



TAFE NSW HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCEDURE

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1. Document history and details

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2. Introduction

- 2.1 In accordance with the principles stated in the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Integrity Policy, this procedure describes academic misconduct and outlines the way in which TAFE NSW Higher Education will respond to allegations of academic misconduct by students enrolled in TAFE NSW Higher Education programs in a manner that promotes fairness, consistency, and equity.
- 2.2 Academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and any detected or suspected instances of academic misconduct will put in train the procedures and penalties outlined below.

3. Audience and applicability

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all students enrolled in TAFE NSW Higher Education subjects and all TAFE NSW Higher Education staff.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic Council	Responsible for academic governance of TAFE NSW Higher Education to allow educational objectives to be achieved.
Academic fraud	A deliberate misstatement or false representation made with an intention to deceive others and gain an unfair advantage.
Academic integrity	Academic integrity means acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in all academic endeavours.
Academic Integrity Lead	TAFE-wide responsibility for planning and implementing systematic approaches to promote and uphold the academic integrity of courses and programs, including a range of initiatives to prevent, detect and manage academic conduct.
Academic misconduct	Student conduct that seeks to gain assessment credit such as marks for work not done fairly and honestly. This can be in connection to either an exam, test, or other supervised assessment, or the unsupervised preparation of any assessed piece of work.
Academic staff	Dean of Higher Education, Course Coordinators, Teachers
Associate Director Higher Education Standards	Overall responsibility for TAFE NSW Higher Education programs and point of contact between TAFE NSW and TEQSA.
Cheating	When a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage through deliberate deceit or dishonesty when submitting assessment work, or during an examination.
Collusion	When a student works with another student(s) on assessment work that is meant to be wholly their own independent, and original work.

Term	Definition
Contract Cheating	When a student outsources their assessment to a third party, such as a friend, family member or professional service, whether paid or unpaid.
Course Coordinator	The manager of a TAFE NSW Higher Education course, who has overall responsibility for course and student management at the delivering campus.
Dean of Higher Education	Responsible for overseeing and reporting to the Academic Council on a range of TAFE NSW Higher Education academic matters, student management, course implementation and professional development of staff. Responsible for oversight of academic integrity in relation to TAFE NSW Higher Education delivery.
Examination Cheating	When a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage through deliberate deceit or dishonesty during a quiz, test or examination.
File Sharing	Unauthorised sharing of course learning materials and/or student work via file sharing websites or other means of distribution.
LMS	The Learning Management System, such as Moodle, is the online method of distributing learner resources, assessment information and teacher communications to students.
Plagiarism	When a student inadvertently or deliberately claims ownership of an idea or concept without acknowledging the source of the information.
Self-plagiarism	Self-plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that occurs when a student submits a piece of their own work for an assessment, that has been previously submitted for assessment in another subject without acknowledgement of the previously submitted work
Smart Device	Any gadget or electronic device capable of storing, transmitting, receiving or displaying digital information, including but not limited to mobile phones, smart phones, iPads, tablets, smart glasses, smart watches cameras, mobile/wireless earpieces.
Student Issues Register	A record of all student issues, including cases substantiated academic misconduct, is maintained in the Student Issues Register. Information in the Student Issues Register is treated as private and confidential. Access to the register is restricted to prevent unauthorised access.
Student Management System	The digital system used by TAFE NSW to manage student records including student enrolment, academic progress and course completion documentation. Often referred to as SMS.
TAFE NSW Higher Education	TAFE NSW Higher Education is the registered trading name of the Technical and Further Education Commission as a higher education provider.
Teaching and Learning Committee	The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) monitors the implementation of a TAFE NSW Higher Education course to ensure quality and consistency of teaching and learning across all delivery locations.

5. Ensuring student awareness of academic integrity requirements

- 5.1 Academic staff will reinforce to students the provisions of this procedure at the commencement of each subject.
- 5.2 All Subject Guides will include clear information in relation to:
- referencing requirements;
 - whether students are permitted to work on an assessment task jointly and provide clear guidelines relating to all aspects of group work; and
 - the consequences of, and possible penalties for, academic misconduct.
- 5.3 All students are required to complete the Academic Integrity Module available on the Learning Management System within the first three weeks of enrolment in a TAFE NSW Higher Education course.
- 5.4 Every student must complete an academic integrity declaration when submitting any unsupervised assessment piece. That declaration will remind students of the need for academic integrity and that there are potential consequences of academic dishonesty.
- 5.5 Prior to the commencement of any supervised assessment such as an exam, students will be reminded of the need for academic integrity and the potential consequences of academic dishonesty.
- 5.6 All TAFE NSW Higher Education academic staff are required to complete the Academic Integrity module on the Learning Management System within three weeks of initial commencement of Higher Education teaching duties.
- 5.7 To the best of its ability, TAFE NSW Higher Education will not permit on its campuses or on its systems, any advertising or other to students of services that may facilitate academic dishonesty. This may include blocking access to identified contract cheating sites or similar from its systems.

6. Types of academic misconduct

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

6.1 Plagiarism

6.1.1 Plagiarism occurs when students fail to acknowledge that the ideas of others are being used in their work. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism, which refers to a student re-using elements of work previously submitted by the student for assessment at TAFE NSW or elsewhere without acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include:

- other people's work and/or ideas being paraphrased and presented without a reference;
- other students' work being copied either partially or in full;
- other people's designs, codes or images being presented as the student's own work;
- phrases and passages being used verbatim without quotation marks and/or without a reference to the author or source;
- lecture notes being reproduced in a student's work without due acknowledgement;
- themes or ideas in visual artwork, practical artifacts, performance pieces and other relevant activities being copied without appropriate acknowledgement.

6.2 Collusion

- 6.2.1 Collusion occurs when a student works with another student(s) on assessment work that is meant to be wholly their own independent, and original work. Collusion may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- more than one person contributing to a piece of work that is submitted as the work of an individual;
 - a student allowing another student to copy their work in an exam or other assessment task.
- 6.2.2 Collaboration that is required or approved as part of the assessment is not collusion. Students engaging in group discussions, completing group assignments together, or convening study groups, are not colluding.
- 6.2.3 Having someone proofread a paper for language correctness is not considered inappropriate collaboration. However, the proof-reader should not help with the academic content of the paper.

6.3 Examination cheating

- 6.3.1 Examination cheating occurs when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage through deliberate deceit or dishonesty during a quiz, test, or examination. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- looking at another student's paper or screen during a quiz, test, or examination;
 - allowing other students to view answers during a quiz, test, or examination;
 - possession of unauthorised materials in the examination room that could help performance;
 - arranging to give or receive answers by use of signals, notes, or technological devices during a quiz, test, or examination;
 - obtaining a copy of a quiz, test, or examination in advance of its scheduled administration.

6.4 Academic fraud

- 6.4.1 Fraud is defined as a deliberate misstatement made with an intention to deceive others. Academic fraud may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- falsification or invention of any information or citation in a paper or assignment;
 - faking the results of a laboratory experiment or other practical work;
 - writing a laboratory report without performing the activity or experiment;
 - presenting data developed by someone else as the student's own;
 - falsely claiming illness or bereavement.

6.5 File sharing

- 6.5.1 All assessment and learning resources, including but not limited to, presentation slides, tutorial handouts, subject guides, assessments, and examination papers, are protected under the Copyright Act (1968) and remain the property of TAFE NSW. Sharing learning resources externally, to any party without written approval, via file sharing websites or other means of distribution is a breach of copyright and TAFE NSW reserves the right to take appropriate legal action to rectify such breaches.

- 6.5.2 Sharing of student work, such as completed assessments, via file sharing websites or other means of distribution is prohibited and is treated as a form of academic misconduct.

6.6 Contract cheating

- 6.6.1 Contract cheating occurs when a student submits an assessment task that a third party (such as a friend, family member or professional service) has partially or fully completed for the student, regardless of whether the third party has been paid for the work. Contract cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following instances where a student:
- engages a person or company to complete or partially complete an assessment;
 - arranges another person to sit an exam for them;
 - sits an exam for another student;
 - asks a friend or family member to write an assignment;
 - completes or partially completes an assessment for another student.

7. Detecting academic integrity breaches

- 7.1 Students are required to submit all relevant assessments in electronic form to enable the use of electronic text matching or similar software as supplied by the TAFE NSW Higher Education.
- 7.2 Students will have the opportunity prior to submitting an assessment task, to review their assessment for possible breaches of academic integrity using the software.
- 7.3 When assessing students' work, academic staff will use the supplied electronic text matching software or similar to alert them to potential breaches of academic integrity.
- 7.4 When marking assessments academic staff may detect possible contract cheating by observing details such as:
- changes in writing style, language level, and vocabulary compared to work previously submitted by the student;
 - the student's level of engagement with the subject;
 - a paper not addressing the question or veering away from the topic;
 - lack of recent reference sources or references in a language that the student does not speak;
 - common phrases appearing in more than one student paper.
- 7.5 Where an academic integrity breach is suspected, academic staff must take action in accordance with this procedure.

8. Dealing with suspected cases of academic misconduct

- 8.1 Allegations of academic misconduct must be based on solid grounds of probability.
- 8.2 When academic misconduct is suspected the Course Coordinator must be notified.
- 8.3 Where there is suspicion of a student breaching examination conditions the Examination Supervisor must advise the student of the suspected infringement but allow the student to finish the examination. The Examination Supervisor will submit an Examination Infringement Report to the Course Coordinator.
- 8.4 The Course Coordinator will conduct a further investigation.

- 8.5 If the Course Coordinator determines that there is insufficient evidence of academic misconduct there is no requirement to contact the student. No further action is required except to inform the source of the allegation of the decision.
- 8.6 Otherwise the Course Coordinator will notify the student of the allegation of academic misconduct in writing. They will use the TAFE NSW Higher Education Suspected Academic Misconduct letter template. The letter will include:
- sufficient details of the potential breach of academic integrity and available evidence to enable the student to understand the allegation and properly respond.
 - an invitation to meet, physically or digitally, with the Course Coordinator to give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation of academic misconduct. The student will be informed that they can be accompanied by a support person. In cases where it is impracticable for a student to attend a meeting, the student may respond to the allegation in writing. The student must respond within one week from the date shown on the written communication.
 - the possible outcomes and/or penalties that may be applied if the potential breach is substantiated.
- 8.7 The Course Coordinator will consider the student's response (if any) and other evidence to determine whether the allegation of academic misconduct has been substantiated or not, on the balance of probabilities.
- 8.8 If the decision is that the allegation is unsubstantiated the student and the source of the allegation will be informed and no other actions will be taken.
- 8.9 For substantiated breaches of academic integrity, the Course Coordinator will determine the penalty to be applied using the table in Appendix A as a guide. For serious or other forms of academic misconduct, the Course Coordinator must consult with the Dean of Higher Education in determining the penalty.
- 8.10 In deciding penalties, relevant factors will be taken into consideration including but not limited to the:
- the student's previous academic experience and relevant level of knowledge and skills;
 - the student's prior history (if any) of breaching academic integrity as obtained from a check of the Student Issues Register;
 - type of breach: e.g. minor incident, academic misconduct involving plagiarism, collusion, cheating, contract cheating or other serious misconduct;
 - the student's intent: whether the conduct is unintentional, accidental, or intentional;
 - the extent of the breach: e.g. the amount or proportion of the completed assessment task that is not the student's work, or the extent that the completed assessment task is compromised.
- 8.11 Penalties may be applied retrospectively in circumstances where a breach is identified after the completion of a subject or course.
- 8.12 The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation and any penalties imposed using the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Misconduct letter template. This notification will include a warning about the consequences of any further repeat breaches. It will also advise the student that the outcome has been recorded on the confidential Student Issues Register for reference if they are any future breaches.

- 8.13 The student shall also be advised of their right to appeal the outcome and the penalty if there is a case to be made about procedural correctness.
- 8.14 The Course Coordinator will ensure that all substantiated cases of academic misconduct are entered into the Student Issues Register and reported to the Dean of Higher Education.
- 8.15 Any professional services identified in substantiated cases of contract cheating shall be reported to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) for further investigation in accordance with the Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services Act 2019.
- 8.16 At the conclusion of each semester the Dean of Higher Education will submit an academic integrity report to the Higher Education Academic Council, highlighting trends and addressing risk and quality issues related to academic integrity and misconduct. The Higher Education Academic Council will advise of any further preventative action in relation to any identified risks.

9. Appeals

- 9.1 A student may appeal the outcome of a substantiated case of academic misconduct on the grounds that the decision is inconsistent with this procedure.
- 9.2 Students wishing to make an appeal should consult the TAFE NSW Higher Education Grievance Procedure. An appeal of an academic misconduct decision begins at Stage 2 of the Grievance Procedure.
- 9.3 Appeals must be made using the Academic Integrity Appeal Form and sent to the Dean of Higher Education within four weeks of the date shown on the written notification of the decision.
- 9.4 The student will receive a response in writing within two weeks of lodging the appeal to notify them of the outcome of the appeal.

10. Roles and responsibilities

- 10.1 Students and staff are responsible for complying with this procedure.
- 10.2 Teaching staff are expected to employ approaches to assessment design that minimise the potential for academic dishonesty such as:
 - ensuring that there is appropriate variation in assessment tasks each time a subject is delivered, and
 - ensuring that assessment tasks are authentic, experiential, meaningful, and scaffolded.
- 10.3 All TAFE NSW staff responsible for monitoring, reviewing and dealing with cases of academic misconduct are to be familiar with relevant policies and procedures and to have completed the appropriate training to ensure fair and defensible institutional responses to allegations of academic misconduct.
- 10.4 The Course Coordinator, Academic Integrity Lead, and Dean of Higher Education are responsible for the training of academic staff in this procedure.
- 10.5 The Dean of Higher Education and Academic Integrity Lead will regularly monitor and review the academic integrity and misconduct data in the Student Issues Register.
- 10.6 The Dean of Higher Education and Academic Integrity Lead are responsible for taking appropriate action to mitigate risks in response to any trends or systemic issues identified through the academic integrity or academic misconduct data in the Student Issues Register.

10.7 This procedure does not replace or modify any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

11. Related documents

TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Integrity Policy

TAFE NSW Higher Education Assessment Policy, Procedure and Guidelines

TAFE NSW Higher Education Progression, Exclusion and Graduation Policy

TAFE NSW Higher Education Progression and Exclusion Procedure

TAFE NSW Higher Education Degree Conferral and Graduation Procedure

TAFE NSW Higher Education Student Grievance Procedure

TAFE NSW Complaints Handling Procedure

12. Monitoring and evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with the TAFE NSW Higher Education Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Framework.

13. Publication of this procedure

The current version of this procedure is published on the TAFE NSW internet.

14. Approval

The TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Council approved this version of this procedure on 7 July 2022.

Appendix A: Student academic misconduct penalties

Penalties that may be applied in response to substantiated breaches of academic integrity are described below. The penalties applied will depend on the student's level of academic experience and seriousness of the breach.

Students who have committed breaches of academic integrity may be advised to complete further academic integrity training which can include repeating the TAFE NSW Higher Education Academic Integrity module, attending academic support sessions and/or meeting with TAFE NSW Counselling Services.

Level	Type of conduct	Range of outcomes or penalties
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism or collusion involving a minimal amount of plagiarised material (constituting up to 10% of the assessment item). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark the assessment item with penalty. Any work with plagiarised/copied content must be marked based only on the student's own work.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism or collusion involving a moderate amount of plagiarised/copied material (constituting 10%-25% of the assessment item). Repeated instance of minor level misconduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark the assessment item with penalty. Any work with plagiarised/copied content must be marked based only on the student's own work; or For instances of plagiarism where the student has limited previous academic experience and has not received a prior warning, allow the student to re-attempt and re-submit all or part of the assessable work in a specified timeframe. The maximum mark available for re-submitted work is no more than 50%.
Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated instance of medium level academic misconduct. Multiple instances of minor level misconduct. Plagiarism or collusion involving a large amount of plagiarised/copied material (constituting more than 25% of the assessment item). Creating or providing false documentation in relation to assessment requirements, deadlines or special consideration. Falsification or invention of any information or citation in a paper or assignment. Cheating in an examination. First instance of contract cheating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mark of zero recorded for the assessment item; or A grade of Fail recorded for the subject.
Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated instance of major level academic misconduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspension from the course for a period of specified time; or Exclusion from the course and the institute and termination of enrolment.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraordinary breaches of academic integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined relative to issues of similar significance above