Academic Freedom. The Statement and Code set out Hult's commitment to securing and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom for all staff, faculty, students, and visitors, in accordance with UK law. It applies to all activities on or off Hult premises and to all members of the Hult and Ashridge UK community.

1. Principles of Practice

We operate on the following principles:

- **Open Academic Environment:** Academic freedom and freedom of speech are fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and the School's mission. Intellectual challenge, robust debate, and exposure to diverse viewpoints are vital to academic and personal growth. Free, open and robust discussion can be achieved only if all concerned engage critically but courteously with each other.
- **Non-Discrimination in Assessment:** Evaluation of students, staff and faculty is based solely on legitimate academic and professional criteria, not on political, religious, or philosophical beliefs.
- **Cultural Inclusivity:** We are committed to maintaining the rights of all community members to express themselves freely, within the parameters of the law.
- **No Institutional Endorsement:** The School allows lawful viewpoints to be expressed during events or discourse, however, this should not be considered as the School's endorsement of any views expressed through such channels.
- **Minimal Restriction:** We aim to apply the least restrictive, least burdensome approach to the regulation of speech and expression, consistent with legal and safety obligations. Lawful speech will not be restricted because it is controversial, unpopular, or offensive.
- **Prevent Duty Compatibility:** We fulfill our Prevent responsibilities without compromising freedom of expression, applying context-sensitive, proportionate responses to potential risks.

2. Legal Framework

This Code is made in accordance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, the Office for Students regulatory framework, the Education Act 1986, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty).

Where institutional policies conflict with statutory rights to freedom of speech or academic freedom, statutory rights prevail.

3. Institutional Neutrality and Securing Freedom of Speech

The School maintains institutional neutrality on political, ideological, or religious matters, while providing platforms for lawful discourse. Faculty, staff and students have the right to pursue research, teaching, and learning without institutional discipline or adverse action, subject only to the law and professional standards. No member of the community will be required to affirm or subscribe to any particular ideology as a condition of employment, study, or participation.

The School supports those exercising their rights, including students and faculty facing undue pressure, interference, or retaliation for their lawful speech or academic work. Hult will take all reasonably practicable steps to secure lawful freedom of speech for staff, students, and visiting speakers.

4. Limitations

Freedom of speech and academic freedom do not protect:

- Speech or conduct that violates the law (e.g., harassment, defamation, incitement to violence or terrorism).
- Breaches of institutional codes (e.g., Hult Honor Code, employee handbook, etc.).

5. Responsibilities of Faculty, Staff, Students, and Visitors

All members of the Hult community are expected to uphold this Code and respect the rights of others to free speech and academic freedom.

Members may criticize and contest views expressed on campus but may not obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express lawful views.

The School may regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure ordinary activities are not disrupted, but such regulation must be content-neutral and not used to suppress debate.

6. Complaints and Review

Complaints regarding alleged breaches of this Code may be raised through the School's standard complaints procedures.

The School will review complaints in light of this Code and applicable law, ensuring that no disciplinary or adverse action is taken against lawful speech.

7. Communication and Training

The School will communicate this Code to students at least annually and provide appropriate training to the Hult community to ensure understanding and compliance.

8. Review and Transparency

This Statement will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with legal developments and institutional values.