

Academic Board Policy: Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

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Part 1 - Preliminary

1.1 Commencement

This Policy and Procedure commence on 1 January 2010. They replace all previous University of Sydney policies and procedures relating to academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to:

- 1.2.1 set out the principles underpinning the University's approach to academic honesty;
- 1.2.2 identify individual responsibilities for promoting the principles of academic honesty; and
- 1.2.3 prescribe a transparent process for handling allegations of academic dishonesty and plagiarism by students enrolled in Coursework Award Courses.

1.3 Authority

This Policy and Procedure are made by the Academic Board pursuant to clause 4.3.4 of the *University of Sydney (Academic Governance) Rule 2003*.

1.4 Interpretation

This Policy and Procedure are to be read and interpreted in accordance with the *University of Sydney Act 1989* (as amended) and any delegated legislation (such as By-laws or Rules of the University) as amended from time to time.

1.5 Revision

This document is maintained by the Academic Board in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), and is published by the Academic Board.

1.6 Dictionary

In this document:

Academic Dishonesty has the meaning given to it in clause 2.1.1

Acknowledgement of the Source means identifying at least:

- the author or person who owns the Work; and
- the place from which the Work or part of the Work was sourced.

Assessment means evaluation of a student's performance, including by written or oral examination, assignments, presentation, and thesis.

Award course means a formally approved program of study which can lead to an academic award granted by the University.

Coursework Award Course means an Award Course not designated as a research Award Course. While the program of study in a Coursework Award course may include a component of original, supervised research, other forms of instruction and learning will generally be dominant. All undergraduate award courses are Coursework Award Courses.

Dean means the dean of a faculty or chairperson of a board of studies.

Dishonest Plagiarism has the meaning given to it in clause 2.4.1.

Examiner means the person responsible for assessing the Work.

Faculty means a faculty or college board, as established in each case by its constitution or, where applicable, a board of studies.

Legitimate co-operation means any constructive educational and intellectual practice that aims to facilitate optimal learning outcomes through interaction between students, including:

- a) researching, writing and/or presenting joint Work;
- b) discussion of general themes and concepts;
- c) interpretation of assessment criteria;
- d) informal study/discussion groups; and
- e) strengthening and development of academic writing skills through peer assistance.

Co-operation is not legitimate if it unfairly advantages a student or group of students over others.

Negligent Plagiarism has the meaning given to it in clause 2.3.1.

Nominated Academic means the relevant Heads of School, Associate Deans, and/or other nominated academic staff members responsible for handling Plagiarism and academic dishonesty as nominated by the Dean of the Faculty in accordance with the University's Delegations of Authority.

Plagiarism has the meaning given to it in clause 2.2.1.

Work means ideas, findings or written and/or published material.

Written Warning means a warning issued under clause 4.3.2 (b) or 4.4.4 (b).

Part 2 - Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

2.1 Academic Dishonesty

2.1.1 For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, Academic Dishonesty means seeking to obtain or obtaining academic advantage (including in the Assessment or publication of Work) by dishonest or unfair means or knowingly assisting another student to do so.

2.1.2 Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) recycling – that is, the resubmission for Assessment of Work that is the same, or substantially the same, as Work previously submitted for Assessment in the same or in a different unit of study (except in the case of legitimate resubmission with the approval of the Examiner for purposes of improvement);
- (b) fabrication of data;
- (c) the engagement of another person to complete or contribute to an Assessment or examination in place of the student, whether for payment or otherwise or accepting such an engagement from another student;
- (d) communication, whether by speaking or some other means, to other candidates during an examination;

- (e) bringing into an examination forbidden material such as textbooks, notes, calculators or computers;
- (f) attempting to read other student's work during an examination; and
- (g) writing an examination or test paper, or consulting with another person about the examination or test, outside the confines of the examination room without permission.
- (h) Copying from other students during examinations.
- (i) Inappropriate use of electronic devices to access information during examinations.

2.2 Plagiarism

- 2.2.1 For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, Plagiarism means presenting another person's Work as one's own Work by presenting, copying or reproducing it without Acknowledgement of the Source. Plagiarism is a form of Academic Dishonesty, but, for purposes of this policy, is treated separately.
- 2.2.2 Plagiarism includes presenting Work for Assessment, publication, or otherwise, that includes:
 - (a) phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs or longer extracts from published or unpublished Work (including from the Internet) without Acknowledgement of the Source; or
 - (b) the Work of another person, without Acknowledgement of the Source and presented in a way that exceeds the boundaries of Legitimate Cooperation.
- 2.2.3 The presentation of Work containing the elements in 2.2.2 is regarded as Plagiarism, regardless of the author's intentions. The author's intentions, resulting in Plagiarism, can be classified as negligent (Negligent Plagiarism) or dishonest (Dishonest Plagiarism).

2.3 Negligent Plagiarism

- 2.3.1 For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, Negligent Plagiarism means innocently, recklessly or carelessly presenting another person's Work as one's own Work without Acknowledgement of the Source.
- 2.3.2 Negligent Plagiarism often arises from a student's fear of paraphrasing or writing in their own words, and/or ignorance of this Policy and Procedure. It may be due to:
 - (a) failure to follow appropriate referencing practices;
 - (b) failure to determine, verify or acknowledge the source of the Work.

2.4 Dishonest Plagiarism

- 2.4.1 For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, Dishonest Plagiarism means knowingly presenting another person's Work as one's own Work without Acknowledgement of the Source.
- 2.4.2 Alleged Plagiarism will be deemed to be alleged Dishonest Plagiarism where:
 - a. substantial proportions of the Work have been copied from the Work of another person, in a manner that clearly exceeds the boundaries of Legitimate Cooperation;

- b. the Work contains a substantial body of copied material (including from the Internet) without Acknowledgement of the Source, and in a manner that cannot be explained as Negligent Plagiarism;
- c. in the case of a student preparing Work for Assessment, there is evidence that the student engaged another person to produce or conduct research for the Work, including for payment or other consideration; or
- d. the student has previously received a Written Warning.

Part 3 – Academic Honesty

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The role of the University of Sydney is to create, preserve, transmit and apply knowledge through teaching, research, creative works and other forms of scholarship. The University is committed to academic excellence and high standards of ethical behaviour as the cornerstones of scholastic achievement and quality assurance. The University requires all students and staff to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in their dealings with the University, its employees, members of the public and others.
- 3.1.2 Academic honesty is a core value of the University of Sydney. The University is opposed to and will not tolerate Academic Dishonesty or Plagiarism. It is the responsibility of all staff and students (including research students) to:
 - (1) ensure that they do not commit or collude with another person to commit Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism;
 - (2) in the case of students and academic staff, report possible instances of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism; and
 - (3) comply with this Policy and Procedure.
- 3.1.3 University employees are expected to display the highest standards of academic honesty in their research, teaching and in the creation of University documents.
- 3.1.4 The University will treat all identified cases of Academic Dishonesty seriously, in accordance with:
 - (a) for students undertaking Work towards a Unit of Study, this Policy and Procedure and Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-law 1999* (as amended) which deals with Student Discipline;
 - (b) for students undertaking Work towards a research Award Course other than a Coursework Unit of Study, the Academic Board *Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practice* and *Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct*, the Academic Board policy on the *Review Process for Postgraduate Research Students*, and Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-law 1999* (as amended) which deals with Student Discipline;
 - (c) for University employees, the *Code of Conduct* and relevant misconduct provisions in individual contracts, individual agreements, enterprise agreements and awards.

3.2 Fostering Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism

- 3.2.1 Fostering academic honesty within the University is an essential element of an ethical education. Sustaining an ethical culture within the University involves much

more than a rigorous and effective mechanism for detection. Academic staff have a duty as mentors and role models to act honestly and to educate students about academic honesty and plagiarism. Faculties have a responsibility to foster an understanding of the nature and role of Assessment in ensuring academic honesty, and to monitor the pressures that may lead students to plagiarise.

3.2.2 The following guidelines help promote academic honesty in coursework at the University of Sydney.

- (a) Assessment should be designed to minimise incentives for students to engage in Academic Dishonesty or Plagiarism and maximise their opportunities to learn (for example, reuse of essay questions should be avoided where it is likely to create an opportunity for plagiarism or recycling).
- (b) Students should be provided with formal opportunities to learn about Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism through such vehicles as the Plagiarism and Academic Honesty module on the Library website, formative feedback on work submitted, and other discipline-specific modules and relevant Learning Centre workshops as appropriate.
- (c) Unit of study outlines should give clear guidelines on the University's policies and procedures on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism and, where appropriate, should also include discipline or subject specific examples. Where students are facing a specific type of Assessment for the first time, students should be provided with written guidance on the steps they might take to ensure that Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism are avoided and a formative discussion around that written guidance should be undertaken.

3.3 Detecting Plagiarism

3.3.1 It is a key responsibility of an assessor to distinguish original from plagiarised work. The principles of fair and transparent Assessment (as set out in the Academic Board Policy: *Assessment and Evaluation of Coursework*) dictate that plagiarised work not be given credit.

3.3.2 The detection and identification of Plagiarism is fundamentally a judgement made by an academic who is aware of the responsibilities involved in the task of academic Assessment. Web-search or Plagiarism checking software, and other such means, should be regarded only as tools in assisting an academic to make that judgement.

3.3.3 Where Plagiarism is suspected, an academic should employ all reasonable means to clarify whether the relevant Work contains Plagiarism, including the use of Plagiarism checking software, web search engines, comparison with other assignments, and consultation with colleagues.

3.3.4 Any decision to make use of a Plagiarism checking tool (such as software, a search engine, or a checking service) compulsory for all students in an assessment task, unit of study or group of units of study should be reported to the Academic and Policy and Standards Committee of the Academic Board prior to the implementation of such compulsory use. The report should make the academic case for the use of the software which would include an assessment of the validity and reliability of the software in the intended context and the intended processes surrounding its use that will allow the academic intent of its introduction to be achieved.

3.3.5 Where a staff member or academic unit intends to use a Plagiarism checking tool for all students, for a particular Assessment task or for all work within a unit of study, this

is to be preceded by timely advice to students that this is to be done, accompanied by training and/or information for the staff and students as appropriate. In cases where software creates or retains a copy of the student's Work external to the University, the faculty should ensure that students are aware of their intellectual property rights under the University of Sydney (Intellectual Property) Rule 2002 (as amended).

3.4 Compliance Statements

3.4.1 All students are required to submit a signed statement of compliance with all Work submitted to the University for Assessment, presentation or publication. A statement of compliance must be in the form of:

- a University assignment cover sheet;
- a University electronic form; or
- a University written statement;

certifying that no part of the Work constitutes a breach of this Policy.

3.5 Academic Board Review

3.5.1 In March each year, Faculties will report to the Academic Standards and Policy Committee of the Academic Board on:

- (a) the number of allegations of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism received by the Faculty during the previous year;
- (b) the manner in which the Faculty handled any allegations of Academic Dishonesty or Plagiarism;
- (c) steps taken by the Faculty to promote compliance with this Policy and Procedure, including maintenance of a register of units of study or groups of units of study in which a Plagiarism checking tool is mandated or is intended to be mandated for all students.

Part 4 – Procedure for handling alleged Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism by students enrolled in a Coursework Award Course

4.1 Procedural Fairness

4.1.1 The University is committed to dealing with alleged Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism by students in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, including the right of a student to:

- (a) be informed of the allegations against them in sufficient detail to enable them to understand the precise nature of the allegations and to properly consider and respond;
- (b) have a reasonable period of time within which to respond to the allegations against them;
- (c) have the matter resolved in a timely manner;
- (d) be informed of their rights under this Policy and Procedure and under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended);
- (e) invite a support person or student representative to any meeting regarding alleged Plagiarism or academic dishonesty;

- (f) impartiality in any investigation process; and
- (g) an absence of bias in any decision-maker.

4.2 Identification and Assessment of Alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty

4.2.1 Where an Examiner detects or is made aware of alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty by a student, the Examiner must report the alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty to a Nominated Academic.

4.2.2 Where:

- a. an Examiner reports alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty to a Nominated Academic; or
- b. a Nominated Academic otherwise becomes aware of alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty;

the Nominated Academic must, in consultation with the Examiner, make a preliminary assessment of whether the alleged Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty would, if proven, constitute Negligent Plagiarism, Dishonest Plagiarism or Academic Dishonesty.

4.2.3 A fail grade may be applied to the Work or part thereof, following Assessment of the Work by the Examiner on academic grounds (without regard to the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Plagiarism), notwithstanding any action taken by the Faculty in accordance with this Procedure. However, the Faculty may not impose any penalty on a student for Academic Dishonesty or Plagiarism (as distinct from an academic Assessment) except in accordance with this Procedure.

4.3 Negligent Plagiarism

4.3.1 Cases of alleged Negligent Plagiarism will be handled by the Nominated Academic in accordance with this clause and with clause 4.1 (Procedural Fairness) above.

4.3.2 Where, following discussion with the student, a Nominated Academic forms the view that the Student is guilty of Negligent Plagiarism, the Nominated Academic *will*:

- a. counsel the student by explaining referencing guidelines, providing a copy of this Policy and Procedure, and referring the student to services, such as courses on academic writing skills, for assistance; and
- b. issue a Written Warning about the consequences of any subsequent breaches of this Policy.

4.3.3 A copy of a Written Warning issued under 4.3.2.2 (b) above must be:

- a. signed and dated by the Nominated Academic and the student;
- b. retained by the student; and
- c. placed on a central file maintained by the Registrar.

4.3.4 Where, following discussion with the student, the Nominated Academic forms the view that the student is guilty of Negligent Plagiarism, the Nominated Academic *may* also take other appropriate action, including:

- a. requiring the student to resubmit the Work for Assessment;
- b. requiring the student to undertake another form of Assessment;

- c. requiring the student to undertake other remedial action; or
- d. applying a fail grade to the Work or part thereof.

4.4 Academic Dishonesty and Dishonest Plagiarism

- 4.4.1 Cases of alleged Academic Dishonesty and Dishonest Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with this clause and with clause 4.1 (Procedural Fairness) above.
- 4.4.2 The Nominated Academic will make a preliminary assessment of whether the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism is serious enough, if proven, to constitute potential student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended).
- 4.4.3 In making his or her assessment under clause 4.4.2 above, the Nominated Academic will take into account:
- a. whether the student has previously received a Written Warning;
 - b. the extent of the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism measured against the student's original contribution to the Work;
 - c. the capacity of the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism to adversely affect the student's peers and/or teachers; and
 - d. the capacity of the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism to impact adversely on the actual or perceived academic standards of the University.
- 4.4.4 Where the Nominated Academic assesses that the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism is *not* serious enough, if proven, to constitute potential student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended), the Nominated Academic *will*, following discussion with the student:
- a. counsel the student by (where relevant) explaining referencing guidelines, providing a copy of this Policy and Procedure, and referring the student to services for assistance; and
 - b. issue a Written Warning about the consequences of any subsequent breaches of this Policy.
- 4.4.5 A copy of a Written Warning issued under 4.4.4 (b) above must be:
- a. signed and dated by the Nominated Academic and the student;
 - b. retained by the student; and
 - c. placed on a central file maintained by the Registrar.
- 4.4.6 Where the Nominated Academic assesses that the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism is *not* serious enough, if proven, to constitute potential student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended), the Nominated Academic *may* also, following discussion with the student, take other appropriate action, including:
- a. requiring the student to resubmit the Work for Assessment;
 - b. requiring the student to undertake another form of Assessment;
 - c. requiring the student to undertake other remedial action;
 - d. applying a fail grade to the Work or part thereof; or

e. applying a fail grade to the unit of study.

4.4.7 Where the Nominated Academic assesses that the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism *is* serious enough, if proven, to constitute potential student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended), the Nominated Academic will refer the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism to the Registrar.

4.4.8 The Nominated Academic will refer the alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism to the Registrar in all cases of alleged Academic Dishonesty or Dishonest Plagiarism where the student has previously received a Written Warning.

4.5 Appeals

4.5.1 An appeal by a student against a decision made under clause 4.3.4(a)-(d) and 4.4.6(a)-(e) of this Procedure will be handled by the University in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006* (as amended).

APPENDIX: GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These Guidelines set out the role of the University, faculties, schools, and academic staff and students to promote academic honesty as a core value of the University.
- 1.2 These Guidelines must be read and interpreted in accordance with the *University of Sydney Act 1989* (as amended) and any delegated legislation (such as By-laws or Rules of the University) as amended from time to time as well as any Academic Board policies on teaching and learning, and assessment and examination of coursework.

2. Responsibilities and obligations of the University

- 2.1 The University has a responsibility and obligation to:
 - 2.1.1 ensure that its policies on academic honesty are publicised to all academic staff and students;
 - 2.1.2 ensure that its policies on academic honesty are implemented and applied consistently across all faculties;
 - 2.1.3 promote best practice in the detection of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism;
 - 2.1.4 ensure that academic staff and students understand clearly the different dimensions of academic honesty;
 - 2.1.5 ensure that fair and well-publicised procedures are applied to the handling of alleged Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism.

3. Responsibilities and obligations of each Faculty and Board

Each Faculty and Board has a responsibility and obligation to:

- 3.1 ensure:
 - 3.1.1 the timeliness of investigations of alleged Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism;
 - 3.1.2 the fair hearing of all allegations of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism;
 - 3.1.3 accurate record-keeping;
 - 3.1.4 compliance with required privacy provisions and the University Privacy Policy;
 - 3.1.5 that all parties are informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to an investigation of alleged Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism; and
 - 3.1.6 consistent application of policies and practices at both faculty and school level;
- 3.2 put in place and maintain appropriate procedures to oversee and monitor departmental implementation of University and faculty policies on academic honesty;
- 3.3 reinforce both student and staff awareness of their responsibilities in the area of academic honesty, including by referencing University and faculty policies in appropriate publications;
 - 3.3.1 explain the Academic Board Policy on *Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism* to all academic staff;
- 3.4 incorporate into its orientation of new students, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, a program to inform students of good academic practice in regard to academic honesty.

- 3.4.1 design and deliver an appropriate program of communication to first year students regarding their obligations for meeting the requirements of academic honesty in all facets of their academic performance.

4 Responsibilities and obligations of each department and school

Departments and schools have a responsibility and obligation to:

- 4.1 inform students of their requirements by providing a departmental or school style guide (or guides) for the presentation of assignments. This (or these) must at least set out the styles of writing appropriate for different tasks and the form(s) of referencing demanded for each task;
- 4.2 ensure that all academic staff are aware of the need to introduce and reinforce, from the outset, student understanding of the professional and academic skills demanded by the discipline at all levels;
- 4.3 ensure that all academic staff are aware of the appropriate sources of assistance for students seeking to develop their skills in academic writing;
- 4.4 incorporate material into first year units that will aid students to understand what academic honesty means;
- 4.5 put in all appropriate public documents such as school handbooks a statement which:
- 4.5.1 states the University definition of plagiarism and gives examples relevant to the discipline;
- 4.5.2 makes clear that plagiarism is unacceptable;
- 4.5.3 explains the process of dealing with complaints of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism;
- 4.5.4 provides information to students on how to seek support in improving their skills in the preparation and presentation of all assignments;
- 4.5.5 provides clear guidelines on group work, especially concerning Assessment and division of tasks among group members;
- 4.5.6 implements appropriate security practices for submission and return of assignments;
- 4.5.7 provides clear guidelines outlining where co-operation and collaboration is encouraged and where it is prohibited; and
- 4.5.8 provides clear procedures for monitoring group work by academic staff, to ensure fair Assessment.

5 Responsibilities and obligations of academic staff

Academic staff have a responsibility and obligation to:

- 5.1 know the University's policy on academic honesty including plagiarism, co-operation and group work, and to apply it consistently;
- 5.2 be aware of and responsive to different cultural backgrounds of students, especially in relation to the use of the work of others and to writing skills;
- 5.3 incorporate the principles of academic honesty into course outlines and Assessment criteria;

- 5.4 apply appropriate referencing styles/conventions for all Assessment tasks and be consistent regarding referencing styles across tasks;
- 5.5 provide feedback and consultation to students which identifies gaps in learning and knowledge skills and refer students to appropriate sources of assistance to improve their skills;
- 5.6 provide students with early notification and fair warning if they believe any individual or group may be at risk of breaching guidelines relating to plagiarism, group work and co-operation;
- 5.7 provide clear written instructions on the level of co-operation permitted within each Assessment component.

6. Responsibilities and rights of students

Students have a responsibility to:

- 6.1 act in accordance with the principles of academic honesty in the preparation, conduct and submission of academic work;
- 6.2 comply with the University's policies regarding plagiarism and academic honesty;
- 6.3 become familiar with the academic writing expectations in their particular disciplines, subjects and courses of study;
- 6.4 seek assistance from appropriate sources with any academic writing areas where they are aware they need more knowledge and skills; and
- 6.5 retain a copy of all assignments submitted where feasible.

Students have a right to:

- 6.6 be informed of the University's policies on academic honesty including plagiarism, co-operation and group work;
- 6.7 gain easy access to plain English information on these issues via publications that are available to every student;
- 6.8 be provided with clear guidelines on academic styles required in each department/subject;
- 6.9 expect consistent application of University policies and practices;
- 6.10 receive practical comments which assist them to review their work;
- 6.11 expect early notification or fair warning in the case where an academic believes a student or group of students may be at risk of breaching guidelines relating to plagiarism, group work and co-operation;
- 6.12 expect a consistent definition of academic honesty and consistent application of procedures for dealing with suspected Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism across the University;

- 6.13 expect explicit referencing styles within each school and consistency across tasks. (NB: some departments may sanction only one referencing style/convention, others may sanction several);
- 6.14 expect clear guidelines relating to all aspects of group work;
- 6.15 expect clear Assessment information in each course outline, especially concerning which components are individual and which are collective;
- 6.16 expect clear procedures for monitoring group work by academic staff, to ensure fair Assessment;
- 6.17 expect clear written instructions on the level of co-operation permitted within each Assessment component.