



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Academic Misconduct Policy

Category: Academic (ACA)

1. Purpose

The Australian Institute of Higher Education Pty Ltd (“AIH” or “the Institute”) upholds the principle of academic integrity and independently achieved intellectual enquiry. Failure to comply with this principle will result in appropriate and recorded sanctions based on the extent of the breach.

AIH will ensure that:

- a) Students maintain academic integrity and do not claim ownership of concepts or ideas of another person or source without appropriate acknowledgement and/ or otherwise incurring the appropriate consequences
- b) All reported incidences of academic misconduct will go through a published process of clearly defined lines of communication to ascertain the validity of claims of academic misconduct and appropriate consequences
- c) Students will be entitled to representation (not including legal) at all stages of the process of determining academic misconduct
- d) All allegations of academic misconduct will be assessed under impartial conditions to ensure fair and equitable outcomes
- e) All allegations of academic misconduct will be recorded on student files where appropriate
- f) Staff and students will be made aware of the Academic Misconduct Policy through induction, orientation and handbooks

2. Policy Statement

The Academic Misconduct Policy is authorised by the Academic Board to provide guidelines for AIH academic staff and students on the procedures for handling allegations of academic misconduct.

3. Definitions

Academic Misconduct

Involvement in cheating, plagiarism or any other conduct that deliberately or inadvertently claims ownership of an idea or concept without acknowledging the source of the information. This includes any form of activity that negates the academic integrity of the student or another student and/or their work.

Allegation

A reported suspicion of academic misconduct with supporting evidence that requires investigation.

Appeal

A process whereby a student can formally request further investigation into a decision to possibly change an outcome.

Breach

Where a student has knowingly or unintentionally failed to abide by the guidelines set down by the Institute.

Cheating

Includes, *but is not limited to*, copying the work of another under any assessment condition with or without the other person's knowledge; unauthorised collaboration of assessment tasks; communicating with someone else under exam conditions in order to extract information; leaving exam papers exposed under exam conditions that enable others to view the contents; bringing in concealed information or prohibited aids under exam conditions or; receiving answers from another person under exam conditions.

Collusion

Where two or more students incite, facilitate and conceal involvement in cheating and/or plagiarism.

Course Implications

Implications such as a result of the process or proven evidence of academic misconduct such as a failure in the assessment item or unit, suspension, expulsion, loss of student visa, workplace involvement, etc.

Expulsion

Where a student has been found guilty of a serious breach and has had their studies (courses or units) cancelled at the Institute.

Major Breach

A major breach would constitute an intentional act to deceive or willingly participating in an intentional act to deceive, all of which have serious consequences.

Minor Breach

A minor breach would constitute an unintentional act to deceive which has a minor impact and can be rectified with appropriate consequences.

Plagiarism (intentional)

Involves intentionally submitting/presenting work that has been done by another person/ another source. The student submitting/presenting the work has not acknowledged the source of the information. This could involve complete or partial information.

Plagiarism (unintentional)

Involves unintentionally submitting/presenting work that is done by another person / another source, without adequately acknowledging the source of the information and without an intention to take undue credit or deceive lecturers.

Representative

A person (not a legal representative) who provides support for the student during an investigation and/or interview process.

Representative Institute Staff

In the case of a serious breach of academic misconduct, senior academic staff, such as the Executive Dean, will also be involved in the investigation. Other cases may require a second academic staff member to be in attendance at the direction of the Executive Dean. These may include but are not limited to Associate Dean(s) of Studies and lecturers.

Suspension

Where a student has been found guilty of a breach and has been denied access to classes and campus facilities for a stated period of time.

Tampering

Involves attempts to alter examination scripts, class work, grades or any other academic and administration records.

4. Responsible Persons

- Lecturer(s)
- Student(s)
- Associate Dean(s) of Studies
- Executive Dean
- Academic Board
- Representatives (where requested)

5. Documents Involved

- Evidence of submitted work that involves cheating, intentional plagiarism or unintentional plagiarism
- Supporting evidence of cheating, intentional plagiarism or unintentional plagiarism
- Written communication commencing the investigation process
- Interview notes (signed by students and staff)
- Written communication informing student of final outcome

6. Procedures

6.1 Plagiarism

- a) The lecturer receives a student assessment item, test etc with evidence of plagiarism including, but not limited to, the following:
 - i. Work submitted was either entirely or partially completed by a person other than the person submitting the assessment item,
 - ii. Does not reference one or more sources of the idea or work, leading to the misrepresentation of ideas/concepts, or
 - iii. Whole work has been copied from another student assignment, article, website, etc., or work was complete by colluding with any student when it is an individual assessment item, or
 - iv. Writing style lacks consistency, indicating multiple authors with no reference to the original author(s).
- b) The lecturer must collect all evidence of the breach. Evidence includes:
 - i. Work submitted by the student, and
 - ii. Any evidence of plagiarism (or collusion).
- c) In cases of a serious breach with verifiable evidence, the lecturer must first consult the Executive Dean to decide upon a possible course of action.
- d) The Executive Dean (or delegate) formally writes to the student to attend an interview. The written communication to the student must include:
 - i. details of the alleged academic misconduct under investigation,
 - ii. summary of evidence of the academic misconduct,
 - iii. provide the student with the opportunity to have a representative attend the interview, and
 - iv. day, date, time, location and representative Institute staff involved in the interview.
- e) In cases where more than one student is involved and evidence indicates possible collusion with other students, the colluding student will also receive formal written communication to attend an interview

conducted on (possibly) the same day. The interview will not be held at the same time as that of other student(s) involved in the allegation.

- f) During the interview, the following process will occur:
 - i. Representative Institute staff will provide the student with details and evidence of alleged plagiarism,
 - ii. Student will have an opportunity to present his/her case with their evidence,
 - iii. Interview notes must include the issue, discussion and actions required with relevant timeframes,
 - iv. Representative Institute staff and student sign the interview form, and
 - v. Signed copies will be provided for both the student and the Institute.
- g) Where there is doubt as to a student's understanding of content assessed in an assessment or suspicions of submitted assessment items not being authentic (i.e. not that of the student's own work), the student may be called upon to provide a VIVA – style defence of the content. Where the student fails to adequately defend the content by demonstrating understanding or evidence of their own work, the assessment item will be deemed as a fail grade.
- h) In cases of collusion, all students suspected of involvement will be interviewed separately by the same representative Institute staff following the stated formal interview procedures.
- i) Representative Institute staff must then follow the process for confirming allegations or a finding that a penalty is not warranted. Refer to sections **6.4 Confirming Allegations** and **6.5 Allegations not Warranted**.
- j) In cases where the representative Institute staff are lecturers and Associate Dean(s) of Studies, they will meet with the Executive Dean to present the degree of the breach and recommend a course of action based on confirmation of allegation, prior to gaining the Executive Dean's approval for commencing a course of action.
- k) In cases where expulsion of a student(s) has been recommended, final approval must be gained from the Executive Dean in consensus with the Chair of the AIH Academic Board.
- l) The outcome of the investigation and resulting actions will be formally communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days.
- m) Students may appeal any decision in writing following the guidelines stated in the Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure.
- n) Where a student has requested an appeal, the same interview process will be implemented. The Executive Dean and/or Academic Board will appoint representative Institute staff that have not been involved in the process to ensure that students have an opportunity for independent appeal.
- o) All letters (written communication), interview notes and evidence of academic misconduct must be placed in the student's file with notes included in the student database.

6.2 Cheating during examinations

- a) Cheating includes but is not limited to evidence of:
 - i. Communicating during an examination, including verbal and/or written
 - ii. Surreptitiously bringing in unauthorised information into an examination room including written and electronic sources of information
 - iii. Leaving examination papers exposed for others to view
 - iv. Persistent attempts to view other students' examination papers
 - v. Receiving unauthorised notes, papers etc that relate to the examination
 - vi. Providing unauthorised notes, papers etc that relate to the examination.
- b) The invigilator/lecturer must collect all evidence of cheating. Evidence includes but is not limited to:

- i. Unauthorised written communication,
 - ii. Written observations about unauthorised behaviour, and / or
 - iii. Hard copy evidence of unauthorised electronic communication. This may include written observations.
- c) In cases where students have verbally communicated or provided/received unauthorised notes, papers etc that relate to the examination, students involved will immediately have their papers and communication retrieved and quietly removed from the examination room to ensure stability for the other students still doing the examination.
- d) The lecturer/invigator provides the evidence to the Executive Dean as soon as the examination has finished.
- e) The Executive Dean (or delegated representative) formally writes to the student to attend an interview. The written communication to the student must include:
 - i. details of the alleged cheating during the examination,
 - ii. an opportunity to have a representative attend the interview, and
 - iii. day, date, time, location and representative Institute staff involved in the interview.
- f) In cases where more than one student is involved and evidence indicates possible collusion with other students, the other student(s) will also receive formal written communication to attend an interview conducted on (possibly) the same day. The interview will not be held at the same time as that of the other student(s) involved in the allegation.
- g) During the interview, the following process will occur:
 - i. Representative Institute staff will provide student with details and evidence of alleged cheating,
 - ii. Student will have an opportunity to present their case with their evidence,
 - iii. Interview notes must include the issue, discussion and actions required with timeframes,
 - iv. Representative Institute staff and student both sign the interview form,
 - v. Signed copies are provided to both the student and Institute.
- h) In cases of collusion, all students suspected of involvement in cheating during the examination will be interviewed separately by the same representative Institute staff following the same interview procedures.
- i) Representative Institute staff must then follow the process for confirming allegations or finding that a penalty is not warranted. Refer to sections **6.4 Confirming Allegations** and **6.5 Allegations not Warranted**.
- j) In cases where representative Institute staff does not include the Executive Dean, they will meet with the Executive Dean to present the degree of the breach and recommended course of action prior to gaining the Executive Dean's approval for commencing a course of action.
- k) In cases where expulsion of a student(s) has been recommended, final approval must be gained from the Executive Dean in consensus with the Chair of the AIH Academic Board.
- l) The outcome of the investigation and resulting actions will be formally communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days.
- m) Students may appeal any decision in writing to the Executive Dean within 10 working days.
- n) Where a student has requested an appeal, the same interview process will be implemented. The Executive Dean and/or Academic Board will appoint representative Institute staff that have not been involved in the process to ensure that students have an opportunity for independent appeal.
- o) All letters, interview notes and evidence of cheating must be placed in the student's file with notes included in the student database.

6.3 Tampering

- a) Tampering includes but is not limited to evidence of unauthorised tampering of:
 - i. examination scripts
 - ii. assessment items and academic work
 - iii. grades
 - iv. class records
 - v. student records.
- b) The lecturer or administrator must collect all evidence of tampering.
- c) In cases of a serious breach with verifiable evidence, the lecturer or administrator must first consult the Executive Dean to decide upon a possible course of action and representative Institute staff.
- d) The Executive Dean (or delegate) formally writes to the student to attend an interview. The letter to the student must include:
 - i. details of the alleged tampering under investigation,
 - ii. a summary of evidence of tampering,
 - iii. an opportunity for the students to have a representative attend the interview, and
 - iv. day, date, time, location and representative Institute staff involved in the interview.
- e) In cases where more than one student is involved and evidence indicates possible collusion with other students, the other student(s) will also receive a formal letter to attend an interview conducted on (possibly) the same day. The interview will not be at the same time as that of other student(s) involved in the allegation.
- f) During the interview, the following process will occur:
 - i. Representative Institute staff will provide student with details and evidence of alleged plagiarism,
 - ii. Student will have an opportunity to present their case with their evidence,
 - iii. Interview notes must include the issue, discussion and actions required with timeframes,
 - iv. Representative institute staff and student(s) both sign the interview form, and
 - v. Signed copies are provided to both the student and the Institute.
- g) Representative Institute staff must then follow the process for confirming allegations or finding that a penalty is not warranted. Refer to sections **6.4 Confirming Allegations** and **6.5 Allegations Not Warranted**.
- h) In cases where representative Institute staff does not include the Executive Dean, they will meet with the Executive Dean to present the degree of the breach and recommended course of action based on confirmation of allegation, prior to gaining the Executive Dean approval for a course of action.
- i) In cases where expulsion of a student(s) has been recommended, final approval must be gained from the Executive Dean in consensus with the Chair of the AIH Academic Board
- j) The outcome of the investigation and resulting actions will be formally communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days.
- k) Students may appeal any decision in writing to the Executive Dean within 10 working days.
- l) Where a student has requested an appeal, the same interview process will be implemented. The Executive Dean and/or Academic Board will appoint representative Institute staff that has not been involved in the process to ensure that students have an opportunity for independent appeal.
- m) All letters, interview notes and evidence of tampering must be placed in the student file with notes included in the student database.

6.4 Confirmation of Allegations

- a) Where there is confirmation of academic misconduct, the following may be applied:
 - i. reprimand
 - ii. written warning
 - iii. failing the assessment item, and/ or
 - iv. failing the unit, and the student is required to repeat the unit of study.
- b) If it is a student's second (or more) major breach, the following may be applied in addition to the above:
 - i. Suspension from the course, or
 - ii. Expulsion from the course.
- c) In all cases, details of the academic misconduct will be kept on the student's record/file.

6.5 Allegations not warranted

- a) In cases where there is insufficient evidence, or the evidence provided points to not supporting the allegation, no penalty will be imposed but information pertaining to the allegation of academic misconduct can be kept on the student's record/file.
- b) If the student is involved in an allegation of academic misconduct again at a later date, then prior allegation(s) will form a valid part of the later investigation and can be included when considering the seriousness of the later breach(es).

6.6 Factors to Consider

The following factors need to be considered when determining the degree of seriousness of academic misconduct and the level of consequence to be implemented:

- a) Degree of the breach (major or minor breach)
- b) Whether the breach was intentional or unintentional
- c) Academic level of the student and stage of the student's studies they are at the time of the offence (ie: first academic year of above)
- d) Course implications, e.g. loss of student visa
- e) Where there is evidence of collusion, ascertain degree and aspect of coercion (if any), leaders, followers, etc.
- f) Extent of remorse shown by the student
- g) History of serious or unsatisfactory study patterns
- h) Fairness and equity when determining the consequences
- i) Consistent handling to ensure that roles carried out by representative Institute staff is consistent across all cases of academic misconduct.

7. Reporting Lines

When reporting incidents of academic misconduct, the following lines for reporting are to be implemented:

- a) Plagiarism (minor breach):
 - i. Lecturer informs the Executive Dean
 - ii. Executive Dean appoints representative Institute staff
 - iii. Representative Institute staff notifies Executive Dean
 - iv. Executive Dean notifies lecturer
 - v. Lecturer notifies student
- b) Plagiarism (major breach):
 - i. Lecturer informs Executive Dean
 - ii. Executive Dean appoints representative Institute staff
 - iii. Representative Institute staff notifies Executive Dean
 - iv. Executive Dean notifies Academic Board
 - v. Academic Board notifies Executive Dean
 - vi. Executive Dean notifies lecturer/student
- c) Cheating in Examinations:
 - i. Lecturer/Invigilator informs Executive Dean
 - ii. Executive Dean appoints representative Institute staff
 - iii. Representative Institute staff informs Executive Dean
 - iv. Executive Dean informs Academic Board
 - v. Academic Board notifies Executive Dean
 - vi. Executive Dean notifies lecturer/student

8. Appeals

An applicant may appeal against a decision made under this policy. Appeals must be made as prescribed in the appeals process outlined in the **Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure**.

9. Version Control

Policy Owner:	Executive Dean
Policy Code:	ACA-HE-02
Authorising Body:	AIH Academic Board
Version / Dates:	V1 – 24 January 2008
	V2 – 25 February 2008
	V3 – 10 June 2008
	V4 – 19 August 2008
	V5 – 27 February 2009
	V6 – 30 March 2009
	V7 – 14 July 2011