

Purpose

This Policy and accompanying Procedure outlines our commitment to academic integrity and response to all forms of academic misconduct at Australia Advance Education Group Pty Ltd (AAEG) trading as the Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce (SISTC). This ensures that our students, faculty members and staff act with integrity in the performance of their academic work. This Policy defines academic integrity and various forms of academic misconduct, describes the procedures for investigating allegations of academic misconduct, and outlines penalties that will apply where allegations are proven.

Scope

All faculty, staff, and students in all academic and professional work.

All SISTC courses of study and assessment tasks in all units.

The policy does not apply to general or other forms of misconduct by students or staff which is dealt with in other policies including our Student Rights and Obligations Policy.

Principles

SISTC is committed to the following principles in the setting and implementation of this policy:

- Openness
- Trust
- Procedural fairness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Courage
- Educative understanding and support
- Clear assessment task type and marking parameters that ensure students understand how their contribution is to be graded as individual or collaboratively
- Clear assessment guidance in relation to any use of artificial intelligence
- Penalties as part of an educative process that contributes to student learning experience, prevention, and avoidance of repeat instances.

These principles are as applicable and defined in the AAEG Glossary.

Definitions

Terms not defined in this document may be in the AAEG glossary of terms.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity can be defined as a commitment to *honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage* and involves using, generating, and communicating information in an ethical, honest, and responsible manner. (Monash University 2013, cited in TEQSA Guidance Note – Academic Integrity 2019, p. 1)

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct at AAEG/SISTC is not acting with academic integrity or the breach of Academic Integrity principles and the Academic Integrity policy.

Academic misconduct is undertaking academic activity, either deliberately or imprudently, that can result in unmerited advantage. It may take several forms including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and collusion as defined below.

Artificial intelligence (in relation to higher education study)

Assessment or other tasks generated by computers instead of original work genuinely completed by staff or students, sometimes also referred to as the simulation of intelligent behaviour by human beings. These may be partial tasks or an entire assessment task, formative (to provide feedback for instructional adjustments) or summative (any assessment task that contributes to the final mark and grade).

Plagiarism

Examples of plagiarism include:

- submission of work in which ideas, words or other work are copied directly or paraphrased from a source, published or unpublished (for example a website, computer program, another student's essay or presentation, a book or journal article, a lecture, a performance piece), and presented as if they are the student's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of the original author
- recycling, that is, submission of work by a student that has already been assessed in another unit without disclosing that fact
- unintended failure of a student to appreciate appropriate referencing conventions.

SISTC distinguishes between plagiarism which has occurred from negligence on the part of a faculty member, or student (minor) and that which is dishonest (major).

Minor plagiarism is defined as uninformed omissions of details, which are minor in nature and by themselves are unlikely to alter the student's overall grade (for example, omissions of a limited number of referencing details or incorrect referencing details). It is acknowledged that these minor omissions and errors that are more likely to occur in an initial study period and therefore, responses are more educative at that time. Education and rehabilitation are the preferred course of action.

Major plagiarism is defined as a deliberate attempt to circumvent assessment requirements by drawing on unacknowledged sources in such a way as to improve the grade, strengthen the research project or publish a piece of work.

Cheating

Cheating occurs before, during or after an assessment or examination when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage or assist another student to do so. It includes, but is not limited to:

- bringing items into an examination that are not permitted such as a textbook, notebook, dictionary, calculator, computer, notes, manuscript, bag, mobile phone or other materials or device or means of special assistance, except those items specifically authorised for the examination by the lecturer who set the examination
Note: valuable items, such as small purses and wallets, may be brought into the examination room but must be left on the floor adjacent to the student's desk for the duration of the examination; the examination supervisor may inspect such items;
- colluding with others either in the examination venue or outside the venue including by electronic means
- deliberately viewing other students work in an examination, or in other circumstances, without their permission
- fabricating or falsifying data or inventing references
- submitting the same work or recycling work without prior permission of the unit coordinator.

Contract Cheating

Contract cheating involves a faculty member, or student contracting a third party – paid or unpaid – to prepare or contribute to a research or assessment task or part of assessable work on their behalf. It may also involve the person acquiring or commissioning for services related to the preparation of assessable work with the intention to cheat, misrepresent and/or plagiarise.

A third party may include:

- a friend
- a family member
- a fellow student
- a staff member or
- commercial services, such as:
 - a tutoring company
 - a document sharing website
 - an editing service or
 - an assignment writing service, also known as ‘ghost writing’ or
 - unauthorised and/or unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence.

Solicitation

Solicitation occurs when an individual offers, encourages, induces, or advertises for a faculty member, or student to contract, commission, pay, procure, or complete on their behalf, research or assessment tasks and items that are likely to result in their use for the purpose of cheating, misrepresentation and/or plagiarism.

Collusion

Collusion, unlike collaboration, which encompasses positive cooperation, is when two or more students, or a student and any other person/s, work together on individual (not group work) assessable work with intent to cheat, plagiarise or engage in academic misconduct.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Using AI to generate original assessment tasks and using AI as part of a set assessment learning task and referenced accordingly and to submit them as an individual’s own work is serious academic misconduct. But where using AI as part of a set assessment learning task and referenced accordingly, it is not academic misconduct.

If a student submits material for evaluation that was generated by artificial intelligence (AI) software like ChatGPT or Google Bard, but represents it as their own ideas, research, or analysis, then the student is NOT submitting their own work.

Deliberate academic misconduct and cheating can occur when a student submits any work (paid or unpaid) that was written or produced by a third party as their own work for evaluation. This includes using artificial intelligence technologies as part of the third party.

However, where using AI is part of a learning task or as a tool, it is not academic misconduct. If an assessment task does permit the use of AI tools and technologies in the preparation of the submission, this usage needs to be appropriately acknowledged and cited in accordance with the SISTC referencing policy.

Other Academic Misconduct

Other forms of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- tampering, or attempting to tamper, with research work, examination papers, class work, grades, class records, or other student documentation

- acquiring, or attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing examination materials or information without the approval of the lecturer
- impersonating another student, or arranging for anyone to impersonate a student, in any examination or other assessment task
- altering group assessment work that has been agreed as final by all participating students prior to submission without the collaborating students' consent
- use of recorded lectures (audio and/or visual), PowerPoints, or other class notes in a way that infringes another person's privacy or intellectual property rights - for example, by publishing or distributing a recording without permission from the lecturer
- offering or accepting bribes (money or sexual or other favours) for example, for admission or for grades
- fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation of information (including research data and source material)
- not meeting required research standards and referencing, including conducting research without ethics approval, or conducting research in an unethical manner.

Procedure

The following procedure is to outline how we ensure all students and staff are committed to maintaining and acting with integrity and deterring academic misconduct in relation to all higher education activity and academic work. This Procedure defines academic integrity and various forms of academic misconduct, describes the procedures and penalties consistent with policy principles for investigating allegations of academic misconduct.

SISTC believes that ethical research and scholarship is based on an intellectual and educative environment where academic integrity is highly valued and carefully upheld. All work submitted must be your own. SISTC shares academic integrity guides and tips with students at induction, ongoing forums and through handbooks, unit outlines, relevant teaching materials and directly in class. Academic integrity is expected, and misconduct is not permitted or tolerated, and any such occurrences will be penalised.

The SISTC Academic Misconduct Register records warnings and the outcomes of any asserted/claimed/detected plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or research misconduct. A record of all involvement in academic misconduct is retained while actively enrolled in any course. Nominated staff have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of academic misconduct. Faculty involvement in academic misconduct is recorded in the SISTC Faculty Academic Misconduct Register and is available to the appropriate supervisor involved in reviews, appointments, or subsequent allegations of misconduct.

Detection

Any person may report initial detection of misconduct by a faculty member, student, lecturer, Unit Coordinator to the Associate Dean Learning and Teaching (ADLT), Dean, or relevant supervisor. Academic misconduct in relation to staff is handled according to the Staff Performance Monitoring Policy and Procedure policy.

Turnitin similarity reports are considered in relation to submitted assessment tasks and flagged for consideration and/or further investigation where the report indicates similarity or use of AI.

Although moral and legal copyright to student assessment or research materials is vested in that person as the author, the student, by enrolling in an accredited course, provides an implied consent to SISTC which authorises:

- reproduction and storage of electronic material which they may author and submit as part of their course assessment
- scanning this material for purposes of detecting, through software processing or other methods, any plagiarised material used in assignments.

Principles for dealing with academic misconduct

Academic misconduct responses are considered according to the following principles:

- processes are transparent and the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice apply
- the right to have a support person (who is not a legal representative or hold similar office) attend any designated formal interview for the sole purpose of support not commentary or involvement in the process or decision making
- everyone involved is expected to conduct themselves with dignity and respect;
- suspected incidences are dealt with promptly
- penalties are appropriate and proportionate
- judgements of intentionality are considered when applying a penalty confidentiality is maintained by all parties within the constraints of allegation, investigation, and appeal processes, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure
- anyone believed to have been involved with academic misconduct could respond and/or appeal decisions, according to the Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy
- staff investigating misconduct or appeals processes must disclose actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of them.

Prevention

Teaching staff are encouraged to minimise opportunities for the occurrence of academic misconduct for students, through the setting of clear assessment tasks and practical implementation of academic integrity. The range of coordinated strategies may include:

- advising students at the time of enrolment of the details of this policy and that all assessment tasks are submitted electronically unless otherwise specified
- the educative and practical use of Turnitin detection software as an empowering tool for students to interpret and eliminate inappropriate academic misconduct in all classroom activity and submissions
- Where submitted assessment task Turnitin similarity report or AI detection tool indicates high similarity or use of AI, lecturers assess and invite students to an interview which may include the associate dean of learning and teaching
- explicitly referring to academic integrity: plagiarism and collusion at key stages in courses
- providing students with opportunities in which to practise writing and referencing skills
- providing prompt and constructive feedback to assignments and examinations;
- explaining the aims and purposes of assessment tasks
- providing examples of sound and poor practice
- monitoring time pressures and timetabling that may adversely affect completion and submission of assignments
- mixing the assessment tasks of units to minimise risk of plagiarism, contract cheating and collusion and foster positive values and behaviour among students
- requiring students to provide a disclaimer appended to their assignments which affirms that, where otherwise acknowledged, the material submitted in the assignments is their own

- develop assessment tasks within the principles of authentic assessment and applying knowledge not repeating content to minimise the opportunity to engage in cheating.

While this Procedure outline penalties for different instances, the list of factors considered is not all-inclusive and other factors may be relevant. Staff exercise their professional judgement and procedural fairness with students on whether the suggested penalties fit the particular case. Sometimes a more lenient or more severe penalty may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances.

First substantiated instance

This is recorded on the SISTC Academic Misconduct Register.

- If the academic misconduct is understood as unintentional or minor, the lecturer interviews the student to identify the problem and provide assistance to understand academic integrity and misconduct policy (including the consequences of a further instance). The student is offered educative support, and this is not considered a disciplinary matter
- If unintentional and the academic misconduct was substantial, the Associate Dean L&T or the lecturer must note this on the SISTC Academic Misconduct Register. This is not a penalty, it is simply so that if the student does it again, SISTC is aware that academic misconduct has been repeated
- If the lecturer determines that the student was aware that this constitutes academic misconduct and that it was substantial, the lecturer must report the matter to the ADLT, and the student may be placed on Academic Intervention.

Penalty

Coursework lecturers undertake the following actions, consistent with policy principles:

- provide a written warning to the student outlining the following as applicable:
 - possible further investigation
 - the educative process required and/or penalties and associated grade implications
 - the grading impact and whether a failure grade will be applied additional counselling or tutoring as required
 - resubmission
 - oral presentation, question, and answer session on the work
 - revision of the whole or part assessment item (directly relating to the misconduct) by a specified date
- In relation to grading, the following are considered
- If the student is aware they were committing plagiarism, they may be allowed to rewrite the assessment for a chance to receive no more than 50% of the mark on the assessment component where misconduct was evident
- depending on the extent and severity of the case: 0% for the assessment component or fail the entire unit.

Second substantiated instance

This is reported to the ADLT and recorded on the SISTC Academic Misconduct Register.

Penalty

Depending on the type and nature of verified academic misconduct possible outcomes include:

- a requirement for the candidate/student to receive counselling or tutoring and/or
- student receives 0% mark for the assessment task and/or
- the student may be allowed to write an assessment on a new topic for a chance to receive no more than 50% of the mark and/or
- failure in the entire unit or research project and/or
- suspension for one or two teaching periods and/or
- exclusion from SISTC.

Third substantiated instance

This is reported by the ADLT to the Dean and recorded on the SISTC Academic Misconduct Register.

Penalty

Depending on the severity of the academic misconduct, this may include:

- student receives 0% mark for the assessment task and/or
- failure in the entire unit or research project and/or
- suspension for one or two semesters and/or
- permanent exclusion from SISTC.

Factors considered when offering assistance and applying penalties

Aggravating factors:

- If it is contract cheating
- use of AI
- formatting text into graphics
- use of hidden characters
- seriousness of the offence
- degree of premeditation
- impact on other students and staff
- extent to which the misconduct corrupts the assessment process
- repeat misconduct
- extent of assignment involving misconduct.

Mitigating factors:

- First year first semester student
- role played by the individual if others involved
- individual under duress, but not sufficient to constitute a defence
- degree of remorse and cooperation shown
- willingness to seek assistance to avoid further offences.

Graduate:

Where SISTC has admitted a student to a degree and academic misconduct occurring within the student's candidature is substantially alleged and eventually substantiated:

- a "failure" grade is recorded for the unit and/or any other component of the course of study from which he or she graduated
- conferral of the degree is rescinded
- the student's name is deleted from the SISTC Register of Graduates

- the student is contacted and informed their qualification is no longer valid, they have not met the requirements of the qualification due to academic misconduct, and they are required to return the SISTC testamur and final academic transcript to SISTC;
- the student is informed that any source seeking to verify of the qualification will be told the qualification has been rescinded;
- The student is to be informed that relevant professional bodies and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) may be informed of the rescission of the qualification.

Notification and Resolution of Academic Misconduct

Step 1: Report of Alleged Academic Misconduct

Information and/or evidence regarding alleged academic misconduct is submitted to the lecturer (and if necessary, the ADLT) as soon as practicable but no later than two weeks after detection. However, the ADLT has discretion to accept information and/or evidence later than three weeks after the incident to which the information and/or evidence relates. Any person may report a complaint or suspicion of misconduct by a faculty member, or student and SISTC protects the privacy of the individual who reports the complaint and the privacy of alleged person per these procedures.

The ADLT retains all relevant documentation relating to the case of alleged misconduct for use in any subsequent investigation procedure. This documentation will include a relevant item of work or examination sheet and record of meetings and phone conversations with the faculty member, or student concerned and copies of correspondence, including emails, on this and any earlier related matter. The lecturer, and ADLT acknowledges in writing receipt of a signed statement alleging misconduct immediately upon its receipt.

If the ADLT has a conflict of interest in the alleged misconduct, the information and/or evidence is referred to the Dean takes receipt, is responsible for issuing written acknowledgement, and takes charge of subsequent inquiries.

Step 2: Inquiry

Research misconduct is investigated by the Dean using the principles and procedures in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#) or its successors.

For allegations of student misconduct, the ADLT consults the person providing the signed statement, the student, and any other persons the enquirer deems appropriate. The inquiry is concluded as quickly as practicable and normally within a week of the receipt of the signed statement. If, on completion of the inquiry, the investigating officer concludes that there has been no misconduct, no further investigation

If, during the preliminary inquiry, the student admits to the alleged misconduct, or the investigating officer determines that the suspected student has a case to answer, the penalty is determined according to this procedure.

If, on completion of further inquiry, the investigating officer concludes that the allegation is vexatious or malicious in motivation, or the evidence provided as part of the allegation is spurious, it is reported to the Dean for appropriate action.

Step 3: Notification

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On completion of the investigation and after final determination, the investigating officer notifies the student of the outcome and informs them of their right to appeal. If the student disagrees with the outcome or believes that the investigation process was not conducted fairly, they have the right to submit an appeal. The appeal should be made within a specified timeframe, as outlined in the Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedure. The student appeal right allows the student to present their case and provide any additional evidence or arguments in support of their position.

Where academic misconduct has occurred, the incident is recorded as substantiated in the SISTC Academic Misconduct Register.

If academic staff misconduct is determined, then disciplinary action may follow.

If investigating a student, the Director of Operations (DoO) is also notified of the outcome. The Deputy Director Student Services has responsibility for ensuring that the student's record is appropriately notated, and the determination enforced.

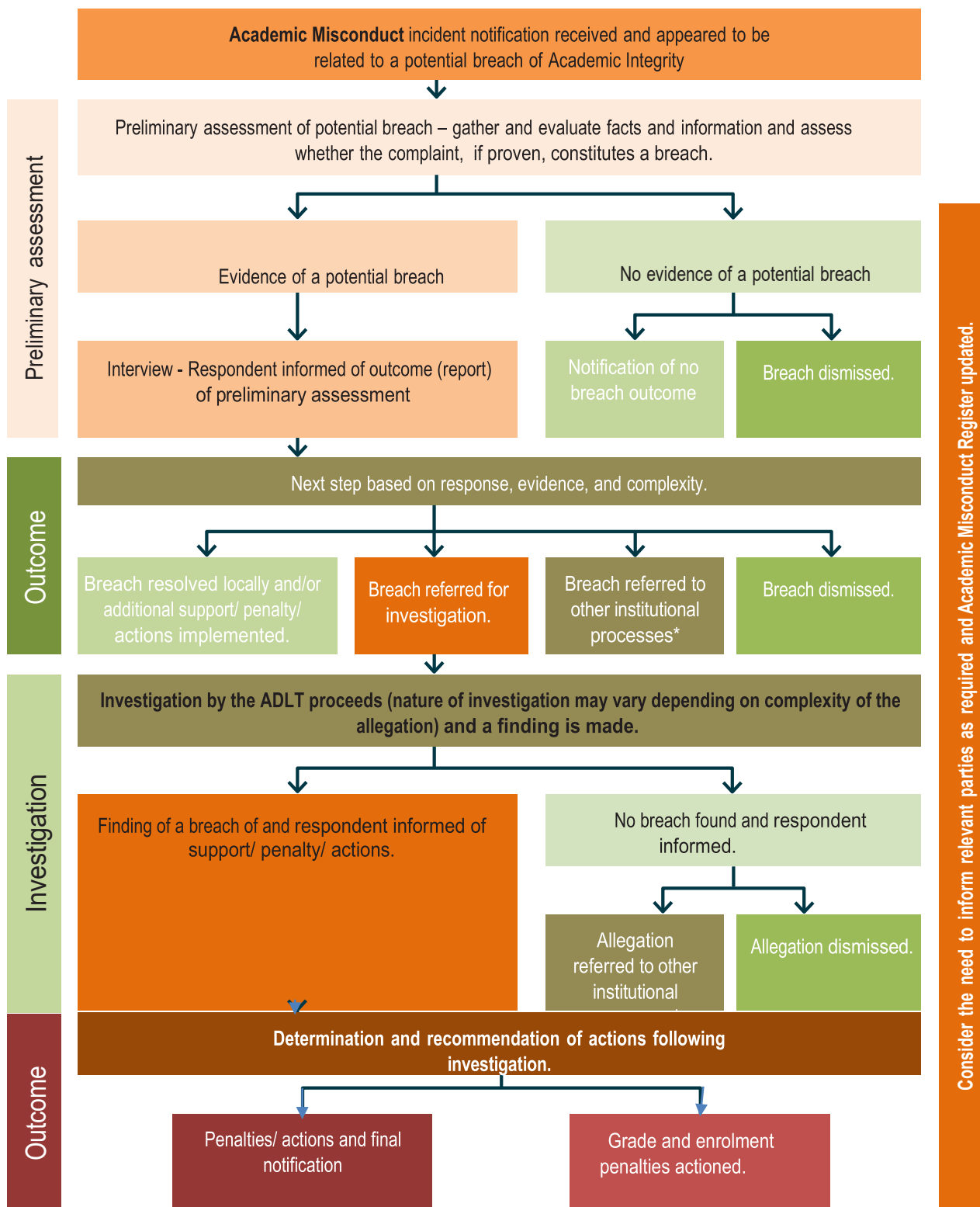
Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure

Document Details

Accountabilities and review cycle					
Delegate <i>(Implements, records and reports)</i>	Associate Dean Learning and Teaching ADLT	Ref: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy			
Approval body	Academic Board				
Reporting Body	Academic Board				
Approval date	202305				
Review date	3 years from last review 202605				
Supporting information					
Related legislation	Educational Services for Overseas Students Act & Regulations (ESOS) <i>(Commonwealth)</i> https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C01320 Higher Education Sport Act (HESA) <i>(Commonwealth)</i> https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00005 Administrative Information for Providers (AIP) <i>(Commonwealth)</i> https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-publications/higher-education-administrative-information-providers-october-2021 Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) <i>(Commonwealth)</i> https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022C00105 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Standard 3.1 – 3.6 <i>(Commonwealth)</i> https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182				
Acknowledgements and sector benchmarking	Yes				
Supporting documents					
Related documents	Assessment Policy and Procedure Student Rights and Obligations Policy and Procedure Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances Policy and Procedure TEQSA - What is contract cheating and methods to reduce it TEQSA - Good practice note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity TEQSA - Report on student academic integrity and allegations of contract cheating by university students				
Superseded documents	NA				
Type and location					
Policy type	Corporate Governance Academic Governance Academic Management Operational Management				
Location/access	Website Student access Staff access				
Document History					
Version No	Delegate	Approving body/delegate	Approval date	Amendment type	Key changes
02.00	D	AB	202304163	Major	Major re-write of policy and procedure and combined into one document and form alignment

Appendix A

Academic Misconduct Action Flow Chart



Consider the need to inform relevant parties as required and Academic Misconduct Register updated.

Table 1 Overview flowchart for managing and investigating a potential breach of Academic Integrity. (Adapted from the NHMRC Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018, Figure 1, p 3)