Academic Integrity Guidelines

Purpose and Scope

Purpose

This document reflects the University's comprehensive approach to upholding student academic integrity and provides guidance on how to:

1. detect academic integrity breaches;
2. investigate suspected academic integrity breaches;
3. classify academic integrity breaches; and
4. determine appropriate penalties and educative interventions in response to academic integrity breaches.

Scope

These Guidelines apply to all University students and should be read in conjunction with the Rules - Student Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct Rules (the Rules), Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy, and the Academic Integrity Procedures.

Definitions

The Definitions (Academic) Policy defines a breach of Academic Integrity as behaviour that contravenes the values of academic integrity, and classifies breaches of academic integrity as either:

a. Minor breach – a breach that is determined to be an unintentional and can be reasonably considered as part of the normal learning process;

b. Moderate breach – a breach that is determined to be unintentional but unacceptably negligent with regard to opportunity to learn, and appropriately apply, academic integrity principles;

c. Major breach – a breach that is determined to be intentional or deliberately negligent including (but not limited to) contract cheating.

Responsibilities for Managing Academic Integrity Breaches

As set out in the Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy:

- Minor breaches of academic integrity are managed by unit teaching staff using an educative approach.
- Moderate and major breaches of academic integrity are considered academic misconduct and are managed by the Academic Integrity Officer (for coursework students) or Dean, Graduate Studies (for higher degree by research candidates) in accordance with the Academic Integrity Procedures, the Rules and these Guidelines.
- Allegations involving both academic misconduct and non-academic misconduct are managed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) in accordance with the Rules - Student Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct Rules.

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Guidelines for Application of the Rules, Policies and Procedures

1. Identifying and Classifying Academic Integrity Breaches

The first step in the academic integrity breach process is to identify and classify potential breaches using the appropriate process. Except in the case of invigilated examinations, markers of assessment tasks have the primary responsibility to identify academic integrity breaches. Table 1 below provides guidance on classifying different breach types as either Minor, Moderate or Major breaches.

Table 1: Breach Classification Types

Breach classification	Definition	Examples
MINOR	• Unintentional and reasonable as part of the normal learning process. • This would include a student in their first or second session at SCU with no previous breaches or misconduct finding. • Normally, this would not include a student beyond their second session at SCU or with more than one breach for similar issues.	The following may constitute Minor or Moderate breaches, depending on whether part of the normal learning process (Minor breach) or negligent in the context of opportunity to learn (Moderate breach): • **Poor referencing**: failure to correctly reference other authors' ideas within an assessment. • **Not identifying direct quotations correctly**: omitting quotation marks and/or incorrectly citing direct quotations within an assessment; • **Close paraphrasing**: inclusion of two or three short phrases copied from other sources with minimal changes to the wording and/or without appropriate citation (including patchwork plagiarism); • **Plagiarism**: direct copying including close paraphrasing or copying from other sources without correct citation. Failure to include a reference list or direct copying, without correct acknowledgement of information and ideas from other sources including but not limited to books, journal articles, web-pages, reports, theses, unpublished works, conference papers, lecture/tutorial/lab notes or on-line teaching recordings, computer code, artwork, graphics is considered plagiarism. • **Recycling**: submitting work that has been prepared for one unit or course, either at Southern Cross University or another institution, by presenting it as original work for another unit or re-presenting work previously submitted for an incomplete or failed unit without specific appropriate permission.
MODERATE	• The breach is unintentional but negligent (because the student has already had an opportunity to learn how to practise academic integrity). • Normally, this would include a student who has completed at least two sessions at SCU. • Normally, this would not include a student with multiple (e.g. three or more) repeated breaches for similar issues.	
MAJOR	• The breach is intentional (i.e. cheating) or deliberately negligent (i.e. repeatedly ignoring	Any of the examples given for Minor and Moderate breaches may constitute Major breaches if intentional or deliberately negligent. Other examples of Major breaches include:

	previous warnings and learning opportunities).	• **Misrepresentation:** deliberate failure to disclose correct sources of information through falsifying references used in an assessment by altering details such as the correct source, author(s), or date of publication; or submitting previously submitted or published information, data, or experimental results as if it were newly identified through laboratory or clinical work or work-integrated learning experiences. • **Collusion**: presenting the product of unauthorised collaboration as independent work, or copying, or attempting to copy, another person's work and pass it off as one's own work, or knowingly allowing work to be copied and passed off as the work of another person, e.g. if a student enables another student to review their individual assessment and components of it are copied and submitted by that student, both students may have breached academic integrity standards. • **Cheating**: improper conduct in examinations or other assessment tasks including taking unauthorised study material and aids into a face-to-face invigilated or an on-line examination where a declaration to the contrary has been completed, allowing another student to sit an exam that the student should sit, communicating with and/or copying from another student during an examination, sitting an examination for another student, failing to equally contribute to a group-work assessment while claiming an equal contribution and share of the marks, or unauthorised photographing/ recording of academic work including examination questions and/or answers. • **Contract cheating**: when a student submits work that has been completed for them by a third party, irrespective of the third party's relationship with the student, and whether they are paid or unpaid (after Harper et al. 2018). Examples include but are not limited to: submitting an assessment obtained from an internet source or another person(s) as if it were the student's own work; asking another person (partner or other family member, friend, colleague or a person previously unknown to them) to prepare or submit an assessment item as if it were the student's own work; colluding with another person to write a test/exam; collaborating with another person(s) to purchase, sell or share parts of or complete assessments or study materials for the use of completing an assessment item.

		• **Fabricating information**: Submitting fictitious information, data, or experimental results through laboratory or clinical work or work-integrated learning experiences.

2. Reporting Academic Integrity Breaches

The second step in the academic integrity breach process is to report the breach for further investigation or action using the appropriate process.

In the case of Minor breaches identified by the marker, the marker will proceed to mark the task as usual and report the breach to the Unit Assessor who will initiate educative intervention and notify the Academic Integrity Support Officer in accordance with Academic Integrity Procedures.

All other breaches (Moderate and Major) must be referred to the Academic Integrity Officer or Dean of Graduate Studies, who will then investigate as an allegation of academic misconduct, and determine penalties and/or orders in a fair and equitable manner and in accordance with the Rules, Academic Integrity Procedures and these Guidelines. The marker will mark the task but not release the marks or feedback to the student. Marks and feedback, along with any penalties or interventions applied by the Academic Integrity Officer or Dean of Graduate Studies, will then be released to the student at the conclusion of the investigation. The Investigative Guide included at the end of these Guidelines provides guidance regarding investigating academic integrity breaches and allegations of academic misconduct.

3. Establishing the Severity of Academic Integrity Breaches

The **third step** in the academic integrity breach process is for the Academic Integrity Officer or Dean of Graduate Studies to **establish the severity level of the breach**.

Table 2 provides guidance on determining the severity of a breach (from Level 0 to Level 5) based on the learning experience and intent of the student, and the extent and impact of the breach. Note that:

- Breaches above Severity Level 0 must be referred to the Academic Integrity Officer or Dean, Graduate Studies (as applicable).
- If an Academic Integrity Officer judges that a breach may be Severity Level 4 or 5, it must be referred to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) as an allegation of potential academic and non-academic misconduct.

The Academic Integrity Officer or Dean, Graduate Studies may also adjust the severity of the breach from what is set out in Table 2 as follows:

- Mitigating Factors: severity may be decreased by up to two levels in the case of significant mitigating factors or circumstances such as health, cultural factors, financial stress etc.
- Repeat Offences: severity may be increased by up to one level in the case of serious repeat offences.

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Table 2: Guide to Determining Severity of a Breach			
Breach classification	**Extent of breach**	**Impact of breach**	**Severity level**
Minor *unintentional and reasonable as part of the normal learning process*	Reasonable in the context of the normal learning process		LEVEL 0
Moderate *unintentional but negligent (because student has already had opportunity to learn how to practice academic integrity)*	Small – e.g. a few paragraphs, or graphics; a few elements of computer source code; sharing a single exam question with a model answer or a portion of an assignment; up to two previous minor breaches	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 1
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 1
		Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 2
	Medium – e.g. a significant proportion or segment of the work; multiple segments of computer source code; sharing multiple exam questions or parts of an assignment; up to three previous minor breaches	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 1
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 2
		Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 3
	Large – e.g. comprises minimal original work; significant appropriation of ideas or artistic work; multiple pages or sections of text or graphics copied; sharing one or more exam papers, exam scripts or assignments; more than three previous minor breaches	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 2
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 3
		Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 3
Major *intentional or deliberately negligent*	Small – e.g. a few paragraphs, or graphics; a few elements of computer source code; selling, procuring or hawking a single exam	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 3
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 3

	question with a model answer or a portion of an assignment.	Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 3
	Medium – e.g. a significant proportion or segment of the work; multiple segments of computer source code; selling, procuring or hawking multiple exam questions or parts of an assignment.	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 3
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 3
		Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 4
	Large – e.g. comprises minimal original work; significant appropriation of ideas or artistic work; multiple pages or sections of text or graphics copied; selling, procuring or hawking one or more exam papers, exam scripts or assignments.	Small – academic achievement of other students completing the assessment task or unit is impacted	LEVEL 3
		Medium – academic achievement of other students in the course and the degree's reputation are impacted	LEVEL 4
		Large – the University's reputation is impacted	LEVEL 5

4. Determining the Appropriate Penalty for Academic Integrity Breaches

The **fourth step** in the academic integrity breach process is for the decision-maker to **determine the appropriate penalty**. The Rules prescribe what penalties a decision-maker may impose and take precedence in case of any ambiguity or uncertainty.

Table 3 provides guidance on determining the appropriate penalty. The penalty scheme set out in Table 3 reflects the University's educative approach to student academic integrity, and that there are consequences of student academic integrity breaches proportionate to the student's learning experience, and their intent, and the nature and extent of the breach, as set out in the Academic Quality, Standards and Integrity Policy.

In addition to the penalties listed in Table 3, an Academic Integrity Officer may impose additional mandatory educational requirements.

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Table 3: Guide to Penalties			
Breach classification	**Severity level**	**Appropriate penalty for coursework students**	**Appropriate penalty for HDR students**
Minor *unintentional and reasonable as part of the normal learning process*	LEVEL 0	No penalty may be applied, but the UA will initiate educative intervention and notify the Academic Integrity Support Officer. Educative interventions might include: - an opportunity to revise and resubmit the assessment item without penalty; - completion of online learning opportunities; - completion of a short reflection; - mandatory requirement to work with the Learning Experience Team	N/A
Moderate *unintentional but negligent (because student has already had opportunity to learn how to practice academic integrity)*	LEVEL 1	Either or both of: - a penalty of up to 20% of available marks for the assessment item; - an opportunity to resubmit or an alternative task or special examination (if applicable) for a maximum mark of 50% of the available marks for the assessment item	A caution and recommendations to revise the assessment item
	LEVEL 2	Either or both of: - a mark of zero for the task; - an opportunity to resubmit or an alternative task or special examination (if applicable) for a maximum of a pass mark for the unit	A caution and recommendations to revise the assessment item
	LEVEL 3	Award of a result of fail for a unit of study	Termination of candidature
Major *intentional or deliberately negligent*	LEVEL 3	Award of a result of fail for a unit of study	Termination of candidature
	LEVEL 4	Either or both of: - suspension from the University for up to 12 months; - award of a result of fail for relevant units of study	Termination of candidature
	LEVEL 5	Either or both of: - expulsion from the University; - a recommendation to the Chair, Academic Board that he or she should recommend Council revoke and require the surrender of an award	Termination of candidature and/or a recommendation to the Chair, Academic Board that he or she should recommend Council revoke and require the surrender of an award

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Investigative Guide to Signals of a Potential Academic Integrity Breach

This following checklist provides a guide on the signals of a potential academic integrity breach (including contract cheating). It is based in part on the TEQSA publication *Substantiating contract cheating: A guide for investigators*, which should be referred to if contract cheating is suspected. Cases involving suspected contract cheating must also be referred to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) to be considered as potential student misconduct.

Table 4: Checklist for Signals of Potential Academic Integrity Breaches

Type of breach	Signals to look for	Are signals present (Y/N)?	What is the evidence (e.g. Turnitin Report)?
Plagiarism	Poor/inadequate paraphrasing		
	Uncited paraphrasing		
	Close paraphrasing		
	Not identifying direct quotations correctly		
	Poor referencing		
	Direct copying with no acknowledgement of source		
	Recycling (self-plagiarism)		
	Other		
Copying and collusion	Copying from another student		
	Allowing work to be copied by another student		
	Collusion		
Cheating in exams	In possession of notes (written, digital device etc.) during examination		
	Communicating with others (speaking or electronically) during exam		
	Leaving notes outside the exam room to access during the exam		
	Looking at another person's paper during exam		
	Recording or photographing exam questions or answers		
	Exam imposter (someone other than student sat the exam)		
	Other		

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Contract cheating	**Textual signals:**		
	Very low text match (0 – 5%)		
	High text match (>30%)		
	High text match (other person's work)		
	Document properties: • Author • Creation date • Editing time • Version number • Properties blank/wiped		
	Not appropriate to discipline area		
	Quality different to or above expectations		
	Language use and ability		
	Unreadable language, including jargon-filled sentences and misuse of words		
	Reference list, but: • No in-text citations • Mismatch with in-text citations • Sources inappropriate/irrelevant • Access dates for internet sources predate enrolment • References are falsified • Does not meet criteria/requirements: • Min/max required references • Required references/authors • Date range of references • Referencing style • Excludes key content • Includes irrelevant content		
	References in languages that the student does not speak		
	Reflective essay/writing bears little connection to experience under reflection		
	Technological signals		
	Learning analytics - Short login times, no logins, no access to assessment resources/information except for submission		
	IP addresses		

	Have they accessed from the library the materials that they have cited?		
	Text readability statistics differences		
	Conduct an internet search for the student		
	Evidence of a template that is not from your institution – e.g. running head, extra white space, "insert name here"		
Data fabrication and falsification	References are falsified		
	Altering or omitting data		
	Falsifying dates		
	Misrepresenting results or methods		
	Adjusting previously published data so it matches the argument for an assessment		
	Falsifying the extent of a research study		
	Using data from other researchers without acknowledgement		
	Publishing the same results in multiple papers (self-plagiarism)		
	Inventing data		
	Presenting previously published data as newly gathered		
	Completing questionnaire for a fictitious subject that was not interviewed		
	Creating a data set for an experiment that was not conducted		
	Adding fictitious data to a real data set		

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