



Conscientious Objection Procedures

1. STRATEGIC PLAN THEME AND COMPLIANCE OBLIGATION SUPPORTED

[Curtin University Values](#)

Strategic Plan Theme: [People and Culture](#)

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consistent University-wide approach to conscientious objection which recognises that some students and staff may have a conscientious belief that is in conflict with research activities, teaching, assessment practices and/or fieldwork education. Areas of potential conscientious objections may include the use of animals including dissecting animals, vaccination requirements, site visits to abattoirs, scheduling of fieldwork on Saturdays (Sabbath worship day), handling cadavers, and physical contact with students of both genders particularly if minimally clad when practising health related procedures.

2. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

- 2.1 Each Faculty/ Area, where it foresees that a prospective student, current student, or staff member may have conscientious objection in conflict with their education or employment, will publish relevant information about course requirements/employment duties in either the Course Handbook, Unit Outline or the Position Description or equivalent for research activities.
- 2.2 The onus is on the person who has a conscientious belief to identify their objection and to provide reasonable notice of it to the relevant area.
- 2.3 Faculties/Areas will record details of all conscientious objections in order to determine whether consideration is provided to future design of alternative teaching/assessments or work practices that are acceptable to the University.
- 2.4 If a student/staff member has a conscientious objection which conflicts with research activities, teaching or assessment practices/employment duties, the student/staff member will contact their Unit Co-ordinator/Line Manager as soon as possible outlining their conscientious objection and the specific implications of their objection upon their studies/employment duties.
- 2.5 Upon exploration of the feasibility, the Unit Co-ordinator/Line Manager will formally notify the student/staff member, in a timely manner, of the decision and reasons for the decision to either accommodate or not accommodate the conscientious objection, and if applicable, the appropriate arrangements.
- 2.6 Alternatives made available to a student/staff member with a conscientious objection are not required to be made available to all other students/staff members.
- 2.7 **Limits**
 - 2.7.1 A student/staff member may request that there be a suitable alternative, but will not demand that the alternative take a particular form.
 - 2.7.2 The University is not obliged to accommodate a conscientious belief.
 - 2.7.3 Where the conscientious objection relates to an assessment item or teaching activity, the Unit Co-ordinator will explore the feasibility of an alternative that:
 - is of comparable difficulty requiring a similar amount of time and effort and;
 - meets the unit learning outcomes and/or professional competencies required for professional registration bodies;
 - is able to be implemented/achieved in a timely manner;
 - does not disadvantage other students in the quality of their education;
 - does not violate any legal obligations; and
 - does not create unreasonable hardship.
 - 2.7.4 Where the conscientious objection relates to a staff member's employment duties, the Line Manager will explore the feasibility of alternative duties that:
 - meet the inherent requirements of the position;
 - is able to be implemented/achieved in a timely manner;

- does not disadvantage other staff/students;
- does not violate any legal obligations; and
- does not create unreasonable hardship.

2.8 Appeals

- 2.8.1 A student/staff member who has evidence that consideration was not provided to their conscientious objection may appeal to the Head of School (students) or Director, People and Culture (staff).
- 2.8.2 The student/staff member will have 20 working days from the date on which they were formally notified of a decision by the Unit Co-ordinator/Line Manager to lodge an appeal.
- 2.8.3 The student/staff will document the grounds of their appeal and provide evidence to substantiate their claims.
- 2.8.4 The appeal will be determined within 10 working days of it being received and the decision of the Head of School or Director, People and Culture is final.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities are those as set out in section 2.

4. SCOPE OF PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to all Staff Members and Students.

5. DEFINITIONS

(Note: Commonly defined terms are located in the [Curtin Common Definitions](#). Any defined terms below are specific to this document)

A **Conscientious Belief** is defined as an individual's genuine and sustained inward conviction of what is morally right or wrong, uninfluenced by any consideration of personal advantage or disadvantage either to oneself or others. A Conscientious Belief can be linked to ethical, religious, or cultural values.

Staff Member means a person who has been offered and has accepted a contract of employment from Curtin University.

Student is a person who is enrolled in, a unit, course or program of study approved by Curtin, and which leads to, or is capable of leading to, an academic award of the University.

6. SCHEDULES

Nil

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS/FORMS

Nil

Policy Compliance Officer	Sean Murray, Director, Student Experience
Policy Manager	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic
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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Committee / Board / Executive Manager	Approval / Resolution Number	Key Changes and Notes
	Approved	27/03/2009	Academic Board	AB 38/09	Attachment 1 to Document No 00115/09
	Amended	02/06/2009	Planning and Management Committee	PMC 47/09	Name Change from Staff Services to Human Resources
	Administratively Updated	06/10/2015	Director, Legal and Compliance Services	EC 76/15	Executive Manager Title Changes
	Approved	22/08/2018	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic	EM1818	Unconditional