

What is the context for Academic Freedom in Canada?

Academic Freedom was initially only outlined in university policies or in non-binding agreements with academic staff. Accordingly, fidelity to Academic Freedom relied heavily on the beliefs of university donors, politicians, and post-secondary administrators.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) launched its first investigation into Academic Freedom in Canada after Harry Crowe, a tenured professor, was fired in 1958. Crowe taught history at United College (now the University of Winnipeg). Dr. Crowe was fired after he criticized College administration in a private letter to a colleague. As a result, CAUT adopted a policy statement on Academic Freedom, and began the work of supporting academic staff associations to negotiate academic freedom language into their Collective Agreements.

Today the vast majority (roughly 90%) of academic staff associations are covered by Collective Agreements that include legal protections for Academic Freedom, but challenges to Academic Freedom remain. Recent major Academic Freedom cases throughout Canada are detailed on the [CAUT Website](#).