



College of Osteopaths

Freedom of Speech/Academic Freedom Statement

The College's Mission

The College' is committed to producing autonomous and reflective practitioners, capable of contributing to the healthcare needs of an ever changing population, as well as contributing to the shape of future health care provision. The College remains faithful to meeting the educational and professional needs of a diverse range of students and remains focussed in providing a challenging professionally recognised programme, underpinned by current research, scholarship and professional practice.

All College students and staff, have freedom within the law to:

- hold and express opinions;
- question and test established ideas or received wisdom;
- develop and advance new ideas or innovative proposals;
- present controversial or unpopular points of view.

The College acknowledges responsibilities to each other and to the wider society to:

- value diversity and recognise the strength that different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture bring;
- treat others with courtesy and respect, challenge inequalities, and respond positively to different needs and circumstances;
- respect the rights of individuals to hold different beliefs and views and to express them through appropriate contribution;
- communicate in ways that are clear, relevant and respectful.

This means that:

- We will, justify our views with evidence and appropriate reason and be willing to recognise the gaps and weaknesses in our own line of reasoning.
- In promoting our ideas, we will make every reasonable effort to minimise the risks of any harm arising for any person, institution or community.
- We will be aware that some opinions and arguments may cause offence to some people which will require us to be sensitive to the views of others and not present or challenge views in a way that is hostile or degrading.
- We respect the right of others to challenge our views, provided that it is based on accurate evidence, facts or reasonable argument and that it is thoughtful and made in appropriate settings.
- We will always be careful to distinguish between our personal views and those of the College or any other person, group of people or organisation with which we may be associated.
- We will consider the legal implications of our actions. We recognise that there may be consequences if we act in breach of the law and will only involve others with their express consent.
- We will reflect upon and apply these principles across all areas of the College, including teaching, research, study, and debate and interaction with patients and the public.

Any alleged breaches of freedom of speech will be addressed through the respective policies for staff (Employee Handbook) and students (Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy).