

Version	1.0
Short description	A policy for Seminary academic staff in relation to their conduct and responsibilities in training Seventh-day Adventist pastors.
Relevant to	Seminary Academic Staff
Authority	Academic Board
Policy owner	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible office	Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Date approved	14 June 2023
Date effective	25 August 2023
Review due	June 2028
Related Avondale documents	Code of Conduct (Staff) Freedom of Inquiry Policy Grievance Resolution Procedure (Staff) Misconduct Procedure (Staff) Unsatisfactory Performance Procedure (Staff)
Related legislation	Higher Education Support Amendment (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2020 Higher Education Support Act 2003 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
Key words	conduct, seminary, freedom of inquiry, ethics, 28 fundamental beliefs

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document sets out Avondale University (Avondale) policy on the expectations and conduct of academic staff hired by the Seminary, which is specific to them, and in addition to the more generic *Code of Conduct (Staff)* which applies to all Avondale staff.
- 1.2 The objectives of this policy are to ensure academics in the Seminary understand and abide by the expectations and responsibilities of those entrusted with training pastors for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all academic teaching staff contracted by the Avondale Seminary for 0.5 or more FTE, and to any individual seeking employment as an academic faculty member in the Seminary.

3. REFERENCES

- 3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Avondale policies:
 - Code of Conduct (Staff)
 - Freedom of Inquiry Policy
 - Grievance Resolution Procedure (Staff)
 - Misconduct Procedure (Staff)
 - Unsatisfactory Performance Procedure (Staff)
- 3.2 This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following Seventh-day Adventist Church documents:
 - [28 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists](#)
 - Pastoral Code of Ethics
 - [Code of Ethics for Seventh-day Adventist Educators](#)
 - [Methods of Bible Study](#)
- 3.3 Avondale also acknowledges the [Theological and Academic Freedom and Accountability Statement](#) (Statement) and intends to conduct itself consistently with the purpose and terms of the Statement. However, Avondale will not apply the Statement to the extent that applying the Statement in a particular circumstance would conflict with any Australian legislation, including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **28 Fundamental Beliefs:** the list of beliefs which constitute the Seventh-day Adventist Church's understanding and expression of the key teachings of Scripture, and which are published in the current Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.
- 4.2 **Scholarly inquiry:** the means of discovery of new knowledge or the use, synthesis or analysis of existing knowledge in new ways to generate fresh insights or understandings.

- 4.3 **Supernatural pre-fall creation:** the notion that God created “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and that this creation occurred prior to the entrance of sin and death into the world.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SEMINARY STAFF

- 5.1 Seminary academic staff are encouraged to engage in rigorous scholarly inquiry. Avondale’s commitment to freedom of inquiry is set out in the *Avondale Freedom of Inquiry Policy Statement*. This freedom is nevertheless to be exercised responsibly, with due regard for the mission and values of Avondale University and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Representatives of Avondale Seminary should be conscious that their publications and public statements may lead to others forming perceptions of their faith, their profession, and their institution.

Commitments

- 5.2 Given their role in the training and formation of Seventh-day Adventist pastors, it is expected that Seminary staff will be growing Christians who will evidence commitments to the following:

- The centrality of Jesus Christ in their own life;
- The Bible as their only creed and rule of faith and practice;
- The presupposition that Scripture is the revealed and authoritative word of God and that any interpretive framework they use needs to build on this foundational presupposition. This commitment should be evident in both their teachings and publications. It does not however preclude the mention of methodologies using other presuppositions when relevant in the classroom or publication, or collegial relationships with scholars who differ in their assumptions;
- The 28 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists inclusive of the preamble in all teaching, both inside and outside the classroom, in publications and personal lifestyle. This support recognizes the possibility of future change in the Fundamental Beliefs. It does not preclude discussion or raising questions about the beliefs responsibly in the appropriate circles. Guidance from the Head of School should be sought if there are any concerns about such discussions or questions;
- The supernatural pre-fall nature of creation and its theological implications; and
- The necessity of restoration through Christ due to the impact of sin on creation.

Professional Practice.

- 5.3 It is expected that Seminary academic staff will also:
- Engage in the mission and ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and demonstrate personal involvement in local church activities;
 - Adhere to both the *Pastoral Code of Ethics* and the *Code of Ethics for Seventh-day Adventist Educators*;
 - Maintain appropriate certification relating to child safety as required by the State and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia; and
 - Will engage in respectful critique when interacting with another individual’s theological perspectives.

6. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

- 6.1 Complaints alleging violations of professional standards or advocacy of positions incompatible with the doctrinal and ethical commitments of Avondale University and the Seventh-day Adventist Church must be substantiated by evidence supporting the allegation. Enquiries in response to such complaints will be in accordance with Avondale's *Misconduct Procedure (Staff)* and *Unsatisfactory Performance Procedure (Staff)*.
- 6.2 Seminary academic staff believing their academic freedom has been unduly restricted may pursue resolution of this issue through the avenues established under the *Grievance Resolution Procedure (Staff)*.

Table of amendments

Version Number	1.0	Replaces Version	NEW
Implementation Date	25 August 2023	Scheduled Review Date	June 2028
Approving Body	Academic Board	Approval Date	14 June 2023
Policy Owner	Vice-Chancellor	Date first introduced	14 June 2023
Short description of amendment			