

Academic Freedom at the University of Copenhagen

Academic freedom is the condition and principal concept for research at the University.

Academic freedom makes the University the freest institution in society. The framework protects the researchers' freedom to explore any given problem and search for answers.

Academic freedom ensures that the University contributes to a free, prosperous society by creating, sharing and applying new knowledge in its own right.

Formal basis

Academic freedom is supported by and ensured by way of s. 2 (2) and s. 14 (6) cf. the University Act.

s. 2 (2): The university has academic freedom. The university must safeguard the academic freedom of the university and the individual and the ethics of science.

s.14 (6): The rector may allocate specific tasks to specific staff. The academic staff has academic freedom and is free to conduct research within the university's strategic research framework during the time when they are not performing their allocated tasks. The university's strategic research framework covers the entire profile of the university. The academic staff cannot be occupied with tasks during all of their working hours for an extended period of time, resulting in them in fact being deprived from their academic freedom.

These provisions are reflected and incorporated in the University of Copenhagen's own rules, cf. s. 3 of the Statute of 24 January 2013. The University of Copenhagen's Fundamental Principles for Personnel Policy also state in s. 1 on "Freedom and co-responsibility" that:

KU protects freedom of speech and research and makes room for creative and professional development of all employees with respect for the entire university community and the University's overall objectives. Each individual employee is involved in and shares the responsibility for the organisation and completion of the work.

Principles for interpreting academic freedom for individual researchers.

- Academic freedom provides freedom to choose research topics, freedom to ask questions, freedom to decide on the material and methods used to find answers and freedom to present hypotheses, results and reasoning in public.
- The University is required to ensure academic freedom in research environments to allow the free expression of diversity and mutual criticism.
- Research is done within the framework of the resources that are available.
- There must be time for research, and freedom of research must be expressed in the daily work through dialogue between researchers and their line managers with flexibility on both sides and with respect for the long-term maintenance of the balance between research, education and other tasks. The balance

between work assignments may at times come “in waves”, often supported by the possibility of work-sharing within research teams.

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