

# STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## 1. Overview

Astra Institute of Higher Education (“the Institute”) upholds the principle that academic integrity relies on the application of honesty in all scholarly endeavour. All students of the Institute are expected to conduct themselves in their academic studies honestly and ethically, and to carefully and correctly acknowledge the work of others in all their academic activities.

Expectations of students with regard to academic integrity will be transparent and regularly reinforced. If a student has concerns about their own understanding of academic integrity or their skills in acknowledgement and referencing, they should talk to and seek advice from their teacher.

This policy describes academic misconduct to students and outlines the Institute’s response to instances of academic misconduct that are detected.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Types of academic misconduct

Academic misconduct includes and is not limited to cheating, collusion, plagiarism or any other conduct that deliberately or inadvertently claims ownership of an idea or concept without acknowledging the true 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.

Plagiarism occurs when a student fails to acknowledge that the ideas of others are being used. Specifically, plagiarism occurs when:

- i. other people’s work and/or ideas are paraphrased and presented without a reference;
- ii. other students’ work is copied or partly copied;
- iii. other people’s designs, codes or images are presented as the student’s own work;
- iv. phrases and passages are used verbatim without quotation marks and/or without a reference to the author or source; or
- v. lecture notes are reproduced without due acknowledgement.

Cheating occurs when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage in an assessment task, including submitting assessment tasks in their own name that have been written and/or prepared in part or in whole:

- i. by other persons, e.g. contract cheating and file sharing; or
- ii. with the assistance of generative AI tools, e.g. ChatGPT.

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<sup>1</sup> The expectations of academic integrity in relation to the Institute’s staff are contained in the Institute’s *Academic Freedom, Integrity and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy*.

Collusion (unauthorised collaboration) involves working with others without permission to produce work which is then presented as work completed independently by the student. Collusion is a form of plagiarism. Students should not knowingly allow their work to be copied, or otherwise make their work available for copy through file-sharing websites and related facilities.

### **3. Notification to students**

All Unit Outlines will refer to this policy and will explain the meaning of academic misconduct and will give students clear instructions as to whether they are permitted to work on an assignment jointly and provide clear guidelines relating to all aspects of groupwork.

Unit Outlines will also provide adequate information to students about referencing requirements and academic conventions for the use of others' work including advice on how to avoid plagiarism. Resources on referencing techniques will be made available through the Institute's library.

### **4. Prevention and detection of academic misconduct**

In order to assist in the prevention of academic misconduct (including plagiarism, cheating, and collusion) teaching staff have a responsibility to explain and demonstrate good scholarly practice and the concept of academic and research integrity to all students. In particular, teaching staff are themselves obliged to correctly acknowledge in their teaching when they are using text, images, videos and other artefacts sourced from others.

Assessment task design and scheduling will promote creative thought and reflection, and minimise opportunities for students to engage in acts of academic misconduct.

Students are required to:

- i. familiarise themselves with this and other related policies and procedures;
- ii. declare that all submitted assessment tasks are their own work, through the inclusion of a signed Academic Integrity Declaration with each submitted task; and
- iii. submit all assessment tasks electronically through Turnitin so that they can be subject to electronic scanning to detect plagiarism.

## 5. Allegations of academic misconduct

When academic misconduct is suspected by teaching staff, the Course Coordinator should be notified. All allegations of academic misconduct must be based on evidence.

The Course Coordinator will address the matter to the student(s) and give them an opportunity to respond to the allegation of academic misconduct. The student(s) should be called to a meeting where they are given details of the suspected academic misconduct and given a chance to defend the allegation. The student(s) should be informed of the penalties that may be applied if the allegation of academic misconduct is upheld. In cases where it is impracticable for a student to attend such a meeting, particulars of the alleged academic misconduct should be put to the student in writing, and the student should be asked to respond within 10 working days from receipt of the written communication.

The Course Coordinator is required to decide whether the allegation of academic misconduct is upheld or dismissed and if upheld, whether the academic misconduct was likely to have been intentional or unintentional.

There are a number of factors that might be taken into consideration when deciding whether the alleged academic misconduct was unintentional, such as:

- i. the student is in the first year of the course and may be inexperienced avoiding academic misconduct;
- ii. the student has not been subject to a prior allegation of academic misconduct;
- iii. the student is from an educational background where different norms apply for the acknowledgement of sources;
- iv. the student has made an inadequate attempt at referencing.

Allegations of suspected academic misconduct in assessment may be investigated at any time, including after the release of marks and grades for an individual assessment task or final marks and grades in a unit.

## 6. Penalties

Once an allegation of academic misconduct has been investigated and found to be upheld a determination will be made within 10 working days of the appropriate penalty. Each finding of academic misconduct will be treated on its merits.

Where appropriate, an educative – as opposed to a punitive – response to proven allegations of academic misconduct may be recommended. The determination of any response to an allegation of student academic misconduct will be ultimately guided by the Institute's values of: respect, quality, and integrity.

## 6.1 Unintentional academic misconduct

Where the Course Coordinator determines that academic misconduct was not intentional they may take one of the following possible actions:

- i. issue the student a written warning and mark the assessment task without penalty (deduction of marks);
- ii. issue the student a written warning and mark the assessment task with penalty; or
- iii. issue the student a written warning, request resubmission, and mark the resubmitted assessment task with or without penalty.

All warnings and penalties will be recorded on the student's file.

The student will be required to receive professional development on avoiding academic misconduct.

The student will also be advised of their right to appeal the finding of academic misconduct and the penalty imposed.

## 6.2 Intentional academic misconduct

Before the Course Coordinator determines that the finding of academic misconduct was intentional, they must consider the student's response (if any) to the allegation and if the student has previously been found to have committed unintentional academic misconduct. If the student:

- i. fails to respond to an allegation of academic misconduct or cannot convince the Course Coordinator that the academic misconduct was unintentional; or
- ii. has previously been found to have committed unintentional academic misconduct

The Course Coordinator will refer the matter to the Dean, who will determine the appropriate penalty for the finding of intentional academic misconduct, which may be one or more of the following:

- i. the student may be required to undertake additional or alternative assessment (the maximum mark and grade being 50 Pass);
- ii. a Fail grade may be recorded for the assessment task;
- iii. a Fail grade may be recorded for the unit;
- iv. recommendation that the student may be temporarily suspended from the course for a specified period of time;
- v. recommendation that the student's enrolment may be permanently cancelled.

The most serious penalties (suspension or cancellation of enrolment) will normally be reserved for the most serious cases of repeated academic misconduct and will be implemented as

required, in accordance with the Institute's *Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure*

The basis on which the academic misconduct has been determined to be intentional and the penalty that has been determined must be communicated in writing to the student and a copy kept on the student's file.

The student will be required to receive professional development on avoiding academic misconduct.

The student will also be advised of their right to appeal the finding of academic misconduct and the penalty imposed.

### **6.3 Recording incidences of academic misconduct**

All warnings and/or penalties will be recorded on the student's file and will be entered onto a central register to allow for verification of repeated infringements. This register is maintained by the Dean.

## **7. Review of decision**

A student may request a Review of Decision made under this policy. The grounds for a review are that the allegation (i.e. that the alleged misconduct was unintentional or intentional) is inconsistent with the guidelines in this policy, or that the penalty imposed is inconsistent with the determination (i.e. that the alleged misconduct was proven to be unintentional/intentional and an inconsistent penalty applied).

Requests for a Review of Decision must be made in writing and lodged with the Dean within 10 working days of the student receiving written notification of the decision. In the case of alleged unintentional academic misconduct, the Dean will respond in writing to the request within 20 working days and may confirm or vary the decision. In the case of alleged intentional academic misconduct, the Dean will refer the matter to the Teaching and Learning Committee for consideration. The Teaching and Learning Committee will respond in writing to the request, via the Registrar, within 20 working days and may confirm or vary the decision. All determinations made under this policy, including outcomes of reviews of decision, will be reported to the Academic Board via the Teaching and Learning Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for Review of Decision regarding academic misconduct, they may lodge a formal grievance in writing to the Registrar: [registrar@astra.edu.au](mailto:registrar@astra.edu.au) within 20 working days, in accordance with the Institute's *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*.

## 8. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Academic integrity</i>	<p>The following plain-English definition of academic integrity is provided by the Exemplary Academic Integrity Project at the University of South Australia, <a href="https://lo.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=6751">https://lo.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=6751</a></p> <p>“Academic integrity means acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in learning, teaching and research. It is important for students, teachers, researchers and all staff to act in an honest way, be responsible for their actions, and show fairness in every part of their work. Staff should be role models to students. Academic integrity is important for an individual’s and the College’s reputation”.</p>
<i>Academic misconduct</i>	Any breach of the standards of academic integrity and the conventions of academic honesty.
<i>Cheating</i>	<p>A form of academic misconduct including and not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being in possession of, or having access to unauthorised materials or information during a quiz, test, or examination;</li> <li>• making contact with or colluding with another person or persons via any means (including verbal, physical, gestural or electronic) during an examination or other form of invigilated assessment;</li> <li>• copying or reading another student’s work; or</li> <li>• allowing another student to copy or read from one’s own work; or</li> <li>• engaging a third-party person or application to complete an assessment task.</li> </ul>

<i>Collusion</i>	A form of academic misconduct where two or more persons agree to act together secretly or without express permission to achieve an unfair academic advantage. Includes inciting others to engage in academic misconduct.
<i>Course</i>	A structured sequence of study leading to the award of a degree, or other recognized qualification, which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Directors of Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>Exclusion</i>	Permanent cancellation of a student's enrolment in their course and the termination of their rights and privileges as a student of the Institute, including their right to re-apply for admission.
<i>(the) Institute</i>	Astra Institute of Higher Education.
<i>Plagiarism</i>	A form of 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.
<i>Suspension</i>	Temporary cancellation of a student's enrolment in a unit or course.
<i>Unit</i>	A unit of study in a higher education course or a unit of study, module and/or unit of competency in a vocational education and training course.

## 9. Related documents

- Academic Freedom, Integrity and Free Intellectual Enquiry Policy
- Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure.
- Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation of Study Policy and Procedure

## 10. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	12 October 2021	Document creation
1.1	Academic Board	7 March 2023	Minor amendments addressing generative AI and academic integrity
1.2	Academic Board	29 June 2023	Amendments to '6.2 Intentional academic misconduct', and '7. Review of decision'

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