

IPSA Statement on Academic Freedoms

IPSA's Mission Statement declares that IPSA aims 'to support the academic freedoms needed for the social sciences to flourish'. This 'Statement on Academic Freedoms' from IPSA's Council reinforces IPSA's commitment to safeguarding these principles. The IPSA Council is the General Assembly of the International Political Science Association.

IPSA was founded under the auspices of UNESCO, and it further endorses the UNESCO '[Recommendations on the status of higher education personnel](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001102/110220f.pdf#page=31)', adopted in 1997 (version française: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001102/110220f.pdf#page=31>). These 'Recommendations' cover universities and colleges, and also research institutions not directly linked to such institutions. All UN member states subscribe to these very full provisions for the definition of, and protection of, academic freedoms. These provisions express an international consensus on the importance and meaning of academic freedoms.

IPSA regards these provisions as the necessary minimum to ensure that political scientists can work freely and effectively in undertaking their research and teaching, and in disseminating their ideas and results to colleagues and the public, nationally as well as internationally. In addition many nations and professional bodies have similar, though sometimes more detailed statements of principles, protections and standards, which IPSA respects.

IPSA understands academic freedoms to include the free exchange of ideas that is vitally necessary for scientific endeavour and debate. Arbitrary and politically motivated arrest, and personal and professional harassment, are egregious violations of basic human rights, and such violations pose a clear and present danger to academic freedoms.

Academic freedoms can also be seriously compromised through indirect measures, involving retention, promotion and tenure policies, performance and research management systems, changes in funding for research and resources, or alterations in the teaching curriculum. We urge all members not to adopt policies or to participate in activities that are even indirectly in conflict with the UNESCO 'Recommendations'.

Political scientists will be acutely aware of threats to, and curtailments of, academic freedoms, and will find IPSA's endorsement of these UNESCO 'Recommendations' useful in citing the rights, duties and obligations of our profession in international, national and local contexts. IPSA members may at any time contact IPSA's Secretariat and Executive Committee members for further advice and support.