

# Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

## Fact box

- **Policy owner:** Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee
- **Policy category:** Academic: Learning and Teaching
- **Policy status:** Approved
- **Approval body:** Academic Board
- **Endorsement body:** Learning & Teaching Committee
- **Related policies:**
  - [Academic Freedom Policy](#)
  - [Assessment Policy](#)
  - [Graduation Policy](#)
  - [Higher Education Subject Development, Delivery and Review Policy](#)
  - [Staff Grievance Resolution Policy](#)
  - [Support for Students Policy](#)
- **Last amended:** 10th Dec. 2024
- **Relevant HESF:** Part A: 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach of Alphacrucis University College (AC) to ensure its course work students, Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates, and faculty members, act with integrity in the performance of their academic work. In the context of its Christian mission, AC will implement processes and procedures to:

- promote the reputation of AC
- protect the integrity of AC awards
- educate students and faculty about the importance of ethical behaviour

This policy defines academic integrity and various forms of academic misconduct, describes the procedures for investigating allegations of academic misconduct, and outlines sanctions that will apply where allegations are upheld.

## Scope

This policy applies to all delivery sites, faculty, course work students and HDR candidates.

The policy does not apply to general misconduct by students or staff which is dealt with in other policies.

## Policy

AC believes that ethical research and scholarship is based on an intellectual environment where academic integrity is highly valued and vigilantly upheld. AC will make information about academic integrity available to students during orientation, in online induction, handbooks, subject outlines and other relevant teaching materials. Academic misconduct is not permitted or tolerated, and any such occurrences will be sanctioned.

The AC Academic Misconduct Register records warnings and the outcomes of any allegations of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or research misconduct, where the allegation is substantiated.

Student records on the Register will be permanently retained. Faculty will have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of academic integrity breaches.

Faculty academic misconduct will be recorded and available to the appropriate supervisor involved in reviews, appointments or subsequent allegations of misconduct.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Academic Integrity**

Undertaking academic activity in an ethical and responsible way to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards; honesty and rigour in research and scholarship; and avoidance of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other activity that constitutes academic misconduct, including unauthorised or inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is undertaking academic activity, either deliberately or imprudently, that can result in gaining an unethical and unfair advantage over peers. It may take several forms including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and collusion as defined below, and the unauthorised or inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence.

### **Plagiarism**

Examples of plagiarism include:

- submission of work in which ideas, words or other work are copied directly or paraphrased from a source, published or unpublished (for example a website, computer program, another student's essay or presentation, a book or journal article, a lecture, a performance piece), and presented as if they are the student's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of the actual author;
- recycling, i.e., submission of work by a student that has already been assessed in another subject without disclosing that fact;
- A student intentionally choosing not to reference their work appropriately.

AC distinguishes between plagiarism which has occurred from negligence on the part of a faculty member, HDR candidate or student (minor) and that which is dishonest (major).

**Minor plagiarism** is defined as uninformed omissions of authorial details, which are minor in nature and by themselves are unlikely to alter the student's overall grade (e.g., omissions of a limited number of referencing details or incorrect referencing details). It is acknowledged that these minor omissions and errors are more likely to occur in the student's first semester in an undergraduate course, and therefore, responses should be more educative at that time. Education and formation of students are the preferred course of action.

**Major plagiarism** is defined as an attempt to circumvent assessment requirements by drawing on unacknowledged sources in such a way as to improve the grade, strengthen the research project or publish a piece of work. Examples may include, but is not limited to:

- copying without acknowledging source,
- minimal paraphrasing that retains the original content of the source without acknowledgement,

- self-plagiarism without acknowledgement,
- and/or intentionally incorrect acknowledgement of the source/s,
- creating hallucinatory references.

### **Cheating**

Cheating occurs before, during or after an assessment or examination when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage or assist another student to do so. It includes, but is not limited to:

- bringing items into an examination that are not permitted such as a textbook, notebook, dictionary, calculator, computer, notes, manuscript, bag, mobile phone or other materials or device or means of special assistance, except those items specifically authorised for the examination by the lecturer who set the examination. Note: valuable items, such as small purses and wallets, may be brought into the examination room but must be left on the floor adjacent to the student's desk for the duration of the examination; the examination supervisor may inspect such items;
- colluding with others either in the examination venue or outside the venue including by electronic means;
- deliberately viewing other students work in an examination, or in other circumstances, without their permission;
- fabricating or falsifying data or inventing references;
- submitting the same work or recycling work without prior permission of the subject coordinator or research supervisor.

### **Contract Cheating**

Contract cheating involves a faculty member, HDR candidate or student contracting a third party – paid or unpaid – to prepare or contribute to a research or assessment task or part of assessable work on their behalf. It may also involve the person acquiring or commissioning for services related to the preparation of assessable work with the intention to cheat, misrepresent and/or plagiarise.

A third party may include:

- a friend;
- a family member;
- a fellow student;
- a staff member; or
- commercial services, such as:
  - a tutoring company;
  - a document sharing website;
  - an editing service; or
  - an assignment writing service, also known as 'ghost writing'.

### **Solicitation**

Solicitation occurs when an individual offers, encourages, induces or advertises for a faculty member, HDR candidate or student to contract, commission, pay, procure, or complete on their behalf, research or assessment tasks and items that are likely to result in their use for the purpose of cheating, misrepresentation and/or plagiarism.

### **Collusion**

Collusion, unlike collaboration, which encompasses positive co-learning, is when two or more candidates/students, or a candidate/student and any other person(s), work together on individual (not group work) assessable work with intent to cheat, plagiarise or engage in academic misconduct.

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence**

Generative artificial intelligence is artificial intelligence capable of generating text, images, videos, or other data using generative models, often in response to prompts ([Wikipedia](#)). In circumstances where the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools is authorised in the assessment, correct citation of the source is required, as with expected scholarly practice in relation to acknowledgement of authorship.

### **Other Academic Misconduct**

Other forms of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- tampering, or attempting to tamper, with research work, examination papers, class work, grades, class records, or other student documentation;
- acquiring, or attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing examination materials or information without the approval of the lecturer;
- impersonating another candidate/student, or arranging for anyone to impersonate a candidate/student, in any examination or other assessment task;
- altering group assessment work that has been agreed as final by all participating students prior to submission without the collaborating students' consent;
- use of recorded lectures (audio and/or visual), Powerpoints, or other class notes in a way that infringes another person's privacy or intellectual property rights - for example, by publishing or distributing a recording without permission from the lecturer;
- offering or accepting bribes (money or sexual or other favours) e.g. for admission or for grades or research results;
- fabrication, falsification and misrepresentation of information (including research data and source material);
- not meeting required research standards, including conducting research without ethics approval or conducting research in an unethical manner.

### **Detection**

Although moral and legal copyright in relation to faculty/HDR candidate/student assessment or research materials is vested in that person as the author, the faculty member/candidate/student, provides an implied consent to AC which authorises:

- reproduction and storage of electronic material which they may author and submit as part of their scholarly work; and
- scanning this material for purposes of detecting, through software processing (e.g., Turnitin) or other methods, any plagiarised material used in assignments.

Any person may report a complaint of academic misconduct by a faculty member, student or HDR candidate to the relevant lecturer, subject coordinator or Program Director, Head of School or relevant supervisor.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions for academic misconduct will be applied in accordance with the following principles:

- allegations will be investigated promptly;
- processes will be transparent and in accordance with procedural fairness;
- sanctions will be appropriate and proportionate;
- judgements of intentionality will be taken into account in determining any sanction that might be applied;
- confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties within the constraints of allegation, investigation and appeal processes, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure;
- anyone who is the subject of an academic misconduct allegation has the opportunity to respond and/or appeal decisions, according to the Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy;
- staff involved in academic misconduct or appeals processes will disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of them.
- academic misconduct of staff will be escalated from the faculty member's manager to AC's Provost for judgement and sanction.

Responsible for implementation

Chair, Learning and Teaching Committee

Key stakeholders

All faculty, students and HDR candidates

Related documents

[AC Academic Integrity Framework](#)

[TEQSA Guidance Note on Academic Integrity](#)

National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC):

- [Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (2018)
- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

- [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#)
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## Procedures

### **Academic Integrity and Misconduct Procedure**

#### **PREVENTION**

Faculty are encouraged to minimise opportunities for the occurrence of academic misconduct within the candidate/student cohort through enhancement and practical implementation of a culture and practices of academic integrity. A range of coordinated strategies may include:

- advising candidates/students at the time of enrolment of the details of this policy and the expectation of ethical behaviour in research and scholarship;
- use of similarity or text matching detection software where appropriate;
- explicitly referring to types and examples of academic and research misconduct at key stages in courses;
- providing candidates/students with opportunities in which to practise writing and referencing skills;
- explaining the aims and purposes of assessment tasks;
- providing examples of good and poor practice;
- monitoring time pressures and timetabling that may adversely affect completion and submission of assignments;
- use of similarity or text matching detection software;
- providing prompt and constructive feedback on assignments and examinations;
- varying assessment tasks to minimise the risk of academic misconduct and foster positive values and behaviour among students;
- requiring students to provide a declaration appended to their assignments which affirms that, where otherwise acknowledged, the material submitted in the assignments is their own.
- ensuring that the appropriate ethics applications are approved prior to conducting research.

#### **Ethical Conduct of Research**

Faculty are encouraged to conduct research in accordance with both national frameworks governing ethical research, especially where human subjects are involved. This includes the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. As with HDR candidates, primary data gathered during faculty research projects should be stored in an AC-provided secure repository for a minimum of five years.

#### **SANCTIONS**

##### **Factors to be considered**

While this policy outlines sanctions for different breaches of academic and research integrity, the list of factors is not all-inclusive; other factors may also be relevant. Academic staff will exercise their professional judgement as to whether the sanctions fit the particular breach (refer to the Academic Integrity Framework matrix). Sometimes a more lenient or more severe penalty may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances.

Sanctions for faculty academic misconduct will take account of the fact that faculty are expected to have learned ethical conduct earlier in their academic journey and be models of academic probity in their practice.

**Aggravating factors:**

- seriousness of the offence;
- degree of premeditation;
- impact on other HDR candidates/students/ and other stakeholders;
- extent to which the offence adversely impacts the assessment process;
- repeat offence;
- extent of assignment involving misconduct.

**Mitigating factors:**

- first year student;
- offence unintentional ;
- role played by the offender if others involved;
- offender under duress, but not sufficient to constitute a defence;
- degree of remorse and cooperation shown;
- willingness to seek assistance to avoid further offences.

**Academic Misconduct Sanctions**

**Minor (initial)/Moderate (repeated):**

- a requirement for the student/HDR candidate to receive counselling or tutoring
- informal warning
- formal warning recorded on student record
- the student/candidate receives 0% to 50% of mark, or NYS in the case of VET, on the assessment component where misconduct was evident;
- grade penalty
- the student/candidate may be allowed to write an assessment on a new topic for a chance to receive no more than 50% of the mark, or Satisfactory in the case of VET, on the assessment component where misconduct was evident;

- failure in the entire subject or research project

**Serious (intentional):**

- failure in the entire subject or research project;
- suspension for one or two semesters;
- exclusion from AC.

**Graduate:**

Where AC has admitted an HDR candidate/student to a degree (or other award of AC) and academic misconduct occurring within the candidate/student's candidature is substantially alleged and eventually substantiated:

- the HDR candidate/student concerned is recorded as "failed" in any relevant subject or other component of the course of study from which he or she graduated;
- conferral of the degree is rescinded;
- the HDR candidate/student's name is deleted from AC's Register of Graduates;
- the HDR /student is required to return the AC testamur and final academic transcript to AC.

## **NOTIFICATION AND RESOLUTION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

### **Students**

#### **Step 1: Allegation of Academic Misconduct**

Information and/or evidence, including but not limited to text match/detection software such as Turnitin, regarding potential misconduct is submitted in writing by the Lecturer to the relevant Program Director, or equivalent) as soon as practicable but normally no later than three weeks after the incident to which the information and/or evidence relates came to light. However, the Program Director or relevant supervisor has discretion to accept information and/or evidence later than three weeks after the incident to which the information and/or evidence relates. Any person may report a complaint of misconduct by a faculty member, HDR candidate or student and AC protects the privacy of the individual who reports the complaint.

Initial assessment of the potential misconduct is to be conducted by an appropriate investigating officer (usually the Lecturer or Program Director) within 10 working days. This may include verifying plagiarism scores and/or generative AI scores in additional checking software. This first step of initial assessment does not involve investigation through correspondence with the student.

In the event that the initial assessment reveals the potential misconduct to be false or unsubstantiated the allegation is to be dismissed, and the student is not added to the AC Academic Misconduct Register.

The Program Director or relevant supervisor must retain all relevant documentation relating to the case of potential misconduct for use in any subsequent investigation of a misconduct allegation.

If the Program Director or relevant faculty supervisor has a conflict of interest in relation to investigating the potential misconduct, the information and/or evidence is referred to the Head of



School or Director of Higher Degree Research who takes receipt, is responsible for issuing written acknowledgement, and takes charge of subsequent inquiries.

## **Step 2: Notification and Investigation**

In the event that the initial investigation reveals the potential misconduct warrants further investigating involving the student, the relevant Lecturer notifies the student of the allegation via email and consults the person providing the written allegation, the candidate/student and any other persons the enquirer deems appropriate.

The student is given the opportunity to attend a meeting to respond to the allegation within 10 working days, providing any evidence or explanation to refute or mitigate the allegation. At the meeting, the Lecturer also informs the student of the potential consequences and appropriate sanction, depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

If, during the preliminary inquiry, the student/candidate admits to the alleged misconduct, or the student/candidate chooses not to respond to the allegation within the required 10 working days, then the investigation will continue and an appropriate sanction applied if warranted by the outcome.

If, on completion of further inquiry, the investigating officer concludes that the allegation is vexatious or malicious in motivation, or the evidence provided as part of the allegation is spurious, it is reported to the Program Director, Head of School or Director of Higher Degree Research for appropriate action.

Research misconduct should be investigated by the faculty member's supervisor using the principles and procedures in the NHMRC Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018). The investigation will be conducted by the faculty member's supervisor or another delegated investigating officer.

## **Step 4: Outcome**

On completion of necessary inquiries and after making a determination based on a 'more probable than not' standard, the investigating officer notifies the student of the outcome via email. In the event of an adverse finding, the student is advised that they can lodge an appeal according to the *Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy*.

The Academic Misconduct Register is to be updated to reflect this outcome. The Registrar is notified of the outcome by the investigating officer.

### **Step 4: Appeal**

In the event of a student appeal, the appeal must be assessed by an appropriate investigating officer alternate to that in Step 3 above. The reviewer's investigation must be as independent as practicable and not rely on the original investigator's findings. Moreover, where the only evidence of misconduct is a use of GAI probability score, the reviewer must not rely solely on this evidence but should consider wider evidence such as the student's submissions in other subjects.

If the student's appeal is unsuccessful, the student is to be notified that the original finding has been upheld.

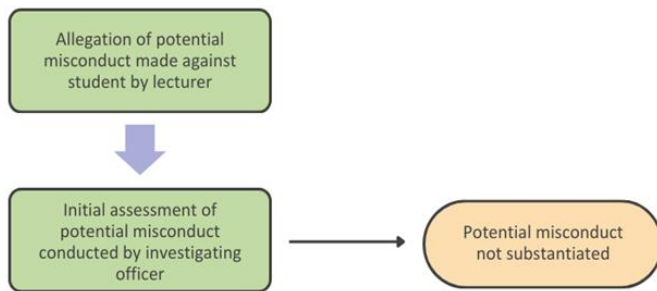
In response to breaches of academic integrity, a review process will take place regarding the type of breach which has occurred and assessment practices to reduce further potential breaches. This will be undertaken by the Learning and Teaching Committee, and a report will be submitted to Academic Board.

### **Faculty**

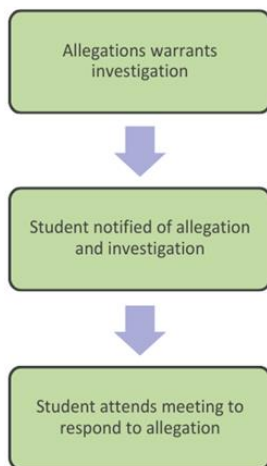
If faculty misconduct is determined, then an appropriate sanction will be applied. Faculty are advised of the appeal process in accordance with the Staff Grievance Resolution Policy

### **Flowchart: Management of an allegation of student academic misconduct**

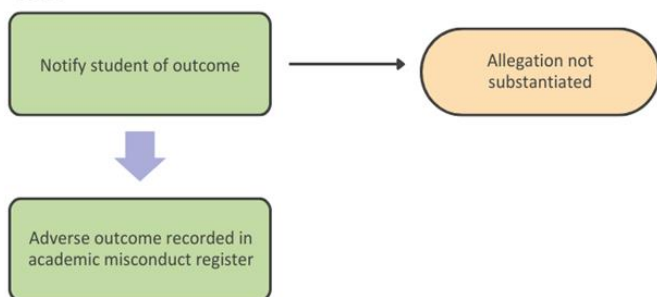
**Step 1**



**Step 2**



**Step 3**



**Step 4**

