Academic Freedom and Code of Ethics Policy

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out EIT's attitude to academic freedom and its expectations of staff and students with regards to ethics.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at EIT in regards to both VET and Higher Education courses.

3.0 Objectives

EIT recognises that academic freedom is a right and responsibility of all staff and students and that it underpins the creation and dissemination of new knowledge. Academic freedom is central to the mission of EIT.

EIT is bound by a common commitment to promote engineering and related scientific disciplines and to facilitate its practice for the common good based upon shared values of:
- Ethical behaviour
- Competent performance
- Innovative practice
- Engineering excellence
- Application of the scientific method
- Equality of opportunity
- Social justice
- Sustainable development.

4.0 Implementation

The promotion of academic freedom will occur via publication of policies on EIT's website; and by forming an integral part of staff induction and staff development.

Academic Freedom

A member of the academic staff of EIT shall have the freedom, within the law, in his or her teaching, research and scholarship and any other academic activities either in or outside EIT, to:

- Question and test received wisdom
- Put forward new ideas and participate in scholarly debate
- State controversial or unpopular opinions
- Pursue critical and independent though and open intellectual enquiry and encourage the same in others, in teaching, scholarly activities and research

Staff will foster a teaching and learning environment that:

- Values diversity of opinion, encouraging vigorous exchange of opinion between teacher and student as part of a robust educational process

- Will seek to develop the search for truth as a part of the experience of teaching and learning

- Recognises that the search for new knowledge, experience, and practice is an essential part of the academic experience.

In so doing they shall not be disadvantaged, or subject to less favourable treatment by EIT when exercising this freedom.

EIT will regulate its affairs in accordance with its independent ethos, traditions and the traditional principles of academic freedom. In doing so, it shall have regard to:

- The promotion and preservation of equality of opportunity and access.
- The effective and efficient use of resources.
- Its obligations to corporate and public accountability.

Ethics

EIT aims to stand in the tradition of universities as independent sources of knowledge, research, scholarship and teaching – supporting an international network of students, scholars and researchers seeking rational enlightenment for the good of society, in general, and the communities we serve, in particular.

EIT wishes to act with integrity – consciously informed by a framework of core values and principles that are given consistent, practical effect. EIT and its members are accountable for their conduct, to be evaluated in the light of this framework.

Engineering is a creative process of synthesising and implementing the knowledge and experience gained through the ages. It is used to enhance the welfare, health and safety of all, with due regard to the environment and the sustainability of the resources employed. It involves a diversity of related functions ranging from the development and application of engineering science through to the management of engineering works.

Teaching staff employed by EIT are expected to be aware of and agree to uphold the code of ethics set out in this document.

EIT and staff members must ensure that there are no real or apparent conflicts of interest. The potential for a conflict of interest arises when a staff member has private interests that could influence or appear to influence judgements made during the course of their professional duty.

Code of Ethics

All EIT staff and students, in the practice of the discipline of engineering, are committed and obliged to apply and uphold the following Code of Ethics:

- Demonstrate integrity
- Practise competently
- Exercise leadership
- Promote sustainability

EIT shall abide by the Code of Ethics as outlined below.

1. EIT shall place their responsibility for the welfare, health and safety of the community before their responsibility to sectional or private interests, or to other members;

2. EIT shall act with honour, integrity and dignity in order to merit the trust of the Community and the profession;

3. EIT shall act only in areas of their competence and in a careful and diligent manner;

4. EIT shall act with honesty, good faith and equity and without discrimination towards all in the community;

5. EIT shall apply skill and knowledge in the interest of employees and students for whom they shall act with integrity without compromising any other obligation to the Code of Ethics;

6. EIT shall, where relevant, take reasonable steps to inform themselves, their staff and students and employers, of the social, environmental, economic and other possible consequences which may arise from their actions;

7. EIT shall express opinions, make statements or give evidence with fairness and honesty and only on the basis of adequate knowledge;

8. EIT and their staff shall continue to develop relevant knowledge, skill and expertise throughout their careers and shall actively assist and encourage those with whom they are associated, to do likewise;

9. EIT shall not assist in or induce a breach of the Code of Ethics and shall support those who seek to uphold it if called upon or is in a position to do so.

Students and Staff

Students and staff of EIT are expected to:

- Act with integrity and according to a well informed conscience

- Be courageous – look beyond established boundaries, promote and defend what you believe to be right and true

- Be curious – explore novel ideas for the creation and discovery of new knowledge

- Be independent – engage with the world in a principled manner without fear or favour

- Be responsible – own your decisions and the part you play in the decisions of others

- Be honest and trustworthy – in all that you say and do

- Be open – to the greatest extent possible, offer a timely, complete and considered account of the basis on which decisions are made

- Be excellent – offer your best even when something less would be acceptable to others; always uphold the standards relevant to your discipline or practice

- Be just – assess each matter fairly and on its merits;

- Be nurturing – care for the health, welfare and safety of all and the environment

- Be cooperative – work with and for others and EIT

- Be compassionate – create opportunities for others to flourish as you hope to yourself.

The values and principles outlined in this framework are intended to be applied in a balanced and inter-related manner and are not intended to be referenced in isolation.

5.0 Definitions

Ethics: The guiding values, principles and standards that enable people determine how things should be done and how they should act. Ethics refers to the judgements that people make and the process that determines those judgements. It is the process by which people make value based decisions which ultimately guides their actions and behaviours.

6.0 Related policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures are related to this policy:

- Academic Honesty & Misconduct Policy
- Student Code of Conduct

Acknowledgement is made to the Engineers Australia 'Code of Ethics'.

7.0 Accountabilities

The Academic Board is responsible for review and approval of this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and EIT's community via the website and other publications.