



## Academic Freedom and Values

Staff and students of the Department of Politics and International Relations are committed, as a community of learning that is part of the wider community of the University, and in the context of a broad range of civil freedoms, to academic freedom, debate, and contestation.

Universities' duties with respect to free speech are reflected in the following UK legislation: the [Education Act 1986](#); the [Education Reform Act 1988](#); the [Human Rights Act 1998](#); the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the most recent [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) S.31. These all explicitly note that public bodies have a duty to uphold freedom of expression and academic freedom.

At Oxford we are robustly compliant with all existing legislation that protects civic and academic freedoms, in accordance with [UNESCO's 1997 Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel](#).

The academic topics studied and researched at the DPIR are invariably politically, ethically, and socially, sensitive, and wide-ranging in geographical and political scope. Our choices of topics for study are influenced by our ethical and political convictions and by the community of science and philosophy. The DPIR is deeply committed to fostering an academic culture of openness and inclusivity, in which members of our community engage with each other in debate and discussion, and remain open to both intellectual challenge and change.

The political and ethical sensitivity of our field means that scientific and philosophical analysis is invariably bound up with political implications. Criticising government policy, expression of support for specific groups, identifying causal relations between policies, processes and events, subjecting public arguments to evaluation and critique – these are all legitimate aspects of academic work. They also contribute to public and political debate.

Academic speech at the DPIR is conducted in such a way as to promote the values of truth, reliability, and validity. No single approach or settled belief can be privileged. Students and staff are open to challenge, and develop reflexively critical ways of thinking about their own positions. Exchange of views must be respectful, and is subject always to standards of civility.

The DPIR actively encourages its students and staff to convene discussions and debates, organise seminars, invite external speakers to the department, and engage fully in the life of the DPIR.