

VET-06 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

This policy is aligned with all relevant regulatory frameworks including but not limited to:

- *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) 2025*
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations Compliance Requirements (2025)
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations Credentials Policy (2025);
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework; and
- any and all other relevant regulatory and contractual requirements applicable to the training product.

4.0 PROCEDURE

4.1 Tier 1 (Minor Breaches) in VET

4.1.1 Forms of activities that constitute Tier 1 breaches of academic integrity include:

- (a) **Unsatisfactory Referencing:** When 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.
- (b) **Minor Paraphrasing Issues:** When TURNITIN has highlighted a small amount of text

in localised section(s) of the assessment where paraphrasing can be more difficult (e.g., when paraphrasing the statistical findings of a journal article).

- (c) Low level of Plagiarism (less than 30%): When a student's work shows low level of similarity to a website, journal article, book, or other external sources, as identified by TURNITIN or other means.
- (d) Unethical use of Gen AI: Part of your submission appear to rely on AI, paraphrasing, or translation tools in a way that compromises the originality of your work. You must ensure all content is generated by you and aligns with the assessment conditions.

4.1.2 Detecting Tier 1 Breaches of Academic Integrity

Interpreting TURNITIN percentages:

- Trainers 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, Trainers 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 Trainers 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 the Trainer 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, Trainer 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 AIOs to obtain a second opinion and seek advice on how to proceed.

4.1.4 Investigating TURNITIN Red Flags

- i. If a student's work returns a red flag icon in TURNITIN, the Trainer will:
 - Investigate the red flag to determine if students have used white text or other methods, such as cut and pasting from applications like ChatGPT to falsify the TURNITIN reading or work count limits.
 - Look for high accounts of highlighted colour in the document as an indicator of students using digital technology to generate text.
 - Where deliberate use of techniques that aim to provide a false TURNITIN reading are detected (for example submitting the assessment in two different units, claiming accident but making the Turnitin score 100% and therefore void) the Trainer will escalate as a Tier 2 breach.

4.2 Responding to Tier 1 (Minor Breach)

4.2.1 Where a minor breach is identified the following response will be undertaken:

- i. It is crucial for the Trainer to handle any investigation of breaches of academic integrity with sensitivity and professionalism and ensure that the student is treated fairly throughout the process.
- ii. If the work is of a satisfactory standard, but a minor breach has occurred, the Trainer may grade the assessment as Satisfactory and then document constructive feedback on the assessment in Moodle.
- iii. If the work is Not Satisfactory due to Tier 1 Breach, trainer marks the work NS, allows the student to resubmit, and reports it to CC to be recorded it in RTOM as Academic Misconduct.
- iv. In the instance of a Trainer encountering a student with three (3) or more Tier 1 breaches in a study period, the case will be escalated to a Tier 2 breach and will follow the Tier 2 procedure.
- v. The Trainer provides information about the academic support service and formally invites (using email on RTO) the student to contact the academic support officer to gain assistance.

4.3 Responding to High-Level Breaches

4.3.1 Where a student is unable, during the investigation, to demonstrate the competency required to complete the assessment and the determination of the trainer/assessor is that the work is unlikely to be that of the student, the Trainer may:

- Consult with Course Coordinators/Senior trainers to obtain a second opinion and seek advice on how to proceed.
- Where the investigation shows evidence of a violation of academic integrity not outlined as a Tier 1 breach, the Trainer 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 moderate breaches of academic integrity include:

- (a) Referencing Issues: The student has not attempted to provide any references or has provided scant references, has fabricated references, or deliberately included references to irrelevant material.
- (b) Weak Paraphrasing: When TURNITIN has highlighted a moderate amount of text throughout the assessment, but the assessor judges that this is due to low academic skill, inexperience, or lack of understanding rather than an evident intention to cheat or deceive, this will be considered a moderate breach (Tier 2).
- (c) Collusion: Where a student's work shows a high similarity to another student's work, as identified by TURNITIN or other means.
- (d) Self-Plagiarism/Recycling: When Turnitin indicates similarity to an assessment that the student completed in the past, this will be considered a major breach. When a student who has erroneously uploaded an assessment to the wrong unit and subsequently submitted their assessment to the correct unit, which returns a high Turnitin score, it will be a tier 2 breach of academic integrity.
- (e) High level of Plagiarism: When a student's work shows a high level of similarity to a website, journal article, book, or other external sources, including Acknowledge Education authored learning resources, as identified by Turnitin or other means. Making available (in any way, including physically, sharing via online platforms or websites) any part or the whole of a completed or partially completed assessment.
- (f) Repeat offenders of tier 1: Students who have been identified for Academic misconduct during prior occasions at tier 1 (maximum up to three times)

- (g) Unethical use of Gen AI Parts of your submission appear to rely on AI, paraphrasing, or translation tools in a way that compromises the originality of your work. You must ensure you generate all content and aligns with the assessment conditions.

Tier 2 breaches indicate more serious academic integrity concerns than Tier 1. They typically involve greater scale, clearer impact on academic standards, or behaviours that suggest negligence, disregard, or emerging intent, but not full-scale deliberate cheating.

4.5 Academic Misconduct (Tier 3)

4.5.1 Forms of activities that constitute Tier 3 levels of Academic Misconduct include but not limited to:

- (a) Contract Cheating: The process of outsourcing academic assignments or exams to third parties, partly or wholly, whether paid or unpaid, to gain an academic advantage. For example, if an assessment is completed to a standard that is beyond the student's abilities, language level or performance, etc.
- (b) Cheating: When students are discovered copying answers, ideas, or solutions from another person's work during exams, assignments, or projects.
- (c) Fabrication: Where a student deliberately and unethical act of altering or fabricates documents or research data, results, records, or any other academic information with the intent to deceive others.
- (d) Falsification: Manipulating, changing, or omitting data or results so that the research or academic work does not accurately reflect the original observations or sources, or forging existing information or documentation (i.e forged Medical Certificate).
- (e) Repeat offender of Tier 2: Students who have a Tier 3 Academic misconduct case of Tier 2 (maximum up to three times).
- (f) Unethical use of Gen AI: The whole assessment submission appears to rely on AI, paraphrasing, or translation tools in a way that compromises the originality of your work. You must ensure all content is generated by you and aligns with the assessment conditions.

4.6 Responding to Significant Breaches of Academic Integrity

4.6.1 Major Breach (Tier 2)

- i. The Course Coordinator further investigates. The investigation may include interviewing the student, reviewing the assessment/s and feedback provided, and reviewing any previous breaches of academic integrity.
 - (a) The Course Coordinator determines which Tier level the breach equates with (Course Coordinator to complete process within 5 business days)
 - (b) When the breach is classified as a Tier 3 breach, notify the Academic Integrity Officer, as the Academic Integrity Officer will review the breach.
 - (c) When the breach equates to a Tier 1 breach, the course coordinator will assess the intent and severity of the breach and will process the breach.
 - (d) When the breach equates to a Tier 2 breach, the course coordinator 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 Manager)
 - Assessment resubmission
 - Mandatory workshop attendance.
 - (e) The Course coordinator will inform the AIO of the outcome and request the case to be recorded in the Academic Misconduct register and the RTO register.

4.7 Academic Misconduct (Tier 3)

4.7.1 The course coordinator completes the Academic Misconduct Report Form and escalates the case to the AIO.

When a case of academic misconduct is identified as tier 3, the following response will be undertaken by the following.

- (a) The Academic Integrity Officer will investigate and define the alleged academic misconduct. This could include contract cheating, data fabrication, falsification, collusion, cheating or any other form of academic dishonesty

- (b) Where the AIO determines the referral to be a Tier 2 or Tier 1 breach, the AIO will refer the case to the Course Coordinator.
- (c) Where the AIO determines that a Tier 3 case of academic misconduct has occurred, the AIO will:
 - 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.
 - Gather evidence: The evidence should be gathered to support 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, relevant, and admissible.
 - 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 academic misconduct: The severity of the academic misconduct should be determined based on the available evidence. Severity will determine the consequences that will be imposed.

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 within 5 working days of the decision. The appeal will not be processed if the appeal is made after the allowed time.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Specific duties, processes and their responsible officers are outlined below. The below table is not an exhaustive list of potential responsible parties that must adhere to and serve only to outline the overarching responsibilities and expectations of the specified officers. If a staff member, contractor or third party is unsure about their responsibilities under this policy, they should consult with the relevant Course Coordinator or the Head of VET.

Role	Responsibilities
Provost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring overall compliance with the policy. • Providing guidance and support to faculty and staff in implementing the policy.

VET Quality and Compliance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and approval of policy, procedure, and amendments. Provision of input and advice on other such matters as dictated by the relevant Terms of Reference in the Acknowledge Education Governance Framework
Risk and Compliance Committee	<p>Examine, review and make recommendations on matters of risk and compliance. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing input and recommendations monitoring execution of agreed continuous improvement actions in relation to policies, processes; and other such matters as dictated by the relevant Terms of Reference in the Acknowledge Education Governance Framework
Head of VET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy owner and responsible officer. Implementation of the policy across VET operations. Addressing any concerns or issues related to compliance and quality.
Head of Quality and Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that the policy is implemented and followed across all aspects of AE operations. Addressing any compliance related issues or concerns. Conduct periodic audits and evaluations to assess the policy's effectiveness and suggest revisions if required.
Course Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complying with the policy guidelines and requirements Ensuring that the policy is being followed and implemented effectively. Providing guidance and support to faculty and staff in implementing the policy. Providing recommendations and feedback where applicable Refer tier 2 breaches to the AIO.
Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in discussions and decision-making related to breaches and disciplinary actions.
Academic Support Officer (ASO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct preliminary investigations of potential breaches. Review evidence and assess the severity and intent of breaches. Record breaches in the RTO Manager. Provide support and information to students regarding academic misconduct and support services. Communicate investigation outcomes to Trainer and students.
Academic Integrity Officer (AIO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate 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 3 breaches, such as resubmission restrictions, zero marks, failure of units, expulsion, or CoE cancellation. Communicate investigation outcomes to Trainer and students. Maintain records of academic misconduct interventions in the RTO Manager.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Trainer, 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.

6.0 Definitions

Terms in the document are defined as per the VET Standing Definitions.

7.0 Related Documents

Document No	Document Name
5.21	Fostering Academic Integrity Policy (previously Academic Misconduct)
2.4.1	Complaints and Appeals Policy

8.0 Procedure Information

Policy name:	Fostering Academic Integrity - VET Procedure
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Responsibilities:	VET Quality & Compliance Committee, Head of VET

9.0 Change 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.
27/08/2026	1.2	Director of Teaching and Learning, Head of VET, Academic Integrity Team Leader and VET Quality & Accreditation Officer	Update to format, standard inclusions, adjustment to tier 1,2 and 3 classifications, penalties and responsible parties. Updates include clarified Tier 1 processes; expanded and reframed Tier 2 breaches; revised Tier 3, penalty, escalation, recording and appeal requirements; removal of the resubmission fee; clearer governance responsibilities; and updated definitions and document-control information.