

Academic Integrity Policy

1. Introduction

Throughout the duration of their studies at the College, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Forms of behaviour contrary to these standards are understood to be academic misconduct. Where a student is found to have breached standards of academic conduct they may be subject to penalties.

2. Principles and Objectives

The College is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of integrity in the conduct of teaching, learning and research (i.e. academic integrity). As a result all members of the teaching and learning environment are responsible for the promotion and protection of academic integrity.

The approach taken by the College to academic integrity is one that is appropriate to a learning organisation; as such its primary aim is to educate students about the expected conventions for academic writing and the appropriate use and acknowledgement of all forms of intellectual material, including authorship. Honesty, trust, respect, fairness and responsibility are the core values that underpin the learning aims around academic integrity at the College.

The College expects students to conduct their studies honestly, ethically and in accordance with the standards of academic conduct outlined in this document. Specifically it is academic misconduct for a student to plagiarise, collude, cheat, make up or falsify research or data.

3. Definitions

- *Academic misconduct*: covers, but is not limited to, acts of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of data or research, unauthorised collaboration [e.g. collusion], misrepresentation of student status, and academic qualifications falsification. Breaching any of the standards outlined in the *Conduct During Examinations* Policy is also considered to be academic misconduct. In addition, where a person knowingly makes false allegations of academic misconduct against any student it will be considered that they have breached the standards of academic conduct.
- *Plagiarism*: is the act of representing the ideas or work of another person(s) as one's own original work, by copying or reproducing that work without acknowledgement of the source, and can include:
 - Word for word copying of sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources which are the work or data of other persons (including material from books, journal articles, theses, unpublished works, working papers, seminar and conference papers, internal reports, Internet articles and publications, lecture notes or tapes, computer code, artwork, graphics or other material) without clearly identifying their origin by appropriate referencing;
 - Closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources without appropriate acknowledgement in the form of a reference to the original work or works;
 - Very closely paraphrasing (e.g. only changing a few words intermittently) sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources even with appropriate acknowledgement: a teacher may decide this is plagiarism, even if a reference is given as the wording is too similar and no quotation marks are used;
 - Self-plagiarising or reusing previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has been used elsewhere. Self-plagiarism occurs when a student submits a whole paper or a

substantial portion of a paper to fulfil a unit requirement, even though that paper has earlier been submitted to satisfy the requirements for another unit taught by a different teacher;

- Copying computer files in whole or in part without indicating their origin.
- *Collusion*: is the presentation by a student of work as his or her own which is in fact the result, in whole or in part, of unauthorised collaboration with another person or persons. Both the student presenting the assignment and the student(s) willingly supplying unauthorised material (colluders) are considered participants in the act of collusion.

Examples of collusion may include:

- Submitting work that includes material obtained as a result of significant assistance from another person(s), if that assistance does not comply with the instructions or guidelines set out by a lecturer or tutor or MIBT;
- Assisting or provoking another student to present/submit work that is not their own and which does not meet the instructions or guidelines set out by a lecturer or tutor or MIBT;
- Copying and submitting another student's work, wholly or partially, by a process of mechanical transformation, for example changing variable names in computer programs;
- Copying and submitting another person's work as if it were your own. If a student lends an assignment to another student and their assignment is copied and handed in by that student, both students will be penalised.
- *Cheating*: is any dishonest conduct in assessment.

Examples of cheating may include, but are not limited to:

- Taking unauthorised written notes into an examination whether on some object (e.g. dictionary) or on part of the body;
- Communicating with others during examinations (whether by speaking, electronic or other means);
- Having notes written in dictionaries;
- Leaving notes outside the classroom to access later during the exam;
- Looking at another student's paper during an examination;
- Contributing little or nothing to a group task and claiming an equal contribution and share of the marks.
- *Fabrication of research or data*: is presenting copied, fabricated or improperly obtained data as if it were the result of laboratory work, field trips or other investigatory work.

Examples may include:

- Using previously published data;
- Using falsified survey data;
- Adjusting previously published data so it matches the argument for the assignment.
- *Misrepresentation*: is the act of presenting an untrue statement or not disclosing information where there is a duty to disclose in order to create a false appearance or identity.

Examples includes:

- Falsifying a testamur for the purpose of admission or an academic transcript for the purpose of obtaining more credit;
- Falsifying a doctors certificate for the purpose of gaining, special consideration or deferred assessment.

4. Penalties

The MIBT Assessment Committee, or a member thereof (usually the relevant Course Coordinator) is responsible for deciding on action to be taken on an allegation of academic misconduct and, where a student has been found to have engaged in a form of academic misconduct, may apply one or more of the following penalties:

1. A formal warning to the student;
2. Requirement to attend compulsory academic skills workshop prior to resubmission of the assessment in which the academic misconduct occurred;
3. A mark reduction or a mark of zero [0] awarded for the assessment item in which the academic misconduct occurred;
4. A Fail [N] grade for the unit within which the academic misconduct occurred;
5. Exclusion from enrolling in the course of study for a specified period of time;
6. Expulsion from the College (readmission to the College is at the discretion of the Academic Director on consideration of the student's case for readmission);
7. Any other academic penalty as decided by the Academic Director.

The functions of the Assessment Committee may be carried out executively by the relevant Course Coordinator, who may decide on action to be taken on an allegation of academic misconduct, or refer the matter to a meeting of the Assessment Committee for a decision.

Where a student is awarded one of the above penalties, a note will be placed on the student's file and a letter will be sent to the student. Where a student is found to have breached the standards of academic misconduct on more than one occasion and has previously been penalised as outlined in penalties 1 - 4, the penalty shall normally be exclusion from the course as set out in penalties 6 & 7, unless in the opinion of the relevant Course Coordinator there are mitigating circumstances.

5. Promoting Academic Integrity

In fulfilling its commitment to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of integrity, the College, with the cooperation of all members of the teaching and learning environment, will ensure that:

- A collaborative effort is made to recognise and deal with plagiarism at every level from policy, through College procedures, to individual staff practices;
- Students are thoroughly educated about the expected conventions for authorship and the appropriate use and acknowledgment of all forms of intellectual material;
- Resources are available to assist students with appropriate approaches to referencing and citation;
- Approaches to assessment minimise the possibility for students to submit plagiarised material, while not reducing the quality and rigour of assessment requirements;
- Resources are available to support academic staff in teaching students the generic skills of critical thinking, analysis, interpretation and thesis development;
- Resources are available to support academic staff in teaching students expected conventions for authorship and the appropriate use and acknowledgment of all forms of intellectual material;
- The installation of highly visible procedures for monitoring and detecting cheating, including appropriate punishment and re-education measures;
- Ethical and professional behaviour is modelled by College staff, authority or position is not improperly used and any conflict that may arise between their personal interest and official duty is declared, in accordance with the *Staff Code of Conduct*.

Responsibility

College Course Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that best practice in academic integrity issues are circulated amongst staff and students and for administering the *Academic Integrity Policy*.

Resources

The College has a central repository of web-based resources with a single point of access for both students and staff related to academic integrity including the academic integrity, guidelines, practices and learning resources. It also provides a short description of this policy and the policy's URL in all Unit Outlines for student reference.

Resources are available to support academic staff in the following areas:

- Teaching students the skills of summarising and paraphrasing, critical thinking, analysis and the development of an argument, data collection, analysis and interpretation, referencing and citation;
- Planning assessment methods that discourage students from engaging in the activities of plagiarism, collusion, cheating and falsification of research or data.
- The College also provides resources to support the decision-making processes of those with whom the responsibility of administering the *Academic Integrity Policy* has been vested.

Student support staff of the College are available to assist students with identifying the appropriate strategies to remediate conduct that falls outside of these standards. They are also available to support students who have allegations of academic misconduct made against them.

Strategies

The College shall develop and implement a program of information dissemination about its position on academic integrity for staff and students, as follows:

- Students shall be advised of the *Academic Integrity Policy* at the commencement of their studies and reminded of this Policy at the start of each unit they undertake as a continuing student;
- Students shall be advised via their Unit Outlines that the College Student support staff are available to assist students to engage in ethical academic practices and to support them if an allegation of academic misconduct is made against them;
- The College will provide all enrolled students with detailed guidance on academic integrity which includes the Colleges requirements for referencing and acknowledging the work of others in presentation of a student work (via the unit: ACA100 Academic Support and a copy of the *Guide to assignment writing and referencing*, 3rd Edition, (2005) Deakin University);
- The College shall promote assessment practices that minimize the opportunity for plagiarism, and are consistent with best practice.

6. Protecting Academic Integrity

Both staff and students have a responsibility for protecting the reputation and integrity of the College by reporting any suspected breaches of academic integrity to the relevant Course Coordinator (being a member of the MIBT Assessment Committee). Observations of academic misconduct are to be reported in a timely fashion, preferably at the time of the occurrence, using the *Academic Misconduct Form*. The College shall deal with a suspected breach of academic integrity or an allegation of academic misconduct quickly and with due regard for the principles of natural justice.

Detection

Instances of academic misconduct may be detected through a variety of mechanisms such as the invigilation of examinations, or the comparison of assessment to either the work of another student or to that of a published author. The College may also use plagiarism/collusion detection software to assist with the identification of instances where assessment submitted by a student has been copied inappropriately from another source.

Allegations of Academic Misconduct

Step 1

An academic staff member of the College, who suspects that a student has been involved in some form of academic misconduct, will investigate to verify the nature and characteristics of academic misconduct. Once this has been determined, the staff member will discuss the issue with the student concerned and outline the suspected occurrence of academic misconduct. On the basis of the discussion, the staff member may decide to:

- Take no further action;
- Provide the student with a warning together with advice about what is acceptable academic conduct; or
- Make a formal complaint of academic misconduct to the relevant Course Coordinator by setting out in writing the nature of the alleged misconduct and including any evidence in support of the allegation (refer to Step 2 below).
- Where a student is suspected of being involved in academic misconduct during a final examination, the Deputy Academic Director will notify the Course Coordinator.

Step 2

Where there is reason to believe that a student has been involved in some form of academic misconduct, the staff member must report the incident in a timely fashion to the relevant Course Coordinator (being a member of the College Assessment Committee) for investigation by completing the *Academic Misconduct Form*. All relevant information/reasons for the allegation of academic misconduct and any supporting evidence must be provided to the Course Coordinator to ensure that allegations of academic misconduct are appropriately managed and thoroughly investigated.

A student who has reason to believe that another student has committed a form of academic misconduct shall report the matter to the relevant Course Coordinator for investigation, providing reasons for the referral and any supporting evidence.

On receiving a complaint of academic misconduct against a student, the Course Coordinator may seek further evidence concerning the matter from other sources. The Course Coordinator shall advise the student in writing (via the myMIBT portal Messaging system using 'read confirmation') of the complaint, including a description of the grounds for the complaint of academic misconduct and any evidence related to the matter.

Before determining the action to be taken concerning a complaint of academic misconduct the Course Coordinator must contact the student advising them of the proposed action and provide them with an opportunity to respond to the complaint of academic misconduct. The response must be in writing and must be received within 7 days of the receipt of the notification of the complaint. When providing a response to the allegation of academic misconduct, the student may request an interview with the Course Coordinator.

Having considered the complaint of academic misconduct in light of the evidence and the student's response, the Course Coordinator may take one of the following actions:

- Dismiss the complaint of academic misconduct. In this case no documentation concerning the complaint shall be placed on file;
- Provide the student with a warning together with advice about what is acceptable academic conduct;
- Where satisfied that academic misconduct has occurred, the Course Coordinator may impose a penalty as set out in the Penalties section above;
- Where further investigation is needed to establish the facts of the case, the Course Coordinator may refer the matter to a meeting of the College Assessment Committee for a formal hearing.

In all cases the student shall be informed in writing of the decision of the Course Coordinator, including the reasons for the decision.

Dealing with Additional Complaints of Academic Misconduct

During the course of consideration of a complaint of academic misconduct, if an additional complaint of academic misconduct is received, that complaint shall be dealt with fully as outlined in Step 1 and 2 above.

7. Formal Hearing Concerning Alleged Academic Misconduct

The College Assessment Committee (hereafter referred to as the committee) may conduct a formal hearing into an allegation of academic misconduct. The student may attend the hearing or, if the student requests, participate in the hearing through telephone conferencing or similar facility.

- If the student declines to attend the hearing (or participate by other means) the hearing shall proceed in the absence of the student.
- The student may make a written submission to the hearing.
- The student may be accompanied at the hearing by a companion who is a member of the College [e.g fellow student or student support staff]. The companion is present as a support to the student and is not an advocate or spokesperson for the student. In exceptional cases, for example a student with a disability which affects communication, the Chair of the committee may give permission for the companion to speak on behalf of the student.
- Neither the student nor any other person participating in the hearing is entitled to be legally represented.

Prior to the hearing the committee shall provide the student with a copy of (or access to) all written materials and other evidence available to the committee.

The committee may call witnesses to give evidence at a hearing or may receive written statements of evidence. If the committee thinks it appropriate or if the student requests it, the committee may require persons to attend the hearing and answer questions. The student may ask questions of any witnesses in attendance at the hearing. The student may make submissions to the committee after the evidence of all witnesses has been given. The student's submissions may be presented orally or in writing.

As an outcome of the hearing, the committee may take one of the following actions:

- Dismiss the complaint of academic misconduct;
- Provide the student with a warning together with advice about what is acceptable academic conduct;
- Decide that the student is guilty of academic misconduct and impose a penalty as set out in the Penalties section above.
- In all cases, the student shall be informed in writing of the decision of the committee, including the reasons for the decision.

8. Recording of Penalty

Where a penalty of exclusion, as provided for in 6 and 7 of the Penalties section, is applied, the Course Coordinator shall advise the Academic Administration Manager for the purpose of suspending the student's enrolment at the College. The student's academic record will subsequently bear the annotation "Student excluded by MIBT".

9. Appeal

Any student who has been penalised for academic misconduct has the right to appeal the penalty imposed. Appeals must outline the grounds on which the appeal is based and must be accompanied by supporting documentation where relevant.

An appeal must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Academic Grievance Committee within seven (7) days of the notification of the penalty that has been imposed.

The Academic Grievance Committee will consider the appeal and notify the student, in writing, of the outcome of their appeal.

For further detail on the appeal process, please refer the *Grievance Procedures relating to academic matters policy*.

Policy Title	Academic Integrity Policy	
Policy Owners	Academic Director	
Contact Persons	Michael Joyce	
Key Stakeholders	All Students at MIBT; Academic Services	
Approval Body	MIBT Academic Board of Studies	Agenda item and meeting date approved 4.6; 20 August 2009
Relevant Legislation	[Relevant Legislation]	
Related Policies	Grievance Procedures Relating to Academic Matters	
Related Guidelines	[Related Guidelines]	
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