

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure HEPP02

PURPOSE	
The purpose of this policy and procedure is to promote the principle of mutual respect by educating staff and students about standards Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) considers appropriate; to discourage behaviour Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education) considers inappropriate; to implement fair and rigorous procedure for addressing possible cases of academic misconduct; and to provide for the enforcement of penalties in cases of academic misconduct.	
SCOPE	
This policy and procedure apply to all staff and students of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education), in respect of their preparation, dissemination and submission of any form of academic and scholarly work.	
DEFINITIONS	
Academic Integrity	The capacity to undertake study and research and to communicate findings and knowledge, in a manner appropriate to that particular discipline's conventions and scholarly standards expected at higher education.
Academic Misconduct	The intentional or reckless conduct by which a student seeks to gain an unfair or unjustified academic advantage in a course or unit. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following instances: collusion, inappropriate collaboration, cheating (including contract cheating), plagiarism, misrepresenting or fabricating data or results or other assessable work, inappropriate electronic data sourcing or collection, and any other forms of dishonest academic or scholarly conduct, breaching examination rules that reduces the efficacy of the assessment process, offering or accepting bribes and using a false identity.
Ethical Scholarship	Entails the pursuit of scholarly enquiry marked by honesty. It is reflected both in individual and group approaches to study and assessment tasks, and is part of a broader institutional commitment to maintain and extend robust, defensible and transparent educational standards and practices.
SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)
POLICY	
1. SCEI-HE is committed to outstanding teaching and learning experiences for its staff and students. It seeks to foster an academic environment that promotes the most rigorous standards of independent scholarship, critical inquiry, academic integrity and freedom of speech and academic inquiry. All staff and students at the Institute are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of academic ethics and integrity in their work. Assessments will be designed to minimise misconduct opportunities, using strategies such as unique tasks, oral assessments, and staged submissions 2. For students, penalties for academic misconduct vary according to the severity of the case, and may include the requirement to do further work; deduction of marks; an award of zero marks for the assessment; failure of a unit or course; suspension from a course; exclusion from the Institute; non-conferral of a degree, or other award to which the student would otherwise have been entitled. 3. All academic staff will receive induction and ongoing training in academic integrity policy and procedure, including the identification, handling, and reporting of academic misconduct. Training will be incorporated into regular professional development sessions and will include tools and resources to support detection (e.g., plagiarism detection software), investigation, and fair handling of cases. 4. Academic misconduct includes the unauthorised use of generative AI tools to produce or substantially edit assessment work without disclosure or permission. Failure to acknowledge generative AI contributions constitutes misrepresentation of authorship. 5. The Academic Director or delegate is responsible for approving any penalty. 6. Severity of Academic Misconduct Academic misconduct at SCEI-HE is defined for students on 3 levels: 6.1 Minor Academic Misconduct 6.2 Moderate Academic Misconduct 6.3 Major Academic Misconduct	

PROCEDURE

SCEI-HE provides ongoing education to students on academic integrity through orientation programs, academic skills workshops, online modules, and access to referencing guides and citation tools. The Learning Management System (LMS) includes academic integrity resources, and students are encouraged to access support services for assistance with academic writing and proper referencing. Academic integrity education will be tailored to support diverse student cohorts, including international students and non-native English speakers, through targeted workshops and resources.

1. Minor Academic Misconduct

- 1.1 Instances of academic misconduct are considered minor where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to result from careless practice and/or neglect of specific guidelines relating to assessment requirements by students. The outcome of the misconduct compromises the purpose of an assessment to a limited extent only.
- 1.2 Instances of minor academic misconduct may arise more often, although not exclusively, in relation to first year undergraduate student assessment. Examples of minor academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.2.1 minor plagiarism such as inadequate or inconsistent referencing, paraphrasing too close to the original; and/or
 - 1.2.2 minor copying of material, such as copying 1 or 2 sentences, including copying where a student utilises a verbatim transcription in their notes and presents it as their own words.

2. Moderate Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are deemed moderate where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to be a moderate breach of ethical scholarship and includes (but is not limited to):

- 2.1 moderate plagiarism;
- 2.2 submitting an item of assessment for a unit that is submitted in another unit in complete or substantial form;
- 2.3 fabricating or falsifying data, results or sources of information in an assessment item;
- 2.4 colluding with another student to produce assessable work and representing that as individual work when such collusion has not been authorised.

3. Major Academic Misconduct

- 3.1 Instances of academic misconduct are considered major where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to be a serious breach of ethical scholarship and includes (but is not limited to):

- 3.1.1 Plagiarism collusion
- 3.1.2 Inappropriate collaboration
- 3.1.3 Plagiarism
- 3.1.4 Misrepresenting or fabricating data or results or other assessable work
- 3.1.5 Cheating in examinations, including:
 1. using unauthorised material in an examination, including (but not limited to) written notes, formulae or other prompts, whether stored on or within some object or device, or on paper or on the student's body; and/or
 2. communicating (or attempting to communicate) in an unauthorised manner with others during examinations (verbally or other means).
- 3.1.6 Contract cheating, such as purchasing assignments or outsourcing assessable work, is a major breach. Detection may involve authorship verification or oral assessments.

- 3.2 All may lead to penalties for unsatisfactory course progress.

3.3 Major – First instance

For a first instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the unit in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be warned that further breaches will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee and may result in the award of a failure grade for all other units concurrently enrolled.

3.4 Major – Second instance

For a second instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the unit in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee, who will typically apply a failure grade for all other units in which the student is concurrently enrolled.

3.5 Major – Third instance

- 3.5.1 For a third instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a failure grade for the unit in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee who will typically apply the failure grade for all other units in which the student is concurrently enrolled. However, in addition, the Teaching and Learning Committee may exclude a student from enrolment in all courses or units offered by the Institute for a period of up to 1 academic year or that a student's current enrolment in any course or unit offered by the Institute be cancelled.
- 3.5.2 Further instances of Major Academic Misconduct may result in consequent expulsion from the Institute or non-conferral of a degree or other award to which the student would otherwise have been entitled.

3.6 Subsequent Instances

- 3.6.1 If a student who has committed a more significant instance of academic misconduct then commits a subsequent, but less significant, instance, that subsequent instance will not be considered as a first offence.
- 3.6.2 In such cases, the subsequent breach will automatically be treated as at least a second breach for that more significant level, and will attract the appropriate penalty.

3.7 Concurrent Instances

In cases where students submit items for assessment concurrently in different units, and those items are found to exhibit evidence of academic misconduct, such collective breaches should, for the purposes of a penalty, be treated as a single instance only. Such leniency should only occur if it is clear that the student, as a result of a concurrent or near-concurrent submission schedule, has not been in a position to benefit from counselling, has not previously received counselling for an earlier instance, and is likely to have committed the breaches without intent.

4. Plagiarism

- 4.1 The following scale has been adopted across the Institute for the purposes of preliminary classification in cases of plagiarism:
 - 4.1.1 Less than 10% - minor; 10-25% - moderate; more than 25% - major.
 - 4.1.2 This refers to the substantive content of the work (i.e. word length excluding properly referenced quotes, and footnotes/ endnotes except where plagiarism is contained in the latter). The extent of plagiarism will be calculated to include both unattributed word-for-word copying, work in which minor amendments have been made to unattributed source material (through substitution, transposition or exclusion of words); and the close paraphrase of the words and/or specific ideas of another person.

5. Mitigating Circumstances

- 5.1 In the process of determining the level of academic misconduct that has occurred and the appropriate penalty to be applied once a case has been established, appeals may be made to the Teaching and Learning Committee to take into account 1 or more mitigating circumstances that are deemed to bear upon the case.
- 5.2 Such factors may include, but are not be limited to:
 - 5.2.1 differing educational, cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds of students at entry level;
 - 5.2.2 documented medical or personal circumstances of a nature to indicate serious impairment of responsibility at the time the academic misconduct occurred.

6. Principles Relating to the Handling of Alleged Academic Misconduct

The following principles are to be observed in all cases of alleged academic misconduct:

- 6.1 Students will be informed of the allegations in writing and will be given an opportunity to respond before any decision is made. Students will be notified of allegations within 5 working days and cases resolved within 20 working days, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- 6.2 Students have the right to be accompanied by a support person at any formal meeting.
- 6.3 Evidence used to support allegations must be made available to the student.
- 6.4 Decisions must be made by individuals who are impartial and not directly involved in the allegation
- 6.5 All outcomes must be communicated in writing with clear reasons and information on the right to appeal.

7. Student Appeal

- 7.1 A student can challenge the decision by lodging an appeal according to the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure HEPP05. All appeals lodged will be processed in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure HEPP05.
- 7.2 This application should be submitted within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the academic misconduct incident.



RELATED DOCUMENTS

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure HEPP05
Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure HEPP01
Assessment Policy and Procedure HEPP04
Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03
Student Code of Conduct HEPP07

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 8 (Specifically 8.8.1)
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, Monitoring and Review: The Corporate Board is responsible for the development, review and implementation of this policy and procedure. Responsibilities for actions under this procedure are detailed throughout this document.

Reporting: The Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, or nominee, shall provide a report to the Academic Board of academic misconduct cases at the conclusion of each semester. The Academic Board will review trends in academic misconduct reports annually to identify patterns and inform improvements in teaching practices, assessment design, and academic integrity training. Insights gained will be used to update academic integrity strategies, procedures, and student support programs.

Records Management: All records relevant to this document are to be maintained in the student's academic file and on the SCEI-HE's Student Management System. Key trends and policy updates from academic misconduct reviews will be communicated to students via the LMS or newsletters.

DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL

Created	Dec 2017 (V1.0)
Amended	Jul 2019 (V1.1); May 2020 (V1.2); Feb 2022 (V1.3); Jan 2024 (V1.4); May 2025 (V1.5); Sep. 2025 (V1.6)
Last reviewed by	Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit (Sep. 2025)
Last approved by	Academic Board (Sep. 2025)
Version	1.6
Effective date	Sep. 2025
Next planned review	Sep. 2027