

Teaching in times of conflict

Universiteit Leiden

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Universiteit
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Bij ons leer je de wereld kennen

Academic freedom, academic integrity and freedom of expression

- [Academic freedom](#) is about the freedom to pose questions, conduct research and teach on topics of choice without interference.
- The very goal of academia is to be critical, curious, open, engage with and learn from other perspectives, not simply defend yours and exclude other perspectives.
- Our academic conduct is professional conduct, based on evidence and arguments, guided by the principles of [academic integrity](#): honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence, and responsibility.
- Academic freedom also has its limits: gossip, bullying, hate speech, discrimination and (sexually) inappropriate behaviour are not acceptable, either online or offline.

Academic freedom and the educational environment

As an academic community, we are engaged in research and teaching with a societal responsibility and impact. What does this mean for you as a lecturer or administrator?

- Facilitate a space where different perspectives can be voiced and engaged in.
- Staff members are advised to clearly differentiate their professional role as teachers from their political activities outside of the educational environment.
- As a lecturer, administrator and representative of Leiden University, it is important to be aware of your role, and not use classrooms and educational platforms or program mailing lists to ask students or colleagues to join a specific political standpoint.

Hot moments

Consult our teaching guides for tips and suggestions on enabling an constructive dialogue on divisive topics.

- Prepare readings materials which reflect different perspectives and experiences as well as different leading arguments within the same field.
- Inform yourself about terminology and context of contested issues.
- Discuss and determine with students collective norms of engagement.
- Discuss which terms are debated or triggering to create awareness and promote conscious choices.
- Create a space to talk about the impact of prejudices and ensure students are not targetted or called out because of their identity or nationality.
- Prepare for hot moments: pauze, recognize the emotional aspects of the discussion, depersonalize, refer to the shared ground rules and refocus on an aspect which does have common ground.

Further information: [tips and resources for lecturers](#) and new [toolkit inclusive education](#)

Where to go with questions

- **Advice and support:** Program Director, Director of Studies or supervisor
- **Teaching practice:** intervision and peer groups, [Najat El Hani](#), instructor inclusive education, Linc
- **Threatening or concerning behavior by a fellow student directed at you or others:** [Advisory team for concerning or threatening behavior](#)
- **Questions about diversity, equity and inclusion:** [Diversity and Inclusion Expertise Office](#)