



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

Sydney Met is committed to upholding the principles of academic integrity and ethical scholarship and ensuring that there is a clear understanding of expectations relating to the avoidance of academic misconduct. The purpose of this Policy is to define and describe the actions that constitute academic misconduct, the College's processes for investigating allegations of academic misconduct, and the range of penalties that may be applied where allegations are proven.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all enrolled students participating in all courses of study at Sydney Met and all staff related to academic activities associated with their employment at Sydney Met. This policy does not apply to misconduct not related to academic activities.

3. DEFINITIONS

Academic integrity means actions aligned with values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in learning, teaching, and research.

Academic misconduct refers to any dishonest or inappropriate behavior by a student in an assessment task or other academic activity including and not limited to cheating and contract cheating; collusion; fraud; or plagiarism.

Acknowledgement practice means acknowledging the ideas, designs, words, or works of other people in academic work. Also known as 'attribution' or 'referencing.'

Allegation of academic misconduct means an assertion of misconduct made against a student which has not been proven.

Cheating means any form of academic misconduct including and not limited to:

- bringing in or having access to unauthorized materials or information during a quiz, test, or examination.

- contacting or colluding with another person or persons via any means (including verbal, physical, gestural, or electronic) during an examination or another form of invigilated assessment.
- copying or reading another student's work.
- allowing another student to copy or read from your work; or
- unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence

Collaboration refers to academic activity that is undertaken by, and attributed to, two or more persons where, in the case of students' work, the work is carried out with the knowledge and consent of the lecturer. Collaboration is expressly not a form of academic misconduct or dishonesty.

Collusion means academic misconduct where there is an agreement between two or more people to act together secretly or without permission to achieve an unfair academic advantage.

Contract Cheating is a form of academic dishonesty which involves procuring academic work from a third party and submitting the work as one's own. Contract cheating involves but is not limited to:

- purchase of an assignment from an online source.
- paying someone to take a test or exam.
- obtaining assistance from someone else, such as a relative or friend, to complete an assessment task that goes beyond mere editing and includes writing an assignment or solving a problem.
- participating in an unauthorized discussion group concerning an assessment, or sharing answers to an assignment on file-sharing sites or social media sites; or
- posting or purchasing answers to an exam, assignment, problem, or any other assessed work.

Duplication is a form of academic misconduct where an assignment, for assessment that has been previously submitted in another unit at the College or at another institution is submitted for assessment.

Fraud means academic misconduct or professional dishonesty including and not limited to:

- impersonating another person or engaging someone else to impersonate another person during the conduct of an academic activity.
- misrepresenting, falsifying, mis-stating or fabricating data during the conduct of an academic activity.
- submitting academic work produced by another person(s) as one's own.
- failing to attribute work completed by another person(s) in the completion of an academic activity.
- providing academic work for sale to another person(s), company, or website to make such work available for copying or use by another person(s)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to artificial intelligence technology that uses machine learning algorithms to produce new content based on prompts it is given. An AI program mimics output, such as text and images, that has been traditionally produced by humans. It achieves this by combining human-produced data and pattern prediction to generate results.

Paraphrasing means the use of one's own words to express the words, works, or ideas of another author or source while still preserving the original author's meaning or source. With acknowledgement of the original source paraphrasing is not a form of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism refers to academic misconduct involving the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging the original author or source. Plagiarism can be unintentional or intentional and is distinguished from incomplete attempts to acknowledge the words, works, or ideas of another author or source.

Professional honesty is a fundamental principle that underpins the reliability and credibility of all professional activities. It includes but is not limited to:

- dealing transparently and fairly within all professional and business relationships.
- building relationships based on mutual respect and trust.
- acting ethically and within the law.
- not being associated with information that contains materially false or misleading statements; and
- accepting responsibility for one's actions.

Revocation of an award means the College recalls and destroys a degree, diploma, certificate or other award that has already been conferred.

Suspension means enrolment is suspended for a specified period. After the suspension period the student can re-enroll.

Termination of enrolment means enrolment is cancelled and the student will not be allowed to re-enroll at Sydney Met.

Turnitin is web-based tool through which assignments can be submitted to allow a text-matching service that can identify similarities with previously published work and submitted assignments.

4. PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL HONESTY

The following principles form the foundation for this Policy.

- Sydney Met is committed to academic integrity, honesty, and ethical scholarship.
- Sydney Met will ensure that all students are informed about this Policy.
- It is the responsibility of all students and staff members to familiarize themselves with the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure and to consciously ensure that

their acts or omissions do not constitute or facilitate breaches of academic integrity or professional honesty.

- Assessment design and scheduling will promote creative thought and reflection and minimise opportunities for students to engage in academic misconduct.
- When identified, acts of academic misconduct or professional dishonesty will be dealt with according to this document and with regards to procedural fairness, the context within which the act occurred, the stage of the student, and with equity and consistency in applying any disciplinary action.
- Where appropriate, an educative, rather than a punitive, response to (minor) acts of academic misconduct may be recommended. The determination of any response to an act of academic misconduct or professional dishonesty will be ultimately guided by this policy.

5. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Sydney Met students are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with all related policies and procedures.
- submit only original work which appropriately acknowledges the ideas, designs, words, or works of others.
- not submit another person's work as their own.
- not submit work, previously submitted in another unit at the College or at another institution,
- not purchase or commission work and submit as if it were their own.
- Not submit work created with the assistance of others, except in the case of approved collaboration in connection with group work assessment.
- not use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools unless this is approved as part of an assessment.
- submit an electronic copy of any assessment through Sydney Met's text-matching software (Turnitin).
- declare that the work submitted for an assessment task is their own through the Academic Integrity Declaration on the Assignment cover sheet.
- use the acknowledgement practice methods that are appropriate for their field of study.
- Not lend, or allow to be otherwise provided, their original assessment work to other students for any reason except approved collaboration in connection with group work assessment; and
- encourage other students to uphold the principles of academic integrity and professional honesty.

6. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff are expected to:

- cultivate a climate of respect for authorship with students.
- inform all students of acknowledgement practice methods that are appropriate for their field of study and provide clear examples of what is acceptable.

- clearly explain academic expectations and what constitutes plagiarism, collusion, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct to students.
- clearly communicate to students the potential consequences of breaches of academic integrity and professional honesty.
- actively seek to discourage, detect, and prevent plagiarism by supporting students to acquire and demonstrate the principles of academic integrity and professional honesty.
- respond appropriately to all instances of academic misconduct in keeping with this Policy; and
- exemplify the values of academic primacy, academic freedom with responsibility, and rigor and integrity in all research and scholarly activities they undertake.

7. PROCESS FOR MANAGING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY BREACHES

- Each suspected breach of academic integrity (hereafter referred to as academic misconduct) is investigated individually in accordance with the principles that the investigation is evidence-based, objective, consistent and fair.
- Four factors are considered when determining the seriousness of an act of academic misconduct as follows:
 - experience of the student;
 - intent of the student;
 - extent of misconduct and
 - type of misconduct.
- Where academic misconduct has been established the four factors above and the student's history of academic misconduct will be taken into consideration in determining the severity of the penalty to be applied.

Based on these factors, each incident of academic misconduct is classified into one of three Levels based on the seriousness of the breach (see Table 1) and penalized accordingly.

If, following an investigation of an allegation of academic misconduct, a decision is made that academic misconduct has occurred then

- any remediating actions or penalties will be fair, appropriate and proportionate; and
- a decision appeals process will be available through the student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

An Academic Misconduct Register (AMR) is used to record the student's full name, student ID number and details pertaining to the academic misconduct. This register is used as the source of future reference in the event the student commits a further act of academic misconduct, to ascertain the seriousness of the misconduct. De-identified information is also extracted from the AMR to support quality assurance and reporting to the Academic Board.

Table 1. Levels of Academic Misconduct and Penalties

Incident Level	Description	Educative Response / Penalty
<p>Level 1 (caution)</p>	<p>Level 1 academic misconduct refers to minor, unintentional incidents that are usually due to inexperience or lack of knowledge of academic writing standards rather than a deliberate act of deception.</p> <p>Academic integrity breaches may be classified as Level 1 if the student has not previously been proven to have breached academic integrity requirements while enrolled as a student at the College, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they occur in the first Trimester of enrolment, where students are relatively new and inexperienced in academic practice (experience); • they appear to be unintentional (e.g., inadequate referencing; and/or poor use of citations; and/or poor paraphrasing.) and there is no attempt by the student to gain any unfair academic advantage (intent). • the misconduct does not affect the integrity of assessment in relation to the unit concerned (extent) • the misconduct is of lesser scale or scope than Level 2 academic misconduct (type) <p>NOTE: For a matter to be classified as a Level 1 breach, the student must acknowledge the breach and the facts that gave rise to the allegation.</p>	<p>Level 1 breaches are generally unintentional, minor, and due to poor academic scholarship, and therefore the response to confirmed Level 1 academic misconduct is generally educative so that the student has the opportunity to learn, minimizing the likelihood of future breaches.</p> <p>Upon determination that a student has been found to have committed a Level 1 academic integrity breach, the outcome is recorded on the AMR and one or more of the following are imposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a written response indicating the outcome. • the requirement for the student to complete a remedial learning activity concerning academic writing and referencing. • a requirement that the student correct and resubmit the work (maximum 50% mark). • the requirement that the student submit an additional/alternative assessment task (maximum 50% mark); and/or • other responses as deemed appropriate. <p>If a student does not comply with a penalty imposed for a confirmed Level 1 breach without explanation, they will receive a mark of zero for the assessment in which the breach was detected.</p>
<p>Level 2 (moderate seriousness)</p>	<p>Level 2 and 3 academic misconducts refer to acts of academic misconduct</p>	<p>Upon determination that a student has been found to have committed a Level 2 or Level 3 academic</p>

<p>and Level 3 (high seriousness)</p>	<p>which involve some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a repeated Level 1 breach (experience; Level 2) • is (Level 2)/is not (Level 3) intended to gain an unfair academic advantage for the student (intent); • may be unpremeditated and out of character (Level 2) or may show evidence of careful and deliberate planning (Level 3) (intent) • if successful, the action would have little effect on the outcome of the assessment for the individual and would not undermine the integrity of the assessment (Level 2) or a major effect on the outcome of the assessment for the individual or undermine the integrity of the assessment (Level 3) (extent) <p>Whether an incident is classified as Level 2 or Level 3 is determined based on a consideration of the circumstances of the individual case, with the proviso that all confirmed incidents of contract cheating and fraud will be classified as Level 3 (see section 3. Definitions).</p>	<p>integrity breach, the outcome is recorded on the AMR and two or more of the following are imposed, depending on the seriousness of the confirmed breach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a written response indicating the outcome; • the requirement for the student to complete a remedial learning activity concerning academic integrity; • maximum mark of 50% to be applied on a resubmission (if permitted); • maximum mark of 50% to be applied on a submission of an additional/alternative assessment task (if permitted); • applying a mark of zero for the assessment task; • fail grade for the unit of study; or • a notation on the student's record to be included on their academic transcript; • the student's enrolment may be suspended or terminated; • In the case of students who have graduated, the awarded qualification may be revoked; or • other penalties approved by the Dean.
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8. PROCEDURES FOR DETECTING, NOTIFYING, INVESTIGATING, COMMUNICATING, DETERMINING, RECORDING AND APPEALING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS

Procedures for detecting, notifying, investigating, communicating, determining, recording and appealing academic misconduct allegations and outcomes are designed to ensure that all cases are dealt with in a way that is fair, consistent, without bias, timely, and lead to effective and appropriate outcomes. The procedures to ensure the principles outlined at Section 4 are enacted are set out below.

Detecting, Notifying and reporting academic misconduct incidents

If an academic staff member becomes aware of a potential instance of academic misconduct through comparisons with other student's work, the use of plagiarism detection software, notification by another person (e.g., a student), or by any other means, and where, therefore, the academic staff member suspects an incident of academic misconduct, then it is the responsibility of that academic staff member to promptly notify the Unit Coordinator (UC) of the relevant unit to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for an allegation of an academic misconduct to be formally reported and investigated. At this time there will be a determination of one of the following:

- no grounds for reporting and investigating academic misconduct, no further action required in relation to academic misconduct.
- evidence of a possible Level 1 breach. Action required (see Table 2).
- evidence of a possible Level 2 or 3 breach. Action required (see Table 2).

Investigating, communicating, determining and recording academic misconduct incidents

The processes for investigating, communicating, determining and recording academic misconduct incidents are summarized in Table 2 based on the determinations above.

Table 2. Summary of Actions in Response to Determination of Possible Academic Misconduct

Determination by Unit Coordinator (UC)		
No grounds for further action in relation to academic misconduct	Possible Level 1 breach.	Possible Level 2 or 3 breach.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to AMR within three business days (UC) • UC arranges interview with student¹ to investigate incident and make recommendations within twenty business days of notifying the allegation on the AMR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to AMR within three business days (UC) • Notification to Head of Department (HOD) • HOD calls together a panel comprising HOD, UC, and one other academic staff member to investigate the notification (HOD). • HOD arranges an interview with the student¹ to investigate incident and make recommendations within twenty business days of notifying the allegation on the AMR. Student can also provide a

¹ Student may bring a support person to the interview

		written response to be considered by the panel.		
	<p>No academic misconduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student notified of outcome in writing (UC). • Outcome recorded on AMR as 'No academic misconduct' (UC) 	<p>Academic misconduct Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC reviews outcome with HOD • If recommendation not confirmed • If recommendation confirmed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educative/penalty actions agreed (UC/HOD) • Student notified of outcome in writing (UC). • Verification that outcomes completed (UC) • Outcome recorded on AMR as 'Academic Misconduct Level 1' • If recommendation not confirmed, follow procedure for 'No Academic Misconduct' 	<p>No academic misconduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student notified of outcome in writing within five business days of the panel interview (HOD). • Outcome recorded on AMR as 'No academic misconduct' (HOD). 	<p>Academic misconduct Level 2 or Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educative/penalty actions agreed (Panel) • Student notified of outcome in writing within five business days of the panel interview (HOD). • Verification that outcomes completed (HOD) • Outcome recorded on AMR as 'Academic Misconduct Level 2' or 'Academic Misconduct Level 3' as appropriate

Appealing academic misconduct outcomes

Students have the right to appeal decisions regarding academic misconduct. Recognizing that academic misconduct allegations can be stressful, confidential support and advice for students is available through the College's Student Support services during this process.

Appeals should be submitted using the *Student Appeal against Academic Misconduct Form*. This form must be submitted in electronic form to studentsupport@sydneymet.edu.au within twenty business days of receiving the decision notice. Forms submitted after this date will not be the subject of an appeal review. An appeal outcome will be provided to the student within ten business days of the date of appeal lodgment.

An appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds, which must be addressed in the appeal application by the student:

- the student presents evidence that the initial finding and/or the outcome(s) imposed was made in breach of procedural fairness.
- the student produces substantial new evidence relating to the original allegation of academic misconduct which was not previously available for consideration; and/or
- the student presents arguments that the penalty imposed is unjustifiably severe.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Registrar will determine if there is sufficient detail and supporting documentation to meet the grounds of appeal set out above.

If the Registrar is satisfied with the appeal documentation; the matter will be referred to the Reviewing Officer.

The Reviewing Officer against a finding of academic misconduct will be:

- Level 1 breaches: Head of Department
- Level 2 and 3 breaches: Dean

The determination of the Reviewing Officer will be provided to the student in writing within ten working days of the Registrar's decision above.

The finding of the Reviewing Officer will be the final internal avenue of appeal.

Where the Registrar determines that the requirements for an appeal have not been met, the student will be advised in writing. The student may submit additional documentation if desired. Only one resubmission will be considered.

A student's enrolment will be maintained during the period of appeal.

All documentation for an appeal against a finding and/or penalty of academic misconduct appeal will be part of the student's record.

9. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY DECLARATION

When submitting written assignments, students are required to use the standard coversheet, which includes the following:

I certify the following (please tick all):

This assessment item is entirely my own original work, except where I have acknowledged use of source material [such as books, journal articles, other published material, the Internet, and the work of another student/s or any other person/s.

- This assessment item has not been submitted for assessment for academic credit in this, or any other course, at Sydney Met or elsewhere.
- I understand that the assessor of this assessment item may, for the purpose of assessing this item, reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of Sydney Met.
- The assessor may communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- I have read and understand the criteria used for assessment, and that the assignment is within the word and page limits specified in the unit outline, and the use of any material in this assignment does not infringe the intellectual property / copyright of a third party.
- By completing this coversheet in full and submitting this assignment electronically, I understand that I am bound by the conditions of the Sydney Met's relevant policy and the declaration on this coversheet.

10. ENQUIRIES

In the event of enquiries regarding this policy and procedure, please contact the Academic Manager for further information.