

# Academic Integrity Policy

## Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Policy replaces Chapter 4.20 of the Academic Policy (December 2010).

## Section 2 - Definitions

(2) For the purpose of this Policy refer to the Academic Board's Definitions Policy.

## Section 3 - Introduction

(3) This Policy provides a framework that defines academic integrity and its attendant responsibilities. It is formulated on the principle that academic integrity is an accepted foundation of excellence in ethical scholarship. Underpinning this principle is the assumption that members of the Southern Cross University community value the highest standards of academic integrity.

## Section 4 - Objectives

(4) This Policy is based on the premise that students need to be educated in ethical values, the meaning and practice of academic integrity in general and in their discipline(s) and field(s) of study specifically, and that courses and units of study and assessment tasks should be designed so as to make academic misconduct by students difficult. The Policy is also concerned with the detection of academic misconduct when it occurs and with the fair, reasonable and consistent application of penalties for such misconduct. The Policy's objectives are:

- a. to define academic integrity as it applies to the students of Southern Cross University;
- b. to provide a framework to ensure that all students have an understanding of the meaning of academic integrity and the implications of academic misconduct at Southern Cross University;
- c. to provide a system of Procedures when academic misconduct is suspected, and of penalties for substantiated cases of academic misconduct which are fair, reasonable, consistent and defensible; and
- d. to ensure that there is a central system in place to keep adequate records of cases of alleged academic misconduct and their outcomes.

## Section 5 - Content and Implementation

(5) Each School/College and Special Research Centre is required to appoint an Academic Integrity Officer. The appointment in Schools/Colleges shall coincide with the appointment term of the Chair, School Board /Chair, College Board. Normally, the Chair, School Board /Chair, College Board will be the Academic Integrity Officer for their respective School/College. The Chair, School Board /Chair, College Board may request that a full time academic staff member, nominated by the relevant Head of School /Head of College be appointed as the Academic Integrity Officer. The nominee is subject to approval by the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Chair, Academic Board. The

Academic Integrity Officer in a Special Research Centre shall be the nominee of the Centre Director, subject to approval by the Chair, Academic Board and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

(6) This Policy is intended to be read in conjunction with: Rule 3, Section 7 - Conduct of Examinations; Rule 3, Section 18 - Academic Misconduct Including Plagiarism; the Misconduct - Student Misconduct Rule; and other relevant Codes, Rules, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines listed in the Associated Information page. Procedures and Penalties are detailed in Section 6. Particular roles in the application of this Policy are described below.

### **Students**

(7) Students of Southern Cross University are expected to comply with this Policy and can expect access to information about this and other relevant Rules, Policies and Procedures along with the penalties for and consequences of academic misconduct.

### **Staff (including part-time and sessional staff)**

(8) All staff are expected to comply with this Policy and, according to their level of responsibility, provide students with a solid foundation in how to practice academic integrity including:

- a. teaching students about academic integrity;
- b. designing courses and assessment tasks that make academic misconduct more difficult; and
- c. taking a fair and consistent approach to the application of this Policy in cases where academic misconduct is suspected and/or found.

(9) When any staff member is satisfied that misconduct has occurred, they should report it to the relevant Academic Integrity Officer and can expect to be supported by the University when they are involved in pursuing any cases to their outcome.

### **Academic Board**

(10) The monitoring of this Policy's consistent interpretation and implementation by the Chair, Academic Board will be supported by the appointment of a person to act as an Academic Integrity Support Officer for a period of two years. The Academic Integrity Support Officer will be appointed by the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor after consultation with the Chair, Academic Board.

(11) The Academic Integrity Support Officer will:

- a. keep records of cases of academic misconduct and maintain them in a strictly confidential manner;
- b. liaise regularly with Academic Integrity Officer as required to provide advice and ensure consistency in the application of this Policy and associated Rules;
- c. report monthly to the Chair, Academic Board regarding the aggregated data on the incidence and outcomes of cases of student academic misconduct; and
- d. prepare an annual report regarding the aggregated data on the incidence and outcomes of cases of student academic misconduct and present this report to the Chair, Academic Board before the first meeting of the Academic Board in the following year.

### **Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor**

(12) The Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor:

- a. decides if the matter should be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee upon referral of an alleged case of serious academic misconduct by a student;

- b. consults with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) prior to convening the Student Misconduct Committee when the allegation of academic misconduct relates to a student in a Research Higher Degree Award or the research component of a masters or professional doctorate; and
- c. reports outcomes of cases to the Academic Integrity Support Officer for their records.

### **Head of School /Head of College and Director, Special Research Centre**

(13) Head of School /Head of College and Director, Special Research Centre will:

- a. ensure that all staff and students within their School, College or Centre have the opportunity to be made aware of the values and practice of academic integrity in the production and reproduction of knowledge, including this Policy and its provisions; and
- b. make decisions regarding appeals against penalties imposed by an Academic Integrity Officer in accordance with relevant Rules.

### **Academic Integrity Officers**

(14) Academic Integrity Officers will:

- a. promote the values and practice of academic integrity among staff and students and ensure that all staff and students are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to academic integrity and student academic misconduct;
- b. liaise with the Academic Integrity Support Officer when necessary;
- c. investigate student academic misconduct;
- d. make decisions in cases of academic misconduct in accordance with the Procedures and penalties outlined in relevant Rules;
- e. refer serious academic misconduct to the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor who may refer the matter to the Student Misconduct Committee;
- f. report all cases of academic misconduct by students in the research components of research higher degrees to their respective Director of Research Training;
- g. ensure their School, College or Special Research Centre records all cases of academic misconduct and their outcomes;
- h. refer appeals against a penalty imposed to the Head of School /Head of College or Director, Special Research Centre and advise the Academic Integrity Support Officer of this action; and
- i. report outcomes of cases to the Academic Integrity Support Officer for their confidential records.

### **School/College & Special Research Centre Directors of Research Training**

(15) School, College or Special Research Centre Directors of Research Training will report all cases of academic misconduct by research students to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) and Dean, Graduate Studies for noting.

### **Examination Room Supervisors**

(16) Examination room supervisors (invigilators) should be familiar with Rule 3, Section 7 - Conduct of Examinations and supervise examinations in accordance with that rule and this Policy.

### **Students**

(17) It is the responsibility of students to:

- a. know and abide by the provisions of this Policy and any other relevant Rules, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, and Codes of conduct; and

- b. know and abide by the academic conventions of their discipline(s) or field(s) of study.

## **Rights of Students**

(18) Students of the University have the right:

- a. to have access to information and teaching about academic integrity and the implications of academic misconduct;
- b. if suspected of academic misconduct, to have the case investigated in a way that observes procedural fairness and confidentiality, that is:
  - i. they will be informed of the nature of any allegation of misconduct, and be presented with all the evidence against them;
  - ii. they are entitled to present a case against the allegation orally and in writing to an Academic Integrity Officer as appropriate;
  - iii. they will have their case dealt with expeditiously and discreetly;
  - iv. they will be notified of decisions at every stage of the process;
  - v. they may appeal a decision of academic misconduct made against them by an Academic Integrity Officer within 14 days to the relevant Head of School /Head of College or Special Research Centre; and
  - vi. they may appeal a decision of academic misconduct made against them by the Student Misconduct Committee within 14 days to the Council Appeals Committee; and
- c. to bring a support person (but not a legal representative) to any hearing into alleged academic misconduct. A support person does not have a role in the proceedings, but may assist a student to clarify the processes involved during any hearing.

## **Electronic Originality Checking**

(19) Students may be required to submit a copy of their assignment or thesis to an electronic originality checking service in order to determine whether the assignment or thesis is an original work. Academic staff, including relevant Higher Degrees Research Supervisors, may submit a student assignment or thesis to such a checking service for originality. The checking service may retain a copy of the assignment on its database for the purpose of future originality checking.

(20) For more information, refer to the University's [Text Matching Software Policy](#).

# **Section 6 - Procedures and Penalties**

(21) While this Policy is formulated on the principle that Southern Cross University values academic integrity as the foundation of excellence in research and scholarship, it is recognised that academic misconduct does occur. In such circumstances, investigations should be conducted and any penalties applied should be fair, reasonable, consistent and defensible. The Misconduct - Student Misconduct Guidelines provide examples of offences and appropriate penalties.

## **Part A - Procedure when Academic Misconduct is Found**

### **Students in Undergraduate and Postgraduate by Coursework Courses**

(22) See [Rule 3 Section 18 Academic Misconduct Including Plagiarism and Student Misconduct Rule Part C: Making, Investigating and Dealing with Allegations](#).

## **Students Undertaking Higher Degrees by Research and the Research Component of Coursework Masters Degrees and Professional Doctorates**

(23) See [Rule 3 Section 18 Academic Misconduct Including Plagiarism and Student Misconduct Rule Part C: Making, Investigating and Dealing with Allegations](#).

### **Part B - Criteria when Investigating Academic Misconduct**

(24) Determine whether the misconduct is deliberate or inadvertent. The [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Guidelines](#) provide additional information and examples. Further acts of academic misconduct by the same student are taken to be deliberate once the student has received a warning, feedback and the opportunity to learn about academic integrity.

(25) Determine whether the academic misconduct is minor or serious (see [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Guidelines, Part C](#) for examples).

(26) Consider the misconduct within the context of the particular Academic conventions of the discipline or field within which it took place.

### **Part C - Application of Procedures and Criteria to Determine Whether an Allegation can be Substantiated and the Application of Appropriate Penalties**

(27) See [Rule 3 Section 18 Academic Misconduct Including Plagiarism and Student Misconduct Rule Part C: Making, Investigating and Dealing with Allegations](#).

(28) For examples and scenarios to assist decision making, refer to the [Misconduct - Student Academic Misconduct Guidelines](#).

### **Part D - Confidentiality is a Vital Element of All Processes**

(29) It is not a light matter to make an accusation of academic misconduct against a member of the University community. Among other things, it may result in that person being unable to practice their profession; there may be dire consequences for their reputation and employment prospects; and it may disrupt or prevent completion of studies.

(30) Confidentiality is essential in any matters relating to a suspicion of academic misconduct. Any person suspecting a student of a breach of this Policy should ensure that they have read the Policy thoroughly, must maintain confidentiality at all times and divulge their suspicions (with accompanying evidence) to the appropriate officer/s only.

(31) All records of information, proceedings and outcomes will be maintained with care as to their security and will be provided only to those who have a bona fide reason to know about them.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	10th August 2012
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