

Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this procedure is to:

- a. promote a culture of academic integrity in learning, teaching, scholarship, and research
- b. describe processes to support and maintain student academic and research integrity and prevent academic or research misconduct
- c. describe actions and penalties for suspected breaches of academic or research integrity.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all Melbourne Polytechnic students, educators, administrative staff, support services staff and partner organisations involved with learning, teaching, and research.

Section 3 - Procedure

Promoting Academic Integrity and helping students better understand Academic Integrity

(3) Students are advised of academic integrity expectations and processes as part of enrolment, orientation and learning activities.

(4) A framework for the use of similarity checking software followed by educators and students. Exemptions from use of this software are approved by Higher Education Course Committees for Higher Education programs or by the Director Vocational Education and Training or Director Foundation for programs within their Directorates.

(5) Commencing Higher Education students complete a required Academic Integrity module on Moodle in the first four weeks of classes or other approved equivalent training approved by the Academic Integrity Officer.

(6) VET, Foundation, and specialised groups (e.g. Auslan and Senior Secondary students) complete academic integrity training developed to meet their needs and delivered at suitable points during their studies.

(7) Educators discuss the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and advise students where to access further information on this and the [Academic Integrity policy](#) and procedure on Moodle and Institute websites.

(8) Early in the learning program and prior to the first assessment, educators:

- a. explain the different types of academic integrity breaches relevant to their learning context by providing relevant examples to help students better understand and recognise a potential breach and prevent academic misconduct
- b. act as role models for students and ensure they meet academic integrity requirements when presenting material (e.g. text, images, videos, and other artefacts) to students during their learning
- c. advise students of where they can access learning skills support (including Studiosity) and assistance in

understanding how to comply with the [Academic Integrity Policy](#)

- d. remind students undertaking research of the expectations outlined in the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#)
- e. where relevant, advise students about similarity checking software (g. Turnitin) and how to use the resource to check their written work before submitting assessments.

(9) Library and Learning Skills teams provide academic integrity training and support for students seeking assistance with academic integrity issues.

Breaches of Academic or Research Integrity

(10) Students are expected to maintain academic integrity in their studies. The Academic Integrity website will provide a summary of breaches and examples to help students better understand the various breaches and avoid the behaviours that undermine academic integrity.

Potential Responses to Breaches of Academic Integrity

(11) Breaches of academic integrity will be met with an educative response and any penalties applied will be proportional to the seriousness of the offence and the level and context of the individual involved.

(12) Factors to be considered when determining the seriousness of a suspected breach for courses/learning programs include, but are not limited to:

- a. the student's understanding of academic integrity
- b. the extent of the suspected breach
- c. the stage and course/program the student is undertaking
- d. whether this is a first or repeated breach
- e. any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

(13) Factors to be considered when determining the seriousness of a suspected breach for research include, but are not limited to:

- a. the extent of the departure from accepted practice
- b. the extent to which research participants, the wider community, animals, and the environment are, or may have been, affected by the breach
- c. the extent to which it affects the trustworthiness of research
- d. the level of experience of the researcher
- e. whether there are repeated breaches by the researcher
- f. whether institutional failures have contributed to the breach
- g. any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

(14) After taking these factors into consideration, breaches will be categorised as either 'minor,' 'moderate', or 'major.' [Schedule A \(Higher Education\)](#) and [Schedule B \(Foundation and VET\)](#) provide a guide for academic integrity breaches, responses, and penalties.

Investigating Suspected Breaches of Academic Integrity

(15) All suspected breaches of academic integrity are investigated:

- a. Minor breaches are investigated at the local level using an informal investigation process. See paragraphs 17–19 (Higher Education) and paragraphs 20 and 21 (VET/Foundation).

- b. Moderate and Major breaches are investigated using the formal process described in paragraphs 22-40. This process is the same for Higher Education, VET and Foundation students.

(16) A summary of these processes is provided at [Schedule C](#).

Informal Investigation - Minor Breaches

Higher Education

(17) Where a Higher Education educator identifies or is notified of a minor breach by a student, the educator will complete an [Incident Report Form](#), attach samples of the alleged breach, and notify the relevant Head of Program (HoP).

(18) The incident will be recorded on the Higher Education Academic Integrity Register.

(19) The educator will investigate the alleged breach and in consultation with the Subject Coordinator provide the student with an educative response as detailed in [Schedule A](#).

VET and Foundation

(20) Where a VET or Foundation educator identifies or is notified of a minor breach by a student, the educator will discuss the matter with the student and provide an educative response, with or without applying an appropriate penalty as detailed in [Schedule B](#).

(21) The VET or Foundation educator may choose to record the incident on the Directorate Academic Integrity Register.

Formal Investigation - Moderate and Major Breaches

(22) Where a staff member suspects a moderate or major breach of academic integrity by a student or receives notification of a suspected breach of academic integrity, they will immediately notify the relevant Head of Program (HoP)/Program Leader (PL) in writing. In the case of Higher Education, the staff member will complete an Incident Report Form/Examination Incident Report and attach samples of the alleged breach.

(23) The incident is recorded on the relevant Directorate Academic Integrity Register.

(24) The HoP/PL determines the appropriate investigator to undertake the formal investigation.

(25) The investigator commences a formal investigation following notification of the suspected breach.

(26) The student is notified in writing of the alleged breach and anticipated steps in the investigation process. In this, and all communications with the student throughout the process, they will be informed of Melbourne Polytechnic Student Services and student organisations available to advise and support them throughout the process.

(27) Results may be withheld during the investigation process.

(28) All suspected breaches will be investigated in a fair, consistent, transparent, and timely manner. Privacy and confidentiality of all parties will be maintained.

(29) The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied throughout the investigation and determination of penalties.

(30) Gender, disability, cultural background, social responsibilities, and other characteristics will be taken into consideration whenever possible when meetings and other arrangements are being made.

(31) If the student is undertaking Senior Secondary studies and the incident relates to a potential breach of the [Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#) (VCAA) examination rules or School-based Assessment authentication rules, the investigator and Authorised Person must familiarise themselves with those rules in the [Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Administrative Handbook](#) for the relevant year.

(32) If the investigator finds the incident may have breached the [Animal Ethics Complaints, Non-Compliance and Adverse Events Procedure](#), they will make appropriate notifications as outlined in that procedure.

(33) Where there is insufficient evidence of a suspected breach, the matter will be dismissed.

(34) Where the investigator decides a breach of Academic Integrity has occurred, they will use [Schedule A \(Higher Education\)](#) or [B \(Foundation and VET\)](#) as a guide when determining the appropriate response/penalty.

(35) The following Authorised Persons can apply the penalties as described in [Schedule A \(Higher Education\)](#) or [B \(Foundation and VET\)](#):

- a. Educator: Any penalty listed in Minor.
- b. Head of Program / Program Leader: Any penalty listed in Minor, Moderate and Major breaches, including suspension up to one week, but not exclusion.
- c. Manager: Any penalty listed in Minor, Moderate and Major breaches, including suspension up to two weeks, but not exclusion.
- d. Academic Director: Any penalty listed in Minor, Moderate and Major breaches, including suspension up to four weeks, but not exclusion.
- e. Executive Director Education Excellence: Any penalty listed in Minor, Moderate and Major breaches, including suspension up to one semester, but not exclusion.
- f. Chief Executive: Any penalty listed in Minor, Moderate and Major breaches, including suspending a student for up to one year or expulsion.

(36) If the Authorised Person determines the appropriate response/penalty is outside their level of authority (refer to paragraph 33), they will, in consultation with the HoP/PL/relevant Manager, refer the matter to an Authorised Person with a higher level of authority to review the matter and apply the penalty they consider appropriate in accordance with [Schedule A \(Higher Education\)](#) or [B \(Foundation and VET\)](#).

(37) If any Authorised Person considers the matter to be of such seriousness that a penalty could only be applied by the Chief Executive as the Authorised Person, the matter must be referred to the Chief Executive to be dealt with under the [Student Discipline Policy](#).

(38) The Head of Program / Program Leader will ensure that external parties such as employers of apprentices and trainees and partner organisations through which a student may be enrolled are kept informed where an investigation and/or penalties applied may affect the student's progression and/or results. Any communication with these parties must take privacy considerations into account.

(39) Employer and partner organisation staff may assist the student through the investigation process however Melbourne Polytechnic Authorised Persons will be the final decision makers regarding the outcome.

(40) Students will be advised in writing of the outcome of a formal Academic Integrity investigation.

Recording and Reporting Suspected Breaches and Outcomes of Academic Integrity

(41) The Head of Program/Program Leader will alert the Department Administrator of a reported breach as soon as they have been notified. If the suspected breach is contract cheating involving staff or multiple students they will also notify their Academic Director.

(42) The Department Administrator will record the incident on the relevant Directorate Academic Integrity Register [template under development].

(43) The Incident Report Form [template under development] will provide the details to be included on the Academic Integrity Register.

(44) The following records will be maintained:

- a. Incident Report Form and samples of the alleged breach
- b. evidence gathered and reviewed as part of the investigation
- c. meeting dates and attendees
- d. decision and response/penalties
- e. appeals and outcomes
- f. links to copies of formal correspondence relating to the investigation, decision, and appeal.

(45) All incidents and decisions where a moderate or major academic integrity breach has been confirmed will be recorded on the student's file.

(46) The Department Administrator will store all information and documentation relating to the incident, determination, and outcome in a secure and confidential manner and for the required period specified by the Melbourne Polytechnic [Records Management Policy](#).

(47) Academic Directors will provide a report bi-annually to the relevant Committees and Boards (Higher Education Academic Board, Vocational Education and Training and Foundation Academic Board, VET and Foundation Academic Board) including the following information:

- a. training completed by students
- b. the number and nature of breaches, outcomes and penalties applied
- c. any recurring breaches, trends, and actions to address underlying causes
- d. academic integrity promotion activities.

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

(49) If the Director is notified that a suspected breach may involve contract cheating by a staff member or multiple students they will immediately notify the Director Academic Quality.

Reporting on Training for Academic Integrity

(50) With respect to the Academic Integrity Module for commencing Higher Education Students:

- a. on commencement, all Higher Education students are contacted via Moodle and:
 - i. reminded of the importance of the Academic Integrity training
 - ii. the requirement to complete the training by the end of the fourth week of classes if not yet completed
- b. in the sixth week of classes, the Library and Learning Skills Teams provide a report of relevant completers/non-completers to Higher Education Managers.
- c. Subject Coordinators contact students who have not completed the training and remind them of this requirement.

(51) At the end of each semester, the Library and Learning Skills Teams provide reports including the following information to relevant Academic Managers:

- a. Higher Education student academic integrity module completion and success rates by program area and course.
- b. Higher Education students who have completed/not completed the academic integrity module and the number of times each student has completed the training.
- c. other academic integrity training completed by all students across the Institute.

Complaints and Appeals

(52) A student who disputes the findings or outcome of an informal academic integrity process (refer to paragraphs 17-21) may request the matter be dealt with formally by notifying the relevant HoP/PL in writing. The relevant HoP/PL will then proceed with a formal investigation as outlined in paragraphs 22-40 of this procedure.

(53) A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal investigation regarding an academic integrity breach may appeal under any of the following grounds:

- a. the process or outcome was not compliant with the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) or Academic Integrity (Students) Procedure.
- b. there is new or additional relevant information or evidence that was not previously available or considered at the time of the initial investigation that may significantly impact the original outcome.
- c. the penalty is unreasonable or excessive.

Note 1: A student who has had their academic integrity matter dealt with under the [Student Discipline Policy](#) as per paragraph 35 is not entitled to have an appeal heard under this Policy.

Note 2: Senior secondary students dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal investigation into a breach of the [Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#) (VCAA) examination rules or School-based Assessment authentication rules may appeal to the VCAA in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), VCAA, no later than 14 days after the student receives written notice of the decision.

(54) In the first instance, the student may discuss the matter with their Academic Manager to determine if the matter can be resolved at the local level.

(55) If, following consultation with the Academic Manager the student is still dissatisfied, they may submit an appeal in writing to the relevant Academic Director using the Academic Integrity Appeals template [under development].

(56) The relevant Academic Director will form an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel. The Panel will comprise:

- a. the Director or their delegate as Chair
- b. an Academic Manager not involved in the original investigation or decision
- c. a Head of Program/Program Leader not involved in the original investigation or decision.

(57) At least one of these members must be an Authorised Person at least one level higher than the person making the original decision. The Director must also ensure when choosing members that any potential conflicts of interest are avoided and/or mitigated and gender, cultural background and other characteristics taken into consideration.

(58) The Academic Integrity Appeal Panel will consider the student's submission and any supporting documentation. This will include inviting the student to attend an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel meeting.

(59) When arranging the meeting gender, disability, social responsibilities and other characteristics will be taken into consideration whenever possible and adequate notice provided.

(60) The student may bring a support person to provide personal support however this person will not act as an advocate for the student.

(61) The Academic Integrity Appeal Panel may:

- a. support the appeal and reverse the original outcome
- b. support the appeal and vary the original outcome
- c. dismiss the appeal and confirm the original outcome.

(62) The student will be notified in writing of the Academic Integrity Appeal Panel outcome.

(63) There are no further internal options for appeal from a decision of the Academic Integrity Appeal Panel.

(64) Students dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academic Integrity Appeal Panel may lodge an external appeal with the [Victorian Ombudsman](#).

Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability

(65) The Higher Education Academic Board is responsible for:

- a. maintaining oversight of Higher Education academic and research integrity
- b. monitoring potential Higher Education risks and mitigating breaches
- c. monitoring the development and implementation of strategies to promote and enhance academic integrity in Higher Education
- d. reviewing trends in breaches of academic integrity in Higher Education
- e. reporting annually to the Education Quality Committee (EQC) on trends in Higher Education academic integrity training and breaches, and the strategies being implemented to enhance Higher Education academic integrity at Melbourne Polytechnic.

(66) The Vocational Education and Training and Foundation Academic Board and VET and Foundation Academic Boards will review trends in breaches of academic integrity and monitor the development and implementation of strategies to promote and enhance academic integrity and to mitigate breaches in their areas of responsibility. It will report on these to the EQC at least bi-annually as part of the VET/Foundation Educational Academic Performance and Risk Reports and Educational Academic Performance and Risk Report (International).

(67) The Results and Integrity Committee (RIC) will:

- a. identify and consider issues of dishonest practices and cheating trends in the assessment period and advise on effective detection strategies
- b. provide the Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) with a report on academic integrity issues identified in each assessment period that includes an analysis of data, trends and historical comparisons and recommendations for improvements to processes
- c. provide the Higher Education Course Committee (HECC) with program-specific data and analysis.

(68) The Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC) will:

- a. receive a report from EIC on academic integrity issues identified in each assessment period that includes an analysis of data, trends and historical comparisons and recommendations for improvements to processes
- b. monitor current or emerging academic integrity issues and advise and make recommendations to the Higher Education Academic, VET and VET and Foundation Academic Boards to support promotion of academic integrity and to mitigate breaches.

(69) 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 Academic Integrity module on Moodle for commencing Higher Education students
- c. providing a report on completion and success rates of an Academic Integrity module on Moodle for commencing Higher Education students to the Higher Education Manager
- d. developing academic training resources suitable for other cohorts across the Institute
- e. recording and reporting on completion and success rates of student academic integrity training to relevant Directors/Boards.

(70) Professional Teaching Practice and Organisational Development teams are responsible for developing and maintaining training modules on academic integrity and how to conduct investigations training.

(71) Academic Directors are responsible for:

- a. ensuring all staff under their leadership are aware of their responsibilities and expectations regarding personal academic integrity and the implementation of this procedure
- b. raising discussions of academic integrity at relevant Directorate meetings
- c. promoting the use of academic integrity similarity checking software across their directorates.
- d. ensuring Academic Integrity Registers are maintained for their areas of responsibility
- e. providing a report on suspected breaches, outcomes, and trends of academic and research integrity to relevant Committees and Boards bi-annually (Higher Education Academic Board, Vocational Education and Training and Foundation Academic Board, VET and Foundation Academic Board)
- f. providing a report on any major breaches and their outcomes at the next available Committee/Board meeting following the incident
- g. notifying the Director Academic Quality immediately they become aware of a suspected incident of contract cheating involving staff or multiple students
- h. developing strategies to support academic integrity and to mitigate breaches in their areas of responsibility and across the Institute
- i. establishing Academic Integrity Appeals Panels.

(72) The Director Academic Quality is responsible monitoring investigations into contract cheating involving staff or multiple students and ensuring any required reporting to external agencies is undertaken.

(73) The Higher Education Course Committee and the Director Vocational Education and Training and the Director Foundation will approve exemptions from the use of similarity checking software in their areas of responsibility.

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

- a. modelling academic integrity in their day-to-day dealings with students, colleagues, and the public.
- b. teaching students how academic integrity applies in the context of their units/subjects, starting at the commencement and then throughout their learning programs.
- c. timely reporting of suspected breaches of academic integrity in line with policy and procedure.
- d. ensuring all occurrences and the nature of suspected breaches of academic or research integrity are monitored, and action is taken to address underlying causes.

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

- a. establishing investigations of potential student breaches of academic integrity in accordance with this

procedure

- b. ensuring external parties such as employers of apprentices and trainees and partner organisations through which a student is enrolled are kept informed where appropriate while ensuring privacy considerations are taken into account
- c. immediately notifying their Director as soon as they become aware that a reported incident of suspected contract cheating may involve staff or multiple students.

(76) Investigators are responsible for:

- a. conducting investigations according to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- b. immediately notifying the Program Leader/Head of Program as soon as they become aware that a reported incident of suspected contract cheating may involve staff or multiple students.

(77) Directorate Administrators are responsible for:

- a. recording all suspected breaches on Directorate Academic Integrity Registers
- b. recording all instances and warnings issued for academic integrity breaches on the student's file
- c. storing all information and documentation relating to the suspected breach, determination, and outcome in a secure and confidential manner.

(78) Academic Integrity Appeals Panels are responsible for:

- a. hearing appeals from students on process and/or outcomes of investigations into breaches of academic integrity.

(79) Students are responsible for:

- a. where relevant completing the Academic Integrity Module on Moodle
- b. observing and complying with Institute academic integrity values and standards
- c. presenting independent work, acknowledging all sources correctly and where relevant using similarity checking software to check work before submitting assessments
- d. completing and submitting a completed assignment cover sheet for written assessments and/or completing the prompt on Moodle for every electronic assessment confirming that the work submitted is their own work
- e. seeking guidance and assistance from Educators, Library staff and Studiosity if they are unsure of correct academic integrity practices
- f. reporting concerns regarding the academic integrity of another student or any acts of suspected academic misconduct to the Head of Program/Program Leader.

Section 5 - Definitions

(80) For the purpose of this procedure the following definitions apply:

- a. Academic integrity: 'the expectation that teachers, students, researchers and all members of the academic community act with: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility' (What is academic integrity? [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#), accessed 14 October 2022)
- b. Academic misconduct: academic misconduct or research misconduct generally refers to a breach of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of data are examples of such breaches.
- c. Authorised Person: person designated by this Procedure to have the authority to impose a penalty for a breach

of academic integrity as outlined in paragraph 35.

- d. Breach: incident where an individual fails to comply with the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) or Procedure
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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. In addition, it may include using artificial intelligence (AI) software or paraphrasing tools.
- h. Educative response: strategies used to help the student understand academic integrity errors and learn correct practice.
- i. Investigation: 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.
- j. Investigator: a staff member delegated responsibility for investigating a suspected breach, usually a Program Leader, Head of Program, Department Manager or Senior Academic.
- k. Level of breach: identifies the severity of the breach and response/penalty.
 - l. 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.
- m. Major breach: a breach that is determined to be intentional or deliberately negligent including (but not limited to) contract cheating.
- n. Minor breach: a breach that is determined to be unintentional due to lack of understanding and can be reasonably considered as part of the normal learning process.
- o. Moderate breach: a breach that is determined to be unintentional but may be negligent. There is an opportunity to learn and apply academic integrity principles.
- p. Natural justice: the right to a fair hearing that is conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.
- q. 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.
- r. Plagiarism: the use of all or part of another person or entity's work without appropriate acknowledgment of the author or source.
- s. 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.
- t. Referencing systems: a set of rules describing how to acknowledge the thoughts, ideas and works of others in a particular way.
- u. Research breach: failure to meet the principles and responsibility of the Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. May refer to a single breach or multiple breaches.
- v. Research misconduct: a serious breach of the Code which is intentional, reckless or negligent
- w. TEQSA: [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#). Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st July 2023
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Policy Owner	Marc Blanks Executive Director Education Excellence
Policy Implementation Officer	Sharon Griffiths Director Academic Quality
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