

## HEPP02 Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to promote the principle of mutual respect by educating staff and students about standards Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) considers appropriate; to discourage behaviour Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) considers inappropriate; to implement fair and rigorous procedures for addressing possible cases of academic misconduct; and to provide for the enforcement of penalties in cases of academic misconduct.

### SCOPE

This policy and procedure apply to all staff and students of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education), in respect of their preparation, dissemination and submission of any form of academic and scholarly work.

### DEFINITIONS

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| Academic Integrity  | The capacity to undertake study and research and to communicate findings and knowledge, in a manner appropriate to the particular disciplinary conventions and scholarly standards expected at university level.   |
| Academic misconduct | The intentional or reckless conduct by which a student seeks to gain an unfair or unjustified academic advantage in a course or subject. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to cheating, or attempting to cheat through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) collusion</li> <li>b) inappropriate collaboration</li> <li>c) plagiarism</li> <li>d) misrepresenting or fabricating data or results or other assessable work</li> <li>e) inappropriate electronic data sourcing/collection</li> <li>f) breaching rules specified for the conduct of examinations in a way that may compromise or defeat the purposes of assessment</li> </ul> |
| Ethical Scholarship | Entails the pursuit of scholarly enquiry marked by honesty. It is reflected both in individual and group approaches to study and assessment tasks, and is part of a broader institutional commitment to maintain and extend robust, defensible and transparent educational standards and practices.  |
| SCEI-HE             | Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).   |

### POLICY

SCEI-HE is committed to outstanding teaching and learning experiences for its staff and students. It seeks to foster an academic environment that promotes the most rigorous standards of independent scholarship, critical inquiry, academic integrity and freedom of speech and academic inquiry. All staff and students at the Institute are responsible to maintain the highest standards of academic ethics and integrity in their work.

For students, penalties for academic misconduct vary according to the severity of the case, and may include the requirement to do further work; deduction of marks; an award of zero marks for the assessment; failure of a unit or course; suspension from a course; exclusion from the Institute; non-conferral of a degree, or other award to which the student would otherwise have been entitled.

The Academic Director or delegate is responsible for approving any penalty.

#### Severity of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct at SCEI-HE is defined for students on three levels.

1. Minor Academic Misconduct
2. Moderate Academic Misconduct
3. Major Academic Misconduct

## PROCEDURE

### Minor Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are considered minor where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to result from careless practice and/or neglect of specific guidelines relating to assessment requirements by students. The outcome of the misconduct compromises the purpose of an assessment to a limited extent only.

Instances of minor academic misconduct may arise more often, although not exclusively, in relation to first year undergraduate student assessment. Examples of minor academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- I. minor plagiarism such as inadequate or inconsistent referencing, paraphrasing too close to the original; and/or
- II. minor copying of material, such as copying one or two sentences including copying where a student utilises a verbatim transcription in their notes and presents it as their own words.

### Moderate Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are deemed moderate where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to be a moderate breach of ethical scholarship and includes (but is not limited to):

- I. moderate plagiarism;
- II. submitting an item of assessment for a course subject that is submitted in another course subject in complete or substantial form;
- III. fabricating or falsifying data, results or sources of information in an assessment item;
- IV. colluding with another student to produce assessable work and representing that as individual work when such collusion has not been authorised.

### Major Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are considered major where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to be a serious breach of ethical scholarship and includes (but is not limited to):

- I. Plagiarism collusion
- II. Inappropriate collaboration
- III. Plagiarism
- IV. Misrepresenting or fabricating data or results or other assessable work
- V. Cheating in examinations, including:
  - a. using unauthorised material in an examination, including (but not limited to) written notes, formulae or other prompts whether stored on or within some object or device, or on paper or on the student's body; and/or
  - b. communicating (or attempting to communicate) in an unauthorised manner with others during examinations (verbally or other means).

All may lead to penalties for unsatisfactory course progress.

### Major Academic Misconduct (Major)

#### Major, First instance

For a first instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the subject in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be warned that further breaches will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee and may result in the award of a failure grade for all other subjects concurrently enrolled.

#### Major, Second instance

For a second instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the subject in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee who will typically apply a failure grade for all other units in which the student is concurrently enrolled.

**Major, Third instance**

For a third instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the subject in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee who will typically apply the failure grade for all other subjects in which the student is concurrently enrolled. However, in addition, the Teaching and Learning Committee may exclude a student from enrolment in all courses or subjects offered by the Institute for a period of up to one academic year or that a student's current enrolment in any course or subject offered by the Institute be cancelled.

Further instances of Major Academic Misconduct may result in consequent expulsion from the Institute or non-conferral of a degree or other award to which the student would otherwise have been entitled.

**Subsequent Instances**

If a student who has committed a more significant instance of academic misconduct, then commits a subsequent, but less significant, instance, that subsequent instance will not be considered as a first offence. In such cases, the subsequent breach will automatically be treated as at least a second breach for that more significant level, and will attract the appropriate penalty.

**Concurrent Instances**

In cases where students submit items for assessment concurrently in different subjects, and those items are found to exhibit evidence of academic misconduct, such collective breaches should, for the purposes of a penalty, be treated as a single instance only. Such leniency should only occur if it is clear that the student as a result of a concurrent or near concurrent submission schedule has not been in a position to benefit from counselling, has not previously received counselling for an earlier instance, and is likely to have committed the breaches without intent.

**Plagiarism**

The following scale has been adopted across the Institute for the purposes of preliminary classification in cases of plagiarism:

- less than 10% - minor
- 10-25% - moderate
- more than 25% - major

This refers to the substantive content of the work (i.e. word length excluding properly referenced quotes, and footnotes/endnotes except where plagiarism is contained in the latter). The extent of plagiarism will be calculated to include both unattributed word for word copying; work in which minor amendments have been made to unattributed source material (through substitution, transposition or exclusion of words); and the close paraphrase of the words and/or specific ideas of another person.

**Mitigating Circumstances**

In the process of determining the level of academic misconduct that has occurred and the appropriate penalty to be applied once a case has been established, appeals may be made to the Teaching and Learning Committee to take into account one or more mitigating circumstances that are deemed to bear upon the case.

Such factors may include, but not be limited to:

- I. differing educational, cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds of students at entry level;
- II. documented medical or personal circumstances of a nature to indicate serious impairment of responsibility at the time the academic misconduct occurred.

### Principles Relating to the Handling of Alleged Academic Misconduct

The following principles are to be observed in all cases of alleged academic misconduct:

- Cases of alleged and established misconduct must be treated confidentially by staff. Discussion of cases should be limited to those who have a direct line of responsibility in such matters (the Academic Director, relevant course coordinator, Teaching and Learning Committee members).
- Lines of responsibility for investigating cases of suspected misconduct must be rigorously adhered to throughout the Institute.
- Course coordinators must advise students that they are suspected of committing academic misconduct no later than when assessment items are returned to other students. This advice must be confidential and coupled with procedural information so that the student understands what will occur next.
- Established protocols for recording academic misconduct must be adhered to in all faculties of SCEI-HE.

### Student Appeal

A student can challenge the decision by lodging an appeal according to **HEPP05 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure**. All appeals lodged will be processed in accordance with the **HEPP05 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

This application should be submitted within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the academic misconduct incident.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

HEMIS14 Student Charter  
HEPP01 Academic Integrity Policy and procedure  
HEPP03 Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure  
HEPP04 Assessment Policy and Procedure  
HEPP05 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure  
HEPP07 Student Conduct Policy

## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'The National Code 2018 - Standard 8 (Specifically 8.8.1)  
The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000  
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cwth)  
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, Monitoring and Review

The Corporate Board is responsible for the development, review and implementation of this policy and procedure. Responsibilities for actions under this procedure are detailed throughout this document.

### Reporting

The Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, or nominee, shall provide a report to the Academic Board of academic misconduct cases at the conclusion of each semester.

### Records Management

All records relevant to this document are to be maintained in the student's academic file and on the SCEI-HE's Student Management System.

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