

## 1. Purpose of policy

This policy affirms the University's commitment to academic integrity throughout all aspects of its teaching, learning and research activities. In particular, this policy promotes the high standards of academic integrity expected of students in undertaking assessment of their learning, and sets out principles for preventing and managing breaches of academic integrity.

## 2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all students enrolled at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

2.2 For students enrolled in coursework and coursework programs, including Bachelor Honours or postgraduate programs that contain a major research component, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Academic Misconduct – Procedures.

2.3 For students enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) program, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy and Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct – Procedures.

## 3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

## 4. What is Student Academic Integrity?

4.1 "Academic integrity means acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility with respect in learning, teaching and research. It is important for students, teachers, researchers and professional staff to act in an honest way, be responsible for their actions, and show fairness in every part of their work. All students and staff should be an example to others of how to act with integrity in their study and work. Academic integrity is important for an individual's and a school's reputation." (1)

4.2 Academic integrity requires that students:

- (a) act ethically in the pursuit of learning and research and in demonstrating the learning or research that they have undertaken, and
- (b) acknowledge, in activities undertaken as part of their learning or research, the contribution of others' ideas and work, including that of other students and colleagues, and
- (c) act in accordance with requirements that ensure the academic standards of the University, for example, instructions for assessment tasks, codes of research conduct.

4.3 Student academic integrity is demonstrated by students taking such actions as:

- (a) appropriately acknowledging in their work the inclusion or use of others' ideas; words; information (including charts, tables, graphs and other illustrative materials); and other contributions (including data manipulation, editing and research design) – usually through use of standard academic referencing and citation systems and incorporation of acknowledgements in appropriate places,
- (b) demonstrating the extent to which the student has consulted appropriate references and source materials – usually through compilation of a bibliography or reference list,
- (c) including and analysing complete and accurate research data when reaching and reporting research findings and conclusions,
- (d) complying with all instructions for preparation and presentation of their individual work as part of group work, and
- (e) complying with all instructions for presenting, undertaking or submitting individual work for assessment, including tests and examinations.

## 5. Promoting Student Academic Integrity

5.1 Student academic integrity is fundamental to ensuring the University's academic standards and quality. The University implements a broad range of communication strategies for educating and informing students and staff on the importance of student academic integrity.

5.2 Students have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with scholarly conventions appropriate to their discipline, and to the Australian Higher Education environment, including learning to use academic referencing systems and sound research practices.

### APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Council

### RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Vice-Chancellor and President

### DESIGNATED OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

### FIRST APPROVED

8 December 2009

### LAST AMENDED

2 September 2019

### EFFECTIVE START DATE

7 December 2018

### REVIEW DATE

21 April 2021

### STATUS

Active

5.3 Academic Staff have a direct role in supporting their students to acquire the skills to be successful in their studies, by providing explicit information on expectations of assessment standards in each course or at the commencement of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidature.

5.4 The University provides education for students about academic integrity, as a key element of training in essential academic skills. The USC Library offers training and assistance in developing scholarly research skills. The Office of Research and the Graduate Research Office provide regular opportunities for HDR candidates to improve their skills and to learn about research ethics, research integrity, and intellectual property.

5.5 The Heads of Schools are responsible for overseeing the provision of discipline-specific education on student academic integrity for both students and staff.

5.6 The University implements strategies for reducing opportunities for breaches of academic integrity in assessment. The Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT) provides training for staff about promoting student academic integrity through thoughtful pedagogical principles and rigorous assessment design.

5.7 Academic staff are encouraged to make use of electronic text matching services that aid in prevention and detection of plagiarism in work electronically submitted by students, and to adopt other detection strategies that enable judgements to be made about the authenticity of a student's work. Where appropriate, staff are also encouraged to enable students to use text-matching software as a learning support tool.

## 6. Departures from Student Academic Integrity

6.1 Any departure from student academic integrity has the potential to undermine the academic standards and quality of the University and constitutes student academic misconduct or a breach of responsible research conduct.

### 6.2 Types of misconduct

Academic misconduct/breach of responsible research conduct includes, but is not limited to:

6.2.1 plagiarism, including using another's expression or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement,

6.2.2 collusion, including giving, swapping or providing for sale, one's own work,

6.2.3 cheating, including in examinations or by accessing restricted assessment materials,

6.2.4 fraud, including falsification or fabrication of data or work; or in any other way participating in activities which are intended to give the student an unfair or dishonest advantage in their learning activities, assessment or research.

More specific examples of misconduct are provided in Schedule 1 of the Student Academic Misconduct – Procedures, and in the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy.

## 7. Categorisation of misconduct

7.1 Instances of student academic misconduct in coursework and coursework programs are classified by the degree of seriousness of the misconduct: Category 1 and Category 2.

7.1.1 Category 1 instances are confined to:

- instances of plagiarism that appear to be a consequence of a student's lack of knowledge of, or skill in, the conventions of academic writing or arising from carelessness rather than a deliberate act of deception, or
- instances of collusion that do not appear to be a deliberate act of deception, or
- instances of attempted collusion that do not appear to be a deliberate act of deception.

7.1.2 All other instances of student academic misconduct in coursework and coursework programs are regarded as Category 2 instances.

7.2 Departure from the principles, responsibilities and standards of responsible research conduct as outlined in the Responsible Research Conduct – Governing Policy are categorised as breaches.

## 8. Investigation of allegations

8.1 The purpose of the investigation in all cases is to make an independent evidence-based determination of whether it can be established, on the balance of probabilities, that the misconduct did occur; and whether there are any associated extenuating circumstances.

8.2 The Investigator follows the conventions of natural justice, and:

8.2.1 proceeds fairly without bias, and without preconceived notions of culpability,

8.2.2 makes inquiries and takes actions to determine the facts of the matter based on sound reasoning and relevant evidence,

8.2.3 commences and completes the investigation without undue delay

8.2.4 informs the student/s concerned of the general substance of the allegation and the range of possible consequences if the investigation results in the allegation being substantiated

8.2.5 provides the student/s concerned with the opportunity to respond to and put forward evidence or arguments in their favour, and

8.2.6 provides opportunity for the student/s concerned to make a case concerning why a particular consequence should not follow in the event that the allegation is substantiated.

8.3 The process for investigation of allegations of misconduct and determination of appropriate penalties is detailed in the associated procedures.

## 9. Educational/remedial activities

Where a case of student academic misconduct is substantiated, any remedial actions that are required to be taken by a student must be educational in intent and be designed for the purpose of preventing further student academic misconduct by the particular student.

In particular, Course Coordinators of first year undergraduate courses should use the instance of a Category 1 offence as an opportunity to encourage students to increase their academic skills through participation in training and support services.

## 10. Penalties

### 10.1 Academic misconduct in coursework and coursework programs

10.1.1 In all cases penalties should be combined with educational/remedial actions. Investigators may determine that evidence of remedial action is required for readmission or re-application for entry.

10.1.2 The following table identifies the range of penalties available to impose on a student where a case of student academic misconduct by the student is proven, on the balance of probabilities. Factors determining the application of penalties are detailed in section 12 of the Student Academic Misconduct – Procedures.

EDUCATIONAL/REMEDIAL ACTIVITIES AND ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES MAY BE APPLIED, DEPENDING ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENCE AND OTHER DETERMINING FACTORS. AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE PENALTIES

Category 1 (a) The student is given a formal written warning or reprimand. (b) The student is required to resubmit the assessment task, and the mark awarded for the work will not exceed 50 percent or a passing grade. (c) The student is required to undertake a substitute assessment task, and the mark awarded for the work will not exceed 50 percent or a passing grade. Category Any of the above, or: (d) The student is awarded a mark of zero for the assessment task in which the misconduct occurred (which may or may not result in a failing grade for the course). (e) The student is awarded a failing grade (FL or UF) for the course.	Course Coordinator, or Investigator (Head of School may identify an appropriate member of academic staff to undertake the investigation.)
Category (f) The student is withdrawn from the course by the University. The WX notation appears on the Student's academic transcript for that course.	Head of School
Category (g) The student is immediately suspended from enrolment at the University for one calendar year. (h) The student is immediately expelled from the University.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Based on recommendation from Head of School

### 10.2 Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct

10.2.1 Where appropriate, penalties should be combined with educational/remedial actions.

10.2.2 The following table identifies the range of penalties available where it has been determined that a breach of responsible research conduct by a HDR student has occurred. The relevant authority may impose one or more of the following penalties.

EDUCATIONAL/REMEDIAL ACTIVITIES AND ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES MAY BE APPLIED, DEPENDING ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENCE AND OTHER DETERMINING FACTORS. AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE PENALTIES

Category 1 (a) The student is given a formal written warning or reprimand. (b) remedial activity, which may include a range of educational activities, such as attendance at workshops or completion of relevant training (c) Requirement for the student to resubmit or revise the assessment item in which the breach occurred	Dean, Graduate Research
Category 2 (d) any category 1 penalty (e) Requirement to delete the research data associated with a breach (f) annulment of a confirmation report or thesis examination report (g) Retraction of a research publication associated with a breach (h) The student is withdrawn from the program.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

(i) The student is immediately expelled from the university.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Based on  
recommendation from Deputy  
Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

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10.3 In exceptional circumstances, the University may rescind an award that has been conferred. The decision to revoke a conferred award is made by Council, on the recommendation of the Chairperson of Academic Board.

## 11. Conflict of interest

A staff member dealing with a case of student academic misconduct has a responsibility to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest. Where necessary, matters should be escalated to the Investigator's supervisor, who may choose to delegate the matter to another appropriate senior academic staff member.

## 12. Confidentiality

All information associated with reports, investigations and outcomes associated with individual instances of student academic misconduct must be treated as confidential and not released to any third party or external agency unless required by law or the student expressly consents to its release in writing.

## 13. Grievances

13.1 If a student is dissatisfied by a decision reached by a member of academic staff, including the Head of School, in relation to student academic misconduct, the student may seek a formal review of the decision by the supervisor of the relevant decision maker. This equates to Stage 2 of the Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy and associated Procedures.

13.2 If a student is dissatisfied by a decision reached by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Dean of Graduate Studies and/or, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), or remains dissatisfied by the outcome of a formal review under 13.1, the student may lodge an appeal to the Student Academic Appeals Committee, in accordance with Stage 3 of the University's Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy and associated Procedures.

## 14. Recordkeeping and Reporting

14.1 All relevant records at all stages of an investigation must be captured by all staff and should provide reliable and accurate evidence of business decisions and actions. All relevant records must be captured in an approved records management system, in line with the University's Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

14.2 Summary data of each substantiated instance of student academic misconduct and the associated educational/remedial actions and penalties applied is recorded through the Student Information System, to enable annual reporting. Similar recording of HDR Breaches will be managed by the Office of Research ethics and integrity team.

14.3 An annual report will be provided to Academic Board summarising academic misconduct/breach of responsible research conduct. Parties involved are not identified in reports.

Footnote (1): Exemplary Academic Integrity Project (EAIP): Embedding and extending exemplary academic integrity policy and support frameworks across the higher education sector (2013), Plain English definition of Academic Integrity, Office for Learning and Teaching Strategic Commissioned Project 2012-2013, <http://www.unisa.edu.au/EAIP>.

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#### RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Administration of Central Examinations - Procedures](#)  
[Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy](#)  
[Coursework Curriculum Design - Academic Policy](#)  
[Coursework Curriculum Design - Procedures](#)  
[Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures](#)  
[Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy](#)  
[Student Academic Misconduct - Procedures](#)  
[Student Conduct - Governing Policy](#)  
[Student General Misconduct - Procedures](#)  
[Student Grievance Resolution - Governing Policy](#)  
[Student Review and Appeals - Procedures](#)

#### LINKED DOCUMENTS

[Student Academic Misconduct - Procedures](#)

#### RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

[Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#)  
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)