

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

CONTEXT

A key objective of Australasia Technology Institute is to foster integrity in the pursuit of knowledge and to produce graduates with a strong sense of professional ethics. It is the shared responsibility of the whole College community to create an intellectual environment where academic honesty, critical judgment, and independent scholarly learning are well understood and highly valued. Students have an obligation to work independently and apply scholarly academic conventions in assessments and other forms of assessment tasks. Teaching staff have an obligation to educate their students in studying ethically and understanding the policies that govern academic integrity.

Any form of cheating, plagiarism or collusion, or other forms of dishonesty, devalues the quality of student learning and undermines the academic standards of the College. There are serious consequences for students who do not act honestly and with integrity during their studies.

Definitions

Academic integrity: the embodiment of the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in scholarship. **Exclusion:** the cancellation of a student's enrolment in their course and the termination of their rights and privileges as a student of the College including the right to re-enrol in their course or be admitted to another course, for a defined period (two years). An excluded student may apply for re-admission to any Australasia Technology Institute courses according to the Admissions Policy at the expiration of the exclusion period.

Expulsion: the permanent exclusion of a student with no right to re-apply for admission.

Procedural fairness: a fair and proper procedure appropriate to the circumstances, where decisions are made without bias and are supported by evidence and communicated with reasons.

Suspension: the cancellation of a student's enrolment and the withdrawal for a specified time of the rights and privileges of a student, including the right to re-enrol as a student. Unless otherwise advised, the student has the right to recommence their studies at the end of the suspension.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in one or more courses at Australasia Technology Institute.

Principles

This policy reflects the following principles:

1. academic honesty and integrity in assessment practices are fundamental to the nature of learning and quality at higher education level;
2. all students and staff have an obligation to respect the rules and practice of academic honesty and integrity, and uphold the high academic standards of the College;
3. students will be provided with induction, and on-going guidance and support in understanding academic conventions and the requirement for independent learning;
4. the procedures for addressing academic misconduct will be applied fairly and consistently, exhibit procedural fairness and will take into account the extent and type of academic misconduct, student's stage in the course, and any history a student has in breaching this policy; and
5. current best practice will inform the regular review of this policy and related procedures.

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct takes place when students act dishonestly in an assessment task or assessment in order to gain an unfair advantage for themselves or other students. Acts of academic misconduct are considered to be misconduct as defined under the Student Conduct Policy.

Examples of academic misconduct include:

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student submits work for assessment which includes the words or ideas of others without appropriate attribution or reference to the original author. Students must make themselves aware of acceptable referencing practices as plagiarism is considered a serious breach of academic integrity principles. Some examples of plagiarism are:

- direct copying of sentences, paragraphs or other extracts from someone else's work without appropriate acknowledgement. Such work includes published or unpublished documents, designs, sounds, images, photographs and films, data and computer code;
- paraphrasing someone else's work without acknowledgement by way of reference to the original work; and
- using facts, information and ideas directly derived from an identifiable source without acknowledging the source.

Cheating in assessments

Cheating in an assessment includes any action or attempted action designed to gain an unfair or dishonest academic advantage. For example, cheating occurs when students:

- have access to unauthorised material during the assessment;
- sit an assessment on behalf of another student or permit another student to sit an assessment on their behalf;
- read, copy from or otherwise use another student's work, or knowingly allow another student to read, copy or otherwise use their work in an assessment;
- assist any other student in completing their assessment, either directly or indirectly;
- accept assistance from any person during an assessment other than authorised staff; and
- inappropriately obtain prior knowledge of an exam's contents and/or expected answers.

The College's Assessment Procedures includes information about the conduct expected of students in assessments.

Collusion

Collusion occurs when there is unauthorised collaboration in the preparation and production of work for assessment which is presented as a student's own individual effort. Collusion includes:

- inappropriately assisting other students in the production of an assessment task;
- accepting inappropriate assistance in the production of an assessment task;
- submitting work which is the same, or substantially the same, as another student's piece of work for the same assessment task;
- submitting files to assignment sharing websites; and
- assisting another student to plagiarise material or cheat in an assessment.

Ghost writing

Ghost writing occurs where a person other than the student has authored, either wholly or in part, a piece of assessment and the student presents the assessment piece as if they themselves have wholly authored the assessment. The student does not have to have remunerated the third-party for ghost writing to have occurred.

Other forms of academic misconduct

There are many ways in which a student might attempt to deliberately gain an unfair advantage by dishonest means. Some examples are:

- submitting fabricated or falsified data as if they were genuine;
- inventing references, quotes or sources;
- submitting the same, or substantially the same piece of work for assessment in one or more different subjects; and
- falsely indicating attendance at an activity when attendance is an assessment requirement.

Responsibilities of students and staff

In general, a student must maintain the highest standards of honesty in all aspects of their scholarly endeavors in order to preserve the value and quality of their learning. They must not submit another person's work as their own, or submit work created with the assistance of others unless collaborative work is expressly allowed. All students must learn and observe the accepted academic referencing and other academic requirements of their field/s of

study.

Staff who assess students' work have a responsibility to educate students in appropriate referencing techniques and clearly explain what constitutes plagiarism, collusion and other forms of cheating.

Allegations and penalties for academic misconduct

All allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated by VETAM or delegate, and if substantiated will result in the provision of academic counselling and may result in penalties appropriate to the case. In a case where the conduct of the student prejudices the interests of other students or the integrity of the assessment scheme itself, the conduct will be referred for action under the Student Conduct Policy.

The following will be considered when determining the seriousness of an act of academic misconduct:

- type of academic misconduct;
- extent of academic misconduct;
- experience of the student;
- prior offenses, if any (this will include prior offenses in other courses at the College); and
- student's stage or level in the course.

An academic misconduct may be deemed minor or significant:

1. Significant - based on available evidence, an academic misconduct is deemed significant if it:
 - is or appears to be deliberately planned, and/or
 - is or appears to be substantial in scale or scope.
2. Minor – based on available evidence, any academic misconduct that is not deemed significant will be deemed minor.

Initial and minor academic misconduct

A first-time substantiated breach of this policy that is deemed minor will be recorded on the student's file and will result in the provision of academic counselling to ensure the process is an educative one for the student.

If deemed appropriate given the factors listed in this section, a penalty may also apply. This may be:

- a downgrade in the mark or a Not yet satisfactory outcome for the relevant assessment item or task. The degree of academic misconduct should be considered when applying the penalty for initial breach of this policy. Any mark awarded will be based on the content of the submitted work that has not been part of the academic misconduct; or
- the student undertaking an alternative assessment task where the opportunity to plagiarise has been removed (e.g. an oral or invigilated individual assessment).

In describing the outcome of a substantiated case of academic misconduct, the student will be provided with notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Fail/Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject, suspension or exclusion.

Initial and significant academic misconduct

A first-time substantiated breach of this policy that is assessed as significant will be recorded on the student's file and will result in the provision of academic counselling to ensure the process is an educative one for the student.

Given the significant nature of the breach, a penalty will also apply. One or more of the following penalties may be imposed:

- student to undertake an alternative assessment task where the opportunity to plagiarise has been removed (e.g. an oral or invigilated individual assessment);
- a downgrade on the mark or a Not yet satisfactory outcome for the relevant assessment item or for the assessment task;
- a zero mark or Not yet satisfactory outcome for the assessment task, but may be a more significant penalty with regard to the factors listed in this section; or
- a downgrade on the final grade in the subject.

In describing the outcome of a substantiated case of academic misconduct, the student will be provided with notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Fail/Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject, suspension or exclusion.

Second and minor academic misconduct

A second substantiated breach of this policy will be recorded on the student's file and will result in the provision of academic counselling to ensure the process is an educative one for the student.

Given the repeated nature of the breach, a penalty will also apply. One or more of the following penalties may apply:

- student to undertake an alternative assessment task where the opportunity to plagiarise has been removed (e.g. an oral or invigilated individual assessment);
- a downgrade on the mark or a Not yet satisfactory outcome for the relevant assessment item or for the assessment task;
- a zero mark or a Not yet satisfactory outcome for the assessment task, but having regard to the factors listed in this section may also be a more significant penalty; or
- a downgrade on the final grade in the subject.

In describing the outcome of a substantiated case of academic misconduct, the student will be provided with notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject, suspension or exclusion.

Note: a third instance of minor academic misconduct will be processed according to Second and significant academic misconduct, or subsequent breaches (see next section), regardless of the severity of the breach.

Second and significant academic misconduct, or subsequent breaches

A second and significant substantiated breach of this policy or a breach of any kind for the third or more time will be recorded on the student's file and will result in one or more penalties.

Given the repeated and/or significant nature of the breach, the penalty will be a Not Yet Competent outcome for the unit, but having regard to the factors outlined in this policy may also be a more significant penalty, including but not limited to:

- a probationary period of up to two years, during which time any further breaches result in automatic exclusion;
- referral to the Student Conduct Policy with a recommendation of suspension for one or more study periods;
- or referral to the Student Conduct Policy with a recommendation of expulsion from the course.

Complaints and Appeals

Students dissatisfied with outcomes and penalties applied under this policy have access to the appeals process outlined in the Student Complaints Policy.