

Academic Misconduct Guidelines

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Guideline replaces Appendix 4.20(c) of the Academic Policy (December 2010). The Guideline gives examples of types of academic misconduct and the range of responses and penalties that can be applied according to the Misconduct - Student Misconduct Rules, and particularly the Academic Integrity Policy, Part B. When determining guilt and an appropriate penalty(s) for Academic Misconduct, decision makers shall:

- a. consider the suspected misconduct within the context of the particular Academic conventions of the discipline or field within which it took place;
- b. determine whether an act of academic misconduct is deliberate or inadvertent; and
- c. determine whether the academic misconduct is minor or serious.

(2) The following examples, cases, scenarios and types of penalties to apply in such cases may assist decision making and are set out as follows:

- a. 'Inadvertent' misconduct in coursework;
- b. 'Deliberate' misconduct in coursework;
- c. distinguishing between 'minor' and 'serious' misconduct; and
- d. misconduct in Higher Degrees by Research and in the research component of Masters and Professional Doctorates.

Section 2 - Definitions

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

Section 3 - Guidelines

Part A - 'Inadvertent' Misconduct in Coursework

(4) Students often begin their undergraduate studies without a clear sense of how to practice academic integrity. Academic misconduct is taken to be 'inadvertent' when the student has not had the opportunity to learn about 'academic integrity' in the context of Southern Cross University and their field of study.

(5) This is incorrect academic practice rather than misconduct and the student should be given feedback and taught how to practice academic integrity in the future. Misconduct can also be 'inadvertent' if the student is careless in their practice of academic conventions or if they learn the conventions of one discipline or field, take an elective in another discipline or field, and make mistakes that appear to be academic misconduct.

(6) The response/penalty range that can be applied by a decision maker, taking into account academic conventions of the field of study in all cases is as follows:

- a. require the student to 'resubmit' the piece of work, as modified to accord with academic integrity principles, without penalty;
- b. deduct marks from the submitted work (0- 50%);
- c. provide feedback, caution, counselling and the opportunity for training.

(7) Examples of inadvertent academic misconduct:

- a. inexperience - a student in the early stage of their course quotes directly or uses paraphrasing without acknowledgement through a lack of understanding of the correct protocols;
- b. poor paraphrasing - a student changes only a very few words in a passage and claims it as paraphrasing because they do not understand how to compose an acceptable paraphrase;
- c. misunderstanding - a student quotes directly from a source or paraphrases without acknowledgement but cites the work in a bibliography or reference list. Previous institutions might have required general 'bibliographies' but not specific 'reference lists';
- d. errors can occur because of prior experience in different institutions and SCU Schools or Colleges (e.g. international student whose previous education institutions taught different academic conventions, or TAFE or High School conventions might be inappropriate at SCU);
- e. inexperience - a student takes a passage directly from the internet and does not acknowledge the source because he or she does not know how to make this type of citation. For example, the student might place the full internet address as an in text citation, but not include it in their final reference list;
- f. carelessness - most of the citations are correct, most of the work of others is acknowledged, but some citations are missing or incorrect;
- g. recycling - a student submits an assignment already assessed in one unit for assessment in a different unit without permission. For example, the assignment might have been prepared in another institution and the student has changed it minimally without being aware that this is considered to be cheating;
- h. recycling - a student may have 'dropped out' of a unit or 'failed' it although they had successfully completed some of the assignments. They could think it is acceptable to 'recycle' these assignments without permission when they enrol in the unit again;
- i. group work misunderstandings - a student engaged in a group assessment task mistakenly claims the work of another student as his or her own as a result of misunderstanding the guidelines for individual and group assessment within the task. Misunderstandings can occur because group assessment tasks might sometimes call for a breakdown of individual/ collective effort, and sometimes might not do so. The student might thus be accused of collusion;
- j. collusion by misunderstanding - a student works in an informal 'study group' and uses the ideas and/or words of another member of the group in an assignment without acknowledgement, either because they do not realize they should do so, or because they do not know how to cite the work of co-learners.

Part B - 2. 'Deliberate' Academic Misconduct in Coursework

(8) A student may not claim 'inadvertence' more than once if he or she has received appropriate feedback and the opportunity to learn how to avoid 'academic misconduct' after the first instance is found. If it is claimed more than once the student must show that they have not had the opportunity to learn about the particular aspect of academic integrity after their first error.

(9) The following examples assume that students have some experience as undergraduates (i.e. have completed at least one study period), have received feedback on their work and have had the opportunity to learn from their teachers and own experiences.

(10) Response/Penalty range that can be applied by a decision maker for deliberate Academic Misconduct in

Coursework, taking into account academic conventions of the field of study in all cases:

- a. Minor:
 - i. award 0% for the task; and
 - ii. provide feedback and strong caution to the student.
- b. Serious: refer the case to the DVC who may refer the matter to the Student Misconduct Committee, and may consult with the PVCR in the case of Higher Degree by research students and those completing the research components of masters or professional doctorates (see Part E).

(11) Examples of deliberate academic misconduct:

- a. 'sham' paraphrasing or changing a few key words in a passage and claiming it to be paraphrasing;
- b. false entries in reference lists and bibliographies;
- c. verbatim copying from the work of others without citation and passing it off as the student's own work. This could be from another person, an internet site, book, journal or other source;
- d. two or more students submitting the same assignment for a particular assessment task without permission, each claiming it as their own individual work;
- e. recycling assignments prepared for one unit and submitting them for assessment in the same or another unit without permission from the lecturer/unit assessor. The assignment might be the student's own or be written by another person;
- f. submitting an assignment 'ghost written' (for payment or free of charge) by someone else as the student's own work;
- g. obtaining an assignment from the internet or from any other source (for payment or free of charge) and submitting it as the student's own work;
- h. stealing another student's work (e.g. by 'hacking' into their MySCU site) and passing it off as the student's own;
- i. knowingly claiming the work of others in a group assignment as the student's own individual work;
- j. taking unauthorised study material or other aids into an examination;
- k. otherwise cheating in examinations; and
- l. falsifying data from experiments, clinics, surveys, field trips or other investigations.

Part C - Minor or Serious Misconduct in Coursework

(12) Distinguishing Between 'Minor' and 'Serious' Misconduct:

- a. Minor includes:
 - i. incorrect paraphrasing;
 - ii. misconduct which is a small proportion of a whole piece of work;
 - iii. a student's own work recycled without permission;
 - iv. a group assignment knowingly passed off as a student's own work;
 - v. two or more students colluding by submitting the same assignment without prior permission from lecturer/unit assessor;
 - vi. collusion in group work when individual effort was required (perhaps students misunderstood guidelines);
 - vii. recycling assignments without prior permission from their lecturer/unit assessor; and
 - viii. false entries in reference lists and bibliographies.
- b. Serious includes:
 - i. a whole piece of work is judged to be dishonest including a piece of work which is:
 - 'ghost written';

- copied or stolen from another student, writer, researcher or maker; or
 - bought or copied from a book, a journal, an internet site or any other source;
- ii. repetition of 'deliberate' academic misconduct;
 - iii. stealing the work of another student (e.g. by 'hacking' into their MySCU site) or acquiring another student's assignment by other means with the aim of passing it off as their own work;
 - iv. a student knowingly allowing their work to be submitted by another student as their own;
 - v. a student knowingly submitting the work of another student as their own with the other student's consent;
 - vi. verbatim copying without citation throughout a piece of work;
 - vii. falsifying data sets from experiments, clinics, surveys, field trips or other investigations; and
 - viii. cheating in an examination.

(13) Response/Penalty range that can be applied by a decision maker is as per clause (10).

Part D - Academic Misconduct in Higher Degrees by Research and the Research Component of Masters and Professional Doctorates

(14) If 'minor' misconduct, the decision maker determines a penalty. If 'serious' misconduct, the case is referred to the DVC who may consult with the PVCR and may refer to the Student Disciplinary Committee.

(15) In addition to any of the above misconduct in coursework, Academic Misconduct in Higher Degrees by Research and Research Component of Masters and Professional Doctorates includes:

- a. failure to correctly attribute the work of co-researchers;
- b. creating false data sets;
- c. falsifying data from experiments, clinics, surveys, field trips or other investigations;
- d. participating in research without conforming to accepted ethical practice;
- e. failure to manage confidentiality and conflict-of-interest issues;
- f. failure to maintain storage and filing protocols; and
- g. interference in the practice of another researcher's work.

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