

Statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

Academic Freedom

Whilst the law on academic freedom as set out in the Education Reform Act 1988 does not specifically apply to Christie's Education, as a place of learning we support the values reflected in the Act that academic staff should have the freedom to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions.

Academic freedom is associated with a number of values, which include:

- Freedom for academics from state and political interference
- Institutional self-governance and autonomy
- Individual freedom to undertake research and teaching
- Institutional excellence
- Security of academic tenure
- Peer review and open and rigorous criticism of ideas.

However academic freedom must be exercised within the limits of the law and Christie's Education will not permit any infringement or breach of national security laws, laws to protect public safety, prevention of disorder or crime, protection of the reputation or rights of others, and to prevent the disclosure of information received in confidence.

Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is a wider concept than academic freedom and applies to everyone, not just academics. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of all kinds are integral to encouraging wide ranging debate, research and teaching that is not afraid to address controversial issues. The law therefore places strong positive duties on HEIs to secure freedom of speech for staff, students and visiting speakers. However, the law also places limits on these freedoms and only protects freedom of speech that is within the law. Protection of freedom of speech does not extend to, for example, allowing a speaker to commit a criminal offence in the course of speaking. Criminal offences which might fall in to this category are using threatening, abusive and insulting words where it is likely that racial hatred will be stirred up, or inviting support for a proscribed organisation. Expressing views which some people find objectionable or offensive is not prohibited generally – freedom of speech is only restricted where the specific requirements of criminal offences are met.

Whilst Christie's Education is not legally subject to some of the duties imposed by law in relation to these freedoms and restrictions, we support the values of freedom of speech within the law.

Christie's take very seriously any breach of the values we subscribe to in this statement. Christie's may take action against any staff, students or external speakers who fail to adhere to the rights and freedoms set out in this statement.