

## 6.4 Academic freedom

The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.

**Compliance Judgment:** In Compliance

### Rationale

As a center of learning, the University of South Carolina Aiken depends upon the search for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is essential to effective instruction, continuing scholarship, and active service, and applies to both teaching and research. The University of South Carolina Aiken safeguards and protects academic freedom by adhering to the policies outlined in the [Faculty Manual](#).<sup>[1]</sup> USC Aiken policies pertaining to academic freedom are in accord with the [statement of academic freedom adopted by the American Association of University Professors](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions not only in the classroom but also on the campus as a whole. The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community — faculty, staff, and students.

USC Aiken faculty members are encouraged to carry out their duties in a professional, ethical, and collegial manner. Faculty members often play dual roles of citizen and professor. Due to their special position in the community, when faculty members speak or write as citizens, they are under special obligations since the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Faculty members should therefore at all times strive to be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, respect the right of others to express their opinions, and make every effort to indicate that they are not spokespersons for the university.

The University of South Carolina System supports the [tenure process](#).<sup>[3]</sup> To promote the welfare of the University and as an assurance that academic freedom will

be protected; it is the policy of the University of South Carolina Aiken to provide, after a successful probationary period, tenure for its full-time tenure-track faculty members. Service of tenured faculty will be terminated only for adequate cause, or because of financial exigency or reduction in program. In the University of South Carolina System, final authority for recommending tenure to the University Board of Trustees resides with the Chancellor, and final authority for approving recommendations of tenure rests with the Board of Trustees. USC Aiken has 70 tenured faculty and 54 faculty who are in a tenure-track position. Illustrative examples of the awarding of tenure are provided for faculty members from the [School of Business Administration](#) <sup>[4]</sup> and from the [College of Sciences and Engineering](#).<sup>[5]</sup> To date, there has been no termination of tenured faculty for adequate cause, financial exigency, or reduction in programs at the University of South Carolina Aiken.

Faculty members who believe that their academic freedom has been infringed upon may request in writing that the Faculty Assembly Chair initiate an investigation. The Faculty Assembly Chair will refer the request to the Chancellor and to the [Faculty Grievance Committee](#).<sup>[6]</sup> To date, there have been no grievances or charges of an infringement of academic freedom filed by faculty at the University of South Carolina Aiken.

All policies and procedures in the Faculty Manual, including the academic freedom policy are periodically reviewed and modified by faculty committees, ratified by the Faculty Assembly, and approved by the Board of Trustees. Dates of approval are included immediately below each policy in the Faculty Manual.

### Supporting Documentation

1. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Instructional Responsibilities – Academic Freedom](#)
2. [AAUP Statement of Academic Freedom](#)
3. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Promotion and Tenure Policy](#)
4. [Example of tenure awarded to faculty in the School of Business Administration](#)
5. [Example of tenure awarded to faculty in the College of Sciences and Engineering](#)
6. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Faculty Grievance Policy](#)