

Critical Inquiry Policy

Version number	2
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of approval	13/01/2021

Purpose

Critical inquiry promotes active engagement with the key ideas and theories of a discipline and encourages students to pursue avenues of advanced knowledge and questioning. Critical inquiry is characteristic of higher education and Sydney Institute of Higher Education (SI) is dedicated to fostering critical inquiry across the entirety of its higher education operations so that students at the SI develop their critical thinking skills and their capacity to engage with ongoing, lifelong learning.

This policy establishes the mechanisms through which SI will promote critical inquiry amongst its higher education operations by developing the skills of critical inquiry into the SI's teaching and learning activities, program development and review, and curriculum design processes.

Scope

This policy applies to the entirety of the SI's higher education operations.

Principles

SI is committed to fostering critical inquiry amongst the entirety of its higher education operations.

All teaching and learning at SI is conducted with the objective of promoting academic freedom and cultivating critical and independent thinking as a graduate attribute of study with SI.

As such, SI will foster a learning environment that adopts an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning and incorporates methods and approaches of critical inquiry into teaching, learning and research activities.

Procedures

The *Academic Board*, under delegated responsibility from the *Corporate Governance Board*, is responsible for oversight of academic quality, including approving curriculum that meets high standards of scholarship and learning outcomes, including the development of students' critical inquiry abilities.

The *Corporate Governance Board* is responsible for ensuring the teaching and learning budget adequately supports the continued delivery of high quality curriculum and the continued compliance of SI with the

Higher Education Standards Framework 2015.

Program development

All programs offered at the SI will develop the skills required to engage in critical inquiry and advanced levels of knowledge so to promote ongoing and lifelong learning amongst its students. As part of the program development process, the *Academic Board* will ensure programs at SI:

- Foster cognitive and critical thinking skills at a level appropriate to the program
- Offer core units that engage students in research, analytic and critical thinking
- Incorporate learning and teaching activities and assessment tasks that integrate collaboration and discussion amongst students.

Academic staff

Academic staff at SI are expected to support students in the development of problem-solving and research skills.

To ensure students are adequately supported in their pursuit of advanced levels of inquiry, all teaching staff will have relevant industry experience within their field of expertise and hold a qualification that is at least one AQF level above the program in which they teach as per the *SI's Workforce Policy*.

The *SI's Professional Development Policy* further ensures the critical inquiry skills of teaching staff are continually developed to ensure staff engage students with the level of critical inquiry appropriate to the AQF level at which they teach.

Research

SI is committed to supporting academic staff and student research and will promote critical inquiry throughout the SI's academic operations by:

- Supporting research projects and the development of research funding grant applications
- Providing adequate resources to support academic staff and students throughout the research process
- Developing online databases which offer students access to up-to-date and useful information
- Encouraging collaborations with academic peers at other higher education providers

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Academic Board* is responsible for approving and ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The *Academic Board* will review all periodic reports from relevant committees and staff members, in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

Additionally, the *Academic Board* will review all relevant student complaints, concerns raised by staff members, and instances of student or staff misconduct in accordance with the *Compliance Calendar*.

Based on these monitoring activities, the *Academic Board* must advise the *Corporate Governance Board* and ensure that findings are taken into account in planning, quality assurance and improvement

processes.

Definitions

Academic Board: the governing body responsible for academic matters, including teaching and learning, program approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes. The *Academic Board* reports to the *Corporate Governance Board*.

Assessment: the process of grading, marking and reviewing student assessment tasks against the assessment standards and criteria. This includes devising and using assessment criteria, standards and assessment criteria; reviewing and comparing the marks and grades awarded to individual student submissions for the same assessment task within a unit of study.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): National guidelines that regulate Australian post-compulsory education and training qualifications. The framework identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements.

Critical inquiry: Describes the analytic and research process of closely evaluating the key theories and ideas of a subject so to consider the alternative and/or conflicting perspectives and understandings of an idea. Critical inquiry produces well-considered analyses that can challenge accepted ideas and spark new avenues of research and inquiry.

Unit: A unit of study in which students enrol as part of a program, for which a degree is awarded upon completion.

Teaching staff: Staff employed at SI in a teaching capacity.

Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Academic Board* every three years.

Version History				
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Academic Board	25/11/2017		25/11/2020
2	Academic Board	13/01/2021	No change. Periodic Review.	13/01/2024

▲ Related Documents	
↗ Academic Freedom Policy	
↗ Academic and Professional Integrity Policy	

🔗	Program Development and Approval Policy
🔗	Workforce Policy
🔗	Learning and Teaching Policy
🔗	Professional Development Policy
🔗	Graduate Attributes
🔗	Corporate Governance Board - Terms of Reference
🔗	Academic Board - Terms of Reference

End of document: "Critical Inquiry Policy"

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