SCAFFE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (SCAFFE)

Membership

Chair:

Co-Chairs – one Lay member of Council and one member of Senate.

Members:

3 x Members of Council, appointed by the Lay Nominations Committee – one to be co-Chair

3 x Members of Senate, elected – one to be co-Chair

1 x Kent Union President OR Vice President Postgraduate Experience, Kent Union

1 x PGR Student

Academic and Professional Services representation:

6 x Divisional academic representatives, 1 per Division, elected (the categories of staff from across these representatives will fall where they may).

1 x Professional Services representative, from any of the Divisions, elected.

Tenure

Members will serve a three-year term of office with the option to extend for a further three-year term.

In attendance:

Human Resources representative, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Head of Stakeholder Communications

Secretary:

Governance Secretariat

General Matters

1. In accordance with the provisions of the Ordinances: to produce a draft Code of Practice (the Code) on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression for approval by the Senate and the Council; to keep the Code under review; and to make recommendations for updates to the Senate and the Council.
2. To support the delivery and the understanding of the importance of academic freedom and free expression and its significance as a guiding value of University culture.
3. To hear complaints and/or receive reports, including those raised confidentially by academic staff and research students, about threats to, or restrictions on, academic freedom arising from

University-related activity, and reporting on these annually by way of an Annual Report to the Senate and the Council.

4. To hear complaints and/or receive reports, including those raised confidentially by academic staff and research students, about threats to or restrictions on freedom of expression in regards University related activity and reporting on these annually, by way of an Annual Report, to the Senate and the Council.

5. To consider initial concerns regarding academic freedom and freedom of expression within the University where possible and refer them to other entities for assistance, as necessary.

6. To assist and make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor and their designees regarding encroachments on statutory principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression arising from the application of policies, procedures, and codes of practice of the University.

7. To adjudicate on any appeals arising from a decision to decline the booking of an event or speaker on the grounds of a restriction of freedom of expression from any members, students and employees of the University, including any member or society of the Students Union, and to report annually to Council on such.

8. Generally to make recommendations to the Senate and/or the Council on any matters relating to academic freedom and freedom of speech.

9. As may be required the Committee may meet in order to provide recommendations to Senate and Council in relation to complaints arising under Ordinance # (referring to the academic freedom ordinance) 3.1 and 3.2 as may be appropriate. Further, the Committee is also to provide its recommendation on any issue of breach in relation to Ordinance # (referring to the academic freedom ordinance) 3.3.

10. For any recommendations of the Committee to go forward to Council and/or Senate and/or the Vice Chancellor and for decisions of the Committee to be reported to Council, Senate and/or Vice Chancellor as appropriate.

11. For the Chairs and the Committee to seek and reflect on examples of good practice and sector experience in regards matters of academic freedom and freedom of expression.

<u>Matters Relating to Individual Members of Academic Staff</u>

12. To provide specific guidance for members of the academic community regarding their right to academic freedom and support that may be available to them.

13. To consider and determine a request made by a member of academic staff under any of Ordinances 35, 37, 38, 39, 41 or 42 for a review of whether academic freedom has been infringed, in accordance with the procedure set out in the Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression. As part of an Annual Report, to provide anonymised summary data on cases and issues to the Senate and the Council.

14. As set out in Ordinances 40 and 43, to consider and determine a grievance or appeal pertaining to an alleged infringement of academic freedom in accordance with the procedure set out in the Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression. As part of an Annual Report, to provide anonymised summary data on cases and issues to the Senate and the Council.

<u>Matters relating to individual postgraduate research students</u>

15. To consider and determine a request made by a postgraduate research student under Annex H, J, M and P of the Code of Practice for Research Courses, for a review of whether academic freedom

has been infringed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression.

Matters relating to both individual academic staff and postgraduate research students

16. As set out in the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, to determine a whistleblowing concern pertaining to the alleged infringement of academic freedom in accordance with the procedure set out in the Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression.

17. Frequency of meetings:

Once per Term or more frequently if business dictates.

18. Quorum:

One third of membership and to include one lay member.

19. Review:

Terms of Reference to be reviewed annually or sooner if required by Council/Senate, or as a result of changes in legislation.