

5.2.3 Fostering Academic Integrity

Vocational Education and Training Procedure

1.0 Rationale

This procedure embodies Acknowledge Education's (AE) dedication to fostering and promoting academic integrity. It affirms AE's strong stance against any violations of academic integrity and outlines the fundamental principles guiding AE's approach to fostering students' ability to uphold standards of academic integrity.

2.0 Scope

This procedure is relevant to all vocational education and training (VET) courses, staff members, and VET students.

3.0 Regulatory Context

See parent policy 5.2.1 for details.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Tier 1 (Minor Breaches) in VET

4.1.1 Activities that constitute Tier 1 Breaches

- i. Unsatisfactory Referencing: Where a student has attempted to reference but has not included sufficient in-text citations and/or referenced sources, or has used an incorrect referencing format, or where citations and references used do not correspond.
- ii. Weak Paraphrasing: When TURNITIN has highlighted a moderate amount of text throughout the assessment, but the assessor judges that this is due to underdeveloped academic skill, inexperience, or understanding rather than an overt intention to cheat or deceive.

4.1.2 Detecting Tier 1 Breaches of Academic Integrity

- i. Interpreting TURNITIN percentages:
 - Teaching staff will use TURNITIN, a text-matching software, as a key tool to indicate the possibility of a breach of academic integrity.
 - In cases where excessively high or low TURNITIN scores are returned, teaching staff will review the student's work to determine if there is a reasonable explanation for the unusually high or low TURNITIN score.
 - The following points indicate situations where a high TURNITIN score may indicate a false positive:

- The use of technical or scientific terminology required for the assessment.
- The use of assessment task text that is required as part of the assessment, such as case studies or lengthy questions.
- The inclusion of a wordy coversheet as required by the assessment.
- The inclusion of reference lists for required readings.
- Where a student has re-submitted assessments in which only part of the assessment has required reassessment, the original work, previously marked as satisfactory, is permitted to be resubmitted without change.

In these cases, a high TURNITIN score does not necessarily indicate a violation of academic integrity but rather a false positive due to the nature of the assessment or the inclusion of required materials.

4.1.3 Assessing Originality of Work Submitted

- i. It is the responsibility of teaching staff to conduct preliminary investigations if there is a suspicion that work submitted is not that of the student.
- ii. High or low AI scores produced by TURNITIN are not sufficient indicators on their own to prove AI usage and further investigation by teaching staff will be required before submitting a referral to the Academic Integrity Team.
- iii. When a student submits unexpectedly high-quality work that is unlikely to be their own or when the work returns a high AI score on TURNITIN, teaching staff will:
 - Investigate the student's academic history to determine whether there is a pattern of submitting high-quality work or if this is an isolated incident.
 - Engage in a discussion with the student to determine if the student understands the topic that is demonstrated in their assessment.
 - Assess the student's account of the steps they took to complete the assessment.
 - Administer a verbal test of the student's knowledge for the assessment content.
 - Consult with Course Coordinators/Senior trainers or ASOs to obtain a second opinion and seek advice on how to proceed.

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- Where the investigation shows evidence of a violation of academic integrity not outlined as a Tier 1 breach, the teaching staff will escalate the case to a tier 2 breach of academic integrity.

4.4 Significant Breaches of Academic Integrity

4.4.1 Major Breach (Tier 2)

Forms of activities that constitute Tier 2 major breaches of academic integrity include:

- i. Suspected Non-Authentic Assessment Submission: Where the assessor believes that the student's work has been sourced from a site and the work is not representative of the student knowledge.
- ii. Plagiarism: Where a student's work shows a high similarity to a website, journal article, book, learning guide or other external sources, as identified by TURNITIN.
- iii. Collusion: Where a student's work shows a high similarity to another student's work or if the student admits to working close with another student (regardless of the institution the other student attends) to complete their work.

4.5 Academic Misconduct (Tier 3)

Note: Students New to Study in Australia: Depending on the severity of the breach, a tier 3 breach may be considered a tier 2 breach where a student is new to academic study in Australia and the breach is their first breach.

4.5.1 Forms of activities that constitute Tier 3 levels of Academic Misconduct include:

- i. Where a student is suspected of using tactics to render void the TURNITIN score.
- ii. Serial Occasions of any Tier 2 breaches: At the discretion of the ASO, where items in tier 2 are repeated after academic support between breaches.
- iii. Contract Cheating in its entirety including:
 - Where TURNITIN indicates similarity to essay-sharing websites such as 'CourseHero', or
 - the work submitted shows a high similarity to the work of other students who have unwittingly copied from the same online assessment, or
 - if the assessment appears to be responding to a question/topic that is completely different from the assigned task, or
 - if the assessment is completed to a standard that is beyond the student's ability.

- iv. Falsification: refers to the deliberate and unethical act of altering documents or fabricating research data, results, records, or any other academic information with the intent to deceive others.
- v. Where the student draws content from a source such as an artificial intelligence platform and the student is unable to demonstrate that the work is their original work.

4.6 Responding to Significant Breaches of Academic Integrity

4.6.1 Major Breach (Tier 2)

Where a major breach is identified, the following response will be undertaken:

- i. Teaching staff do not assign a mark to the student's assessment. The work remains as a dash (-) in Moodle.
- ii. Teaching staff provide an academic breach report to the Academic Support Officer linked to the campus on which the student is enrolled.
- iii. The teaching staff inform the student they will be required to attend a mandatory Academic Support Officer investigation.
- iv. The ASO investigates the case, which may include interviewing the student, reviewing the assessment/s and feedback provided, and reviewing any previous breaches of academic integrity.
- v. The ASO assesses the breach and determines which Tier level the breach equates with.
- vi. Where the breach equates to a tier 1 breach, the case is referred to the teaching staff with permission to process the breach in accordance with this procedure.
- vii. Where the breach equates to a tier 3 breach, the case is referred to the Academic Integrity Officer, who will process the response to the breach.
 - Sydney cases referred to Sydney AIO
 - Brisbane cases referred to Sydney AIO
 - Perth cases referred to Melbourne AIO
 - Melbourne cases referred to Melbourne AIO
- viii. Where the breach equates to a tier 2 breach, the ASO will provide support and information regarding current and other types of possible academic misconduct.
- ix. The ASO will assess the intent and severity of the breach and apply one of the following outcomes:
 - An official warning letter outlining the consequences of the breach. (Notice of Breaches – in RTO)
 - Where the breach is the first offence or in the first term, no penalty and the student is permitted to resubmit.
 - Mandatory workshop attendance.
 - A \$50 fee is imposed for a resubmission attempt.

- Where possible, the student will lose a submission attempt, and be given only one chance to resubmit the work.
 - The student will be graded as Not Yet Competent of the Unit.
 - The student will be required to complete the academic integrity workshop – online.
- x. The ASO will record the RTO Manager and inform the assessor of the outcome of the investigation.
 - xi. Where the student is reported for tier 2 breaches of academic integrity on more than three occasions, it will be escalated to Academic Misconduct (Tier 3).

4.7 Academic Misconduct (Tier 3)

4.7.1 Where a case of academic misconduct is identified the following response will be undertaken:

- i. The Academic Support Office is responsible for identifying occasions of academic misconduct and referring the cases to the academic integrity officer.
- ii. The Academic Integrity Officer will investigate and define the alleged academic misconduct. This could include plagiarism, cheating, data fabrication, collusion, cheating or any other form of academic dishonesty.
- iii. Where the AIO determines the referral to be a tier 2 or tier 1 breach, the AIO will refer the case to the appropriate person.
- iv. Where the AIO determines that a Tier 3 case of academic misconduct has occurred, the AIO will:
 - Gather evidence: The evidence should be gathered to determine the allegation. This could include the student's work, witness statements, and other relevant documentation. It is important to ensure that the evidence is reliable and relevant.
 - Assess the evidence: The evidence should be assessed to determine whether it supports the allegation of academic misconduct. The assessment should be done objectively and based on the available evidence.
 - Determine the severity of the academic misconduct: The severity will determine the consequences that will be imposed. The penalties imposed will be either:
 - Inform the student: The student should be informed of the alleged academic misconduct and provided with the opportunity to respond to the allegations. This should be done in writing and in a timely manner. The student should be informed of the possible

consequences of academic misconduct and the process that will be followed.

- Where the student is found committing academic misconduct for their first submission no first resubmission will be granted, the student will be allowed to submit a second resubmission with a \$50 fee only. (where applicable)
 - Where the student is found committing academic misconduct for their first re-submission, they will be required to sit a verbal test as their 2nd resubmission, and they will be required to pay \$50 fee.
 - Zero marks awarded for the unit.
 - Zero grade awarded and the case escalated to the Dean for consideration of unit failure, expulsion, CoE Cancellation.
- v. The student and teaching staff who made the referral will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision. The student will be informed using the email function through RTO Manager.
- vi. The AIO Records the Academic Misconduct on RTO Manager as an intervention.

4.8 Appealing Decisions Regarding Academic Misconduct

Students may appeal an academic decision, such as a grade or a disciplinary action by following the procedures outlined in the complaints and appeals policy.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Teaching Staff:

- Use TURNITIN to detect potential breaches of academic integrity.
- Investigate suspected breaches and gather evidence.
- Assess the originality of submitted work and student competency.
- Consult with Course Coordinators/Senior trainers or ASOs for second opinions and advice.
- Handle investigations with sensitivity and professionalism.
- Assign appropriate consequences for Tier 1 breaches, such as grading, feedback, and referral to academic support services.
- Report Tier 2 breaches to the Academic Support Officer (ASO) and participate in the investigation process.
- Inform students about breaches, consequences, and referral to academic support services.
- Collaborate with the ASO and Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) for tier 2 and tier 3 breaches.

- Participate in discussions and decision-making related to breaches and disciplinary actions.

5.2 Academic Support Officer (ASO):

- Conduct preliminary investigations of potential breaches.
- Review evidence and assess the severity and intent of breaches.
- Apply appropriate consequences for Tier 1 breaches, such as warnings, workshops, resubmission attempts, or grading as Not Yet Competent.
- Record breaches in the RTO Manager.
- Provide support and information to students regarding academic misconduct and support services.
- Refer tier 2 breaches to the AIO.
- Participate in investigations conducted by the AIO.
- Communicate investigation outcomes to teaching staff and students.

5.3 Academic Integrity Officer (AIO):

- Investigate tier 2 and tier 3 breaches of academic integrity.
- Gather evidence and assess the validity of allegations.
- Determine the severity of breaches.
- Inform students about allegations and provide opportunities for their response.
- Impose appropriate penalties for tier 2 and tier 3 breaches, such as resubmission restrictions, zero marks, failure of units, expulsion, or CoE cancellation.
- Communicate investigation outcomes to teaching staff and students.
- Maintain records of academic misconduct interventions in the RTO Manager.

5.4 Students

- Uphold academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism, collusion, and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- Submit original work and properly reference sources.
- Cooperate with investigations conducted by teaching staff, ASOs, and AIOs.
- Participate in discussions and provide explanations of their work and knowledge related to the assessment.
- Seek support from academic support services when required.
- Have the right to appeal academic decisions, including disciplinary actions, according to the complaints and appeals policy.

9.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic Misconduct	refers to a breach of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of data are examples of such breaches. (TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity, 2023).
Academic Integrity	Academic Integrity is the honest presentation of academic work through acknowledgment of the work of others while developing new insights, knowledge, and ideas. It includes values such as honesty, maintaining academic standards, and avoiding cheating and plagiarism.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	computer systems and algorithms that can perform tasks typically requiring human-like cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving, pattern recognition, learning, and decision-making. Students may also attempt to exploit AI technologies to engage in unethical practices.
Plagiarism	Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking and submitting or presenting another person's thoughts, writings, or other work as though it is your own work.
Cheating	the attempt to deliberately circumvent examination or assessment rules or regulations. Cheating means to act dishonestly or unfairly to gain an advantage or to assist another student in gaining an advantage.
Contract Cheating	a form of academic dishonesty in which a person hires or pays someone else to complete academic work on their behalf. It can involve monetary compensation and non-monetary exchanges, such as favours or promises.
Collusion	a form of academic misconduct where two or more students work together to submit work meant to be completed individually, or where a student allows another to copy their work or submit work substantially similar to their own. Collusion may also occur when a student receives unauthorised assistance from another person, such as a tutor or a family member, in completing their academic work.
Assessor /Teaching staff	is the academic staff member responsible for an assessment and the recording, usually in measurable terms such as a grade, of the academic work of a student or students.
New Student	A student who has not previously studied in Australia or is currently enrolled in term 1 units.
Turnitin	Turnitin is an online text matching software designed to promote academic integrity and prevent plagiarism. It compares submitted student work against a database of academic sources, internet sources,

	and previously submitted student work to identify instances of potential plagiarism or academic misconduct.
Program/Course	A full-time education or training program registered on CRICOS for attaining a testamur or certificate.

10.0 Related Documents

Document No	Document Name
3.21	Fostering Academic Integrity Policy (previously Academic Misconduct)
4.41	Complaints and Appeals Policy

11.0 Procedure Information

Document Name	Fostering Academic Integrity – Vocational Education and Training Procedure
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Date Endorsed by AB	18/8/2023

12.0 Change Log

Document change and review log Date	Version	By	Notes
12/4/2023	1.0	NW (Dean)	Creation of standalone procedure in consultation with Academic support team and teaching and learning committee
26/09/2023	1.1	NW (Dean)	Clarification of Tier 2 and update of interventions.

