Academic Integrity Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) Acting with integrity is at the heart of all Melbourne Polytechnic's operations. Everyone associated with the Institute is expected to uphold high ethical standards in their day-to-day conduct to ensure that decision-making and actions are conducted with integrity and transparency.

(2) The purpose of this policy is to:

a. promote a positive culture of academic integrity across the Institute that aligns with Melbourne Polytechnic's vision and values

b. describe the roles and responsibilities of students, staff and others involved in academic activities at or on behalf of Melbourne Polytechnic that support academic integrity

c. describe actions considered potential breaches of academic integrity and the procedures to be followed to address these.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all Melbourne Polytechnic students, staff and individuals engaged through agencies and partner organisations undertaking academic activities associated with the Institute.

Section 3 - Policy

Policy Statement

(4) Melbourne Polytechnic is a learning organisation 'committed to providing high quality, innovative, applied and future focussed purposeful education and training to our students, industry and communities'. (Melbourne Polytechnic Education Strategy 2019-23, p.4) Ensuring a culture that values and demonstrates academic integrity is fundamental to achieving this and reinforces how our students are learning to become professionals in their fields of endeavour.

Section 4 - Policy Principles

(5) The following principles guide this policy:

a. Melbourne Polytechnic is responsible for informing its academic community of its expectations regarding academic integrity and the potential consequences if a breach of these expectations occurs.

b. Melbourne Polytechnic is responsible for providing academic integrity training for everyone involved in learning, teaching, scholarship and research, and supporting them to develop the academic skills necessary to avoid breaching its academic integrity requirements.

c. All members of Melbourne Polytechnic's academic community are accountable for their actions and are expected to always act with integrity in learning, teaching, scholarship and research.

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d. All alleged breaches of academic integrity will be investigated promptly, and principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be employed throughout the investigation and determination of consequences.

e. Breaches of this policy will be met with an educative response Any disciplinary action will be proportionate to the breach of academic integrity and the experience and intent of the offender.

f. Regular reporting and review of academic integrity will enable the fostering of a positive culture that contributes to Melbourne Polytechnic's values of integrity, shared commitment, courage, operational excellence, future-focussed thinking and action, ownership and accountability.

Policy Topics

Acting with academic integrity

(6) Melbourne Polytechnic expects that all educators, students, scholars and researchers will demonstrate academic integrity in their learning, teaching, scholarship and research, embodying the values of:

a. honesty

b. trust

c. fairness

d. respect

e. responsibility.

> What is academic integrity? | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (teqsa.gov.au), accessed 14 October 2022.

(7) For students, acting with integrity includes following the Student Code of Conduct throughout their learning program and when undertaking assessments. It also includes, but is not limited to:

a. acknowledging the work and/or help of others and all sources of information

b. using recognised referencing styles, including specified styles when directed

c. being honest and not behaving in a way that gives them an unfair advantage (not cheating)

d. being responsible and ethical when collecting, sharing and storing people's private information

e. only submitting work as their own if it has been completed without assistance from any unauthorised source

f. validating the authenticity of their work as their own when submitting it for assessment using documentation required by their assessor

g. following directions for submission of assessments via electronic similarity checking software where that is required.

(8) Educators will model academic integrity in their daily practice by, for example:

a. appropriately acknowledging sources of information in their teaching practice and when communicating in public on behalf of the Institute

b. using recognised and consistent referencing styles in written communication

c. complying with Melbourne Polytechnic's Copyright Requirements for the Development of Teaching Resources Policy and Intellectual Property Policy

d. acting responsibly and ethically when collecting, sharing and storing people's private information in learning, teaching and research activities.

(9) Students and staff undertaking scholarship and research will additionally demonstrate adherence to good research practice and conduct (integrity) as outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018. This

includes, but is not limited to:

a. intellectual honesty in proposing, performing and reporting research
b. accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports
c. fairness in peer review
d. collegiality in scientific interactions, including communications and sharing of resources
e. transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest
f. protection of human subjects in the conduct of research
g. humane care of animals in the conduct of research
h. adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and research participants.

> National Research Council of the National Academies, 2002, cited in TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity v1.2, 2019, accessed 8 June 2022, Guidance Note: Academic Integrity | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (teqsa.gov.au)

Promoting Academic Integrity

(10) Melbourne Polytechnic will:

a. inform students about the meaning, importance of, and expectations regarding, academic integrity at commencement and throughout their learning programs. This information will be contextualised to the learner cohort and the learning context.
b. inform educators regarding expectations through:
    i. an induction module covering Melbourne Polytechnic's academic integrity policy, procedures and expectations that must be completed on engagement and updated every 3 years
    ii. availability of training on matters such as:
        - good practices to promote academic integrity
        - design of programs and assessments to support academic integrity and mitigate breaches
        - processes for identifying and reporting breaches
    iii. training and development for individuals involved in responding to an allegation of a breach of academic integrity
c. ensure all students and staff undertaking research are aware of the expectations outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018 and other codes of research practice and Melbourne Polytechnic policies and procedures relevant to their specific areas of research, such as the:
    i. National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Human Research 2007 (updated 2018)
    ii. Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013
    iii. Melbourne Polytechnic Animal Ethics Policy
    iv. Melbourne Polytechnic Animal Ethics Conduct of Projects Procedure
    v. ensure contracts with partners to deliver academic programs and/or undertake research require compliance with Melbourne Polytechnic's Academic Integrity Policy and associated policies and procedures.

(11) All Melbourne Polytechnic educators will:

a. promote a culture of academic integrity in their work with colleagues and students
b. design programs and assessments to support academic integrity and where possible mitigate the opportunity for breaches to occur

c. comply with Melbourne Polytechnic's framework for the use of similarity checking software when establishing assessment submission requirements for students.

Breaches of Academic Integrity

(12) Breaches of academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

a. plagiarism and/or failures of correct acknowledgement practice
b. contract cheating, or paying for or arranging for another person to prepare an assignment
c. submitting (for assessment or review) work prepared by another person
d. collusion, such as any unauthorised collaboration in preparation or presentation of work, including knowingly allowing personal work to be copied by others
e. all forms of cheating in examinations and other assessment tasks (g. copying another person's work)
f. offering or accepting bribes (money, physical or any other favours), e.g. for admission or for assessment
g. fabrication of information
h. falsification of information or identity
i. file sharing questions or assignments
j. using paraphrasing software
k. using artificial intelligence or any form of software to generate assessment responses where this is not a requirement of the assessment
l. promoting behaviour that undermines academic integrity to others
m. sharing private information collected during learning or research without authorisation.

> TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity v1.2, 2019, accessed 8 June 2022, Guidance Note: Academic Integrity | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (teqsa.gov.au).

> Sector Update: Maintaining up to date academic integrity policies and procedures, accessed 2 September 2022, Sector update: Maintaining up to date academic integrity policies and procedures | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (teqsa.gov.au).

(13) For those undertaking research, breaches of integrity also include, but are not limited to:

a. falsifying or fabricating data
b. deliberately omitting data to obtain a desired result
c. using data from other researchers without due acknowledgement
d. representing observations as genuine when they are not
e. misleading attributions of authorship
f. conducting research in ways that seriously deviate from accepted standards, or in ways that are dishonest, reckless or negligent
g. failing to obtain the required prior ethical or regulatory approval
h. failing to conduct the research project in accordance with an approved ethical or regulatory protocol.

> TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity v1.2, 2019, accessed 8 June 2022, Guidance Note: Academic Integrity | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (teqsa.gov.au).

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Responding to Suspected Breaches of Academic Integrity

(14) All suspected breaches of academic integrity must be responded to when a Melbourne Polytechnic member of staff or educator engaged by Melbourne Polytechnic becomes aware of them.

(15) Investigations of suspected breaches follow a similar framework but are handled under a different policy or procedure depending on whether the alleged offender is a student, employee of Melbourne Polytechnic, employee of a partner organisation or an educator engaged through an agency:

(16) Student investigations will be managed according to the [Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure](#), [Student Code of Conduct Guidelines](#) and [Student Discipline Policy](#).

(17) Melbourne Polytechnic employee investigations will be managed according to the [Code of Conduct Policy](#), [Employment Policy](#) or [Risk and Compliance Management Policy](#).

(18) Employees of partner organisations will have their investigations managed according to the terms of the partner contract.

(19) Educators employed through agencies will have their investigations managed according to the terms of the agreement with that agency.

(20) In all cases:

a. the investigation will:
    i. be conducted in a fair, consistent, transparent and timely manner and following the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
    ii. take gender, disability, cultural background, social responsibilities and other characteristics into consideration whenever possible when meetings and other arrangements are being made
    iii. ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all parties in compliance with the Privacy Policy
b. if a breach is determined to have occurred, the relevant decision-maker will adopt an educative response where this is appropriate. Sanctions may also be imposed as outlined in the relevant policy/procedure/contract/agreement
c. the response and any sanction will be proportionate to the offence and the experience and intent of the offender
d. breaches will be categorised as minor, moderate or major. The [Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure](#) provides guidance as to how a decision maker would categorise a particular breach in a particular context.

Recording and Reporting Training in and Breaches of Academic Integrity

(21) The records listed in paragraph 18 will be kept for the following groups:

a. Higher Education students with a minor, moderate or major breach – Higher Education Academic Integrity Register
b. VET and Foundation students with a moderate or major breach – VET or Foundation Academic Integrity Register. Minor breaches may be recorded.
c. employees of Melbourne Polytechnic with a moderate or major breach: People and Culture staff file
d. employees of agency or partner organisation with a moderate or major breach: as per Melbourne Polytechnic's [Records Management Policy](#).

(22) Records to be maintained are:

a. individual and incident details

b. meeting dates and attendees

c. list of critical evidence reviewed

d. decision and response/sanctions

e. appeals and outcomes

 f. links to copies of formal correspondence relating to the investigation, decision and appeal.

(23) The Academic Integrity Registers will include sufficient detail to allow analysis of aggregated, de-identified data to identify major issues and trends over time, and to show evidence that Melbourne Polytechnic has met relevant internal and external requirements and standards.

(24) All records will be stored in a secure and confidential manner and for the required period specified by the Melbourne Polytechnic Records Management Policy.

(25) The following records relating to academic integrity training will be kept:

a. academic integrity induction training module for educators, to be maintained by People and Culture:

   i. completion and success rates

   ii. due date for re-completion, with reminder sent dates

   iii. % staff compliant and identities of staff overdue for completion

b. other academic integrity training for educators, to be maintained by Academic Directors:

   i. completion and success rates

c. academic integrity training for students, to be maintained by the Library and Learning Skills teams:

   i. student completion and success rates, by year, program area and course

   ii. identities of completers/non-completers.

(26) Academic Directors will immediately notify the Director Academic Quality of any reported incidents of suspected contract cheating involving staff or multiple students. The Director Academic Quality will monitor the investigation and ensure any required reporting to external agencies is undertaken.

(27) Academic Directors will report on academic integrity matters in their areas of responsibility to relevant Committees and Boards (HEAB, VET and Foundation Academic Board and VET and Foundation Academic Board) at least bi-annually, noting at a minimum:

a. training undertaken by educators and students

b. academic integrity promotion activities

c. numbers and nature of breaches and outcomes/penalties applied

d. strategies implemented to mitigate academic misconduct, including implementation of the framework for use of similarity checking software.

(28) Academic Directors will also report on any major breaches and their outcomes at the next available Committee/Board meeting following the incident.

(29) The Academic Integrity Officer will report on trends in academic integrity training and breaches and strategies to promote academic integrity and mitigate breaches across the organisation.

Complaints and Appeals

(30) A student dissatisfied with the outcome of an alleged academic integrity breach can lodge an appeal. The conditions in which an appeal can be made and the process for doing so are outlined in the Academic Integrity

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Section 5 - Responsibility and Accountability

Promotion of Academic Integrity

(31) All staff will model academic integrity in their day-to-day dealings with students, colleagues and the public

(32) Academic leaders will ensure all staff under their leadership are aware of their responsibilities and expectations regarding personal academic integrity and implementing this policy.

(33) The Library and Learning Skills teams are responsible for:

a. developing and maintaining easy-to-understand contextualised academic integrity resources on the Melbourne Polytechnic website
b. developing and maintaining an online module for commencing Higher Education students to complete in the early weeks of their commencement at Melbourne Polytechnic
c. developing academic training resources suitable for other cohorts across the Institute.

(34) Professional Teaching Practice and Organisational Development teams are responsible for developing and maintaining staff induction and training modules on academic integrity.

(35) Program Leaders/Heads of Program/Managers and teachers/lecturers are responsible for:

a. teaching students how academic integrity applies in the context of their units/subjects, starting at commencement and then throughout their learning programs
b. applying the framework for use of similarity checking software in their areas of responsibility.

(36) All members of Melbourne Polytechnic's academic community, including students, are responsible for acting with integrity when undertaking learning, teaching, scholarship and research.

Responding to Suspected Breaches

(37) All staff will respond to any suspicions of breaches of academic integrity as outlined in this policy and associated policies and procedures.

(38) Program Leaders/Heads of Program/Managers and teachers/lecturers are responsible for timely reporting and investigation of suspected breaches of academic integrity in line with policy and procedure.

(39) Program Leaders / Heads of Program are responsible for:

a. establishing formal investigations of potential student breaches of academic integrity in accordance with the Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure
b. ensuring external parties such as partner organisations through which a student may be enrolled and employers of apprentices and trainees are kept informed where an investigation and/or sanctions applied may affect the student's progression and/or results. Any communication with these parties must take privacy considerations into account
c. reporting any suspected incidences of contract cheating involving staff or multiple students to their Academic Director as soon as they become aware of them.

(40) Academic leaders and People and Culture are responsible for investigating and dealing with suspected staff

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breaches of academic integrity reported to them according to the Melbourne Polytechnic [Code of Conduct Policy](#), [Employment Policy](#) or [Risk and Compliance Management Policy](#).

Reporting, Monitoring and Governance Responsibilities

(41) Academic Directors will:

a. ensure Registers of Academic Integrity are maintained for their areas of responsibility
b. report any suspected incidences of contract cheating involving staff or multiple students to the Director Academic Quality as soon as they become aware of them
c. report on academic integrity promotion, training, use of similarity checking software and breaches to relevant Committees and Boards annually (Higher Education Academic Board, VET and Foundation Academic Board, VET and Foundation Academic Board).

(42) The Academic Integrity Officer will provide data and support to key staff, committees and boards in the development of reports on academic integrity.

(43) The Education Quality Committee (EQC) will receive information about trends in academic integrity training and breaches, and the strategies being implemented to enhance academic integrity at Melbourne Polytechnic as a part of bi-annual reports on academic integrity.

(44) The Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) (upon inauguration) will monitor trends in academic integrity breaches and provide organisational and program-specific reports to the HEAB and HECCs.

(45) The Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC) will receive reports from the Academic Integrity Officer on academic integrity issues and trends and make recommendations to the Higher Education Academic Board, VET and Foundation Academic Board and VET and Foundation Academic Boards to support promotion of academic integrity and mitigate breaches.

(46) The HECCs will receive program-specific data and analysis on academic integrity and use this data to inform its development of strategies and advice to the HEAB.

(47) The HEAB will review trends in breaches of academic integrity within Higher Education and monitor the development and implementation of policies and procedures to promote and enhance academic integrity and report on these to the Education Quality Committee.

(48) The Library and Learning Skills teams will report on completion and success rates of student academic integrity training to relevant Directors/Boards.

(49) The Melbourne Polytechnic Board will receive information about trends in academic integrity training and breaches, and the strategies being implemented to enhance academic integrity at Melbourne Polytechnic as a part of a bi-annual reports on Academic Integrity.

(50) People and Culture will record and report on the completion of educator academic integrity induction modules to Directors.

(51) The VET and Foundation Academic Board and VET and Foundation Academic Boards will:

a. review trends in breaches of academic integrity and monitor the development and implementation of strategies to promote and enhance academic integrity and mitigate breaches in their areas of responsibility
b. report, as appropriate, to the EQC and management about trends in academic integrity training and breaches, and the strategies being implemented to enhance academic integrity within the relevant directorates at Melbourne Polytechnic.

c. The Director Academic Quality will ensure any required reporting to external agencies regarding academic integrity is undertaken.

Section 6 - Supporting Documents and Templates

(52) Related Melbourne Polytechnic policies, procedures and templates:

    a. [Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure](#)

    b. [Animal Ethics Policy](#)

    c. [Assessment, Credit and Moderation (HE) Policy](#)

    d. [Assessment (VET and Foundation) Policy](#)

    e. [Code of Conduct Policy](#)

    f. [Copyright Requirements for the Development of Teaching Resources Policy](#)

    g. [Integrity Framework Policy](#)

    h. [Employment Policy](#)

    i. [Intellectual Property Policy](#)

    j. [Risk and Compliance Management Policy](#)

    k. [Student Code of Conduct Guidelines](#)

    l. [Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)

    m. [Student Discipline Policy](#)

(53) Related Legislation, Regulation, Frameworks and Guidance Notes

    a. [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#)

    b. [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#) 8th edn, 2013

    c. [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#) (Vic)

    d. [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#)

    e. [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Vic)

    f. [Health Records Act 2001](#) (Vic)

    g. [Higher Education Standards Framework 2015](#)

    h. [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

    i. [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)](#) (updated 2018)

    j. [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth)

    k. [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014](#) (Vic)

    l. [Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015](#)

    m. [TEQSA Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 2017](#)

    n. [TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity, 2019](#)

    o. [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#)

    p. [Users' guide to Standards for RTOs 2015](#)

Section 7 - Definitions

(54) For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

    a. academic integrity: 'the expectation that teachers, students, researchers and all members of the academic

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community act with: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility'([What is academic integrity? Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#).)

b. cheating: behaviour which is engaged in by an individual or another person to provide that individual or group of individuals with an academic advantage to which they are not entitled

c. collusion: Agreement between individuals (students/other persons) to act together secretly or without permission to achieve an unfair advantage such as copying another person's work

d. contract cheating: when an individual (or group) organises for someone else to undertake their assessment for them. This may include paying a commercial service or arranging for a family member or past student to write an essay or complete an assignment/project on their behalf or to sit a test or examination for them

e. educative response: strategies used to help the student understand academic integrity errors and learn correct practice

f. investigation: means a process by which a Melbourne Polytechnic staff member makes reasonable inquiries about the circumstances surrounding the alleged misconduct, conducted in accordance with the principle of procedural fairness

g. local level: the area of Melbourne Polytechnic or the member(s) of staff responsible for delivering the service or conducting the process about which the accusation or complaint is being made. For example, a member of teaching or academic leadership staff

h. natural justice: the right to a fair hearing that is conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness

i. partner organisation: organisation Melbourne Polytechnic has entered into a contract with to deliver teaching and/or academic services on behalf of or in partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic. This includes 'third parties' contracted to provide VET or Foundation training on behalf of Melbourne Polytechnic

j. plagiarism: the use of all or part of another person or entity's work without appropriate acknowledgment of the author or source

k. procedural fairness: decision-making that is fair and reasonable and includes aspects such as:

    i. giving all interested parties an opportunity to be heard in an open and fair manner

    ii. acting without bias

    iii. informing the individual that allegations of misconduct have been raised in relation to them and the nature of these allegations

    iv. providing the individual with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations and present arguments or evidence in their defence

    v. providing individuals with an opportunity to have a support person with them at any meeting or hearing

    vi. making all reasonable inquiries into the source of the allegations, including consideration of any relevant Melbourne Polytechnic policies

    vii. ensuring that all relevant parties to a matter are heard

    viii. ensuring that no person undertakes an investigation in relation to a matter which directly involves themselves

    ix. completing an investigation and other processes without undue delay.

l. referencing systems: a set of rules describing how to acknowledge the thoughts, ideas and works of others in a particular way

m. TEQSA: [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#). Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.

Status and Details

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Policy Owner	Marc Blanks Executive Director Education Excellence
Policy Implementation Officer	Sharon Griffiths Director Academic Quality
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