



Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism in Coursework Policy

Approved by: The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, with the approval of the Academic Board

Date of effect: 1 January 2012

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The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, as delegate of the Senate of the University of Sydney and with the approval of the Academic Board, adopts the following policy.

Dated: 2011

Signature:

Name: Dr Michael Spence

Part 1 - Preliminary

1.1 Commencement

This policy and these procedures commence on 1 January 2012. They replace all previous University policies and procedures relating to academic dishonesty and plagiarism in coursework.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy and these procedures is to:

- 1.2.1 state the University's unequivocal opposition to, and intolerance of, academic dishonesty, including plagiarism;
- 1.2.2 set out the principles underpinning the University's approach to academic honesty;
- 1.2.3 identify individual responsibilities for promoting the principles of academic honesty; and
- 1.2.4 prescribe a transparent process for handling allegations of academic dishonesty and plagiarism by students enrolled in coursework award courses.

1.3 Application

This policy and these procedures apply to all students enrolled in a coursework award course at the University.

Part 2 – Dictionary

2.1 Interpretation

This policy and these procedures 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.

2.2 Definitions

In this document:

academic dishonesty has the meaning given to it in clause 3.1.1

acknowledgement of the source means identifying, in accordance with the conventions of the discipline, at least:

- the author(s) of 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.

By-law means the *University of Sydney By-Law 1999* (as amended).

coursework award course means a formally approved program of study which can lead to an academic award granted by the University and which is 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 3.4.1.

examiner means the person responsible for assessing a student's work.

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

investigation means an investigation conducted by the Registrar under Chapter 8 of the By-Law.

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) discussing general themes and concepts;
- (c) interpreting assessment criteria;
- (d) informal study/discussion groups; and
- (e) strengthening and developing 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 3.3.1.

nominated academic means the head of school, associate dean, and/or other nominated academic staff member responsible for handling plagiarism and academic

dishonesty as nominated by the relevant dean in accordance with the University's Delegations of Authority.

plagiarism has the meaning given to it in clause 3.2.1.

student misconduct means conduct which, if proven, would constitute student misconduct under Chapter 8 of the By-Law.

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

written warning means a warning issued under clause 5.8.

Part 3 - Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

3.1 Academic Dishonesty

3.1.1 For the purpose of this policy and these procedures, 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.

3.1.2 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 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 another candidate during an examination;
- (e) bringing into an examination forbidden material such as textbooks, notes, calculators or computers;
- (f) attempting to read other another student's work during an examination;
- (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 another student during an examination; and
- (i) inappropriate use of electronic devices to access information during an examination.

3.2 Plagiarism

- 3.2.1 For the purpose of this policy and these procedures, plagiarism means presenting another person's work as one's own work by presenting, copying or reproducing it without appropriate acknowledgement of the source. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty but, for purposes of this policy and these procedures, is treated separately.
- 3.2.2 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 appropriate acknowledgement of the source; or
 - (b) the work of another person, without appropriate acknowledgement of the source and presented in a way that exceeds the boundaries of legitimate co-operation.
- 3.2.3 The presentation of work containing the elements in clause 3.2.2 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).

3.3 Negligent Plagiarism

- 3.3.1 For the purpose of this policy and these procedures, negligent plagiarism means innocently, recklessly or carelessly presenting another person's work as one's own work without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.
- 3.3.2 Negligent plagiarism often arises from a student's fear of paraphrasing or writing in their own words, and/or ignorance of this policy and these procedures. It may be due to:
- (a) failure to follow appropriate referencing practices; or
 - (b) failure to determine, verify or acknowledge the source of the work.

3.4 Dishonest Plagiarism

- 3.4.1 For the purpose of this policy and these procedures, dishonest plagiarism means knowingly presenting another person's work as one's own work without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.
- 3.4.2 Alleged plagiarism will 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 co-operation;
 - (b) the work contains a substantial body of copied material (including from the Internet) without appropriate acknowledgement of the source, and in a manner that cannot be explained as negligent plagiarism; or

- (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.

Part 4 – Academic Honesty

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The role of the University 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 students to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in their dealings with the University, its members, members of the public and others.
- 4.1.2 Academic honesty is a core value of the University. The University is opposed to and will not tolerate academic dishonesty or plagiarism. It is the responsibility of all students to:
 - (a) ensure that they do not commit or collude with another person to commit academic dishonesty or plagiarism;
 - (b) comply with this policy and these procedures.
- 4.1.3 The University will treat all allegations of academic dishonesty or plagiarism seriously, in accordance with this policy and these procedures and Chapter 8 of the By-law.

4.2 Fostering Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism

- 4.2.1 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. The University recognises that appropriate education is essential if students are to be expected to demonstrate academic honesty in their work.
- 4.2.2 The University's approach to such education is based on the following strategies:
 - (a) *Clear expectations.* University policies and faculty processes should clearly document what is expected of students and set out fair processes for dealing with allegations of academic dishonesty.
 - (b) *Knowledge of discipline specific requirements.* Students should be educated in the academic writing and referencing conventions of their discipline from the commencement of their studies.
 - (c) *Emphasis on the importance and value of academic honesty.* Students should be supported in learning the value and importance of academic honesty as a basis for university scholarship and research enriched learning.
 - (d) *Assessment which encourages demonstrated academic achievement, including academic integrity.* Assessment should encourage scholarship,

creativity and originality in ways consistent with research enriched learning. It should not encourage or pressure students to plagiarise or to engage in other forms of academic dishonesty.

4.2.3 For the purpose of fostering academic honesty and sustaining an ethical culture, the University adopts the following principles:

- (a) 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.
- (b) Unit of study outlines, or equivalent, 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. Students should also be provided with written guidance on the steps they might take to ensure that academic dishonesty and plagiarism are avoided.

4.3 Detecting Plagiarism

4.3.1 It is a key responsibility of an examiner 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.

4.3.2 The detection and identification of plagiarism is fundamentally a judgement made by an examiner who is aware of the responsibilities involved in the task of academic assessment. Web search or similarity detecting software, and other such means, should be regarded only as tools in assisting an examiner to make that judgement.

4.3.3 Where plagiarism is suspected, an examiner should employ all reasonable means to clarify whether the relevant work contains plagiarism, including the use of similarity detecting software, web search engines, comparison with other assignments, and consultation with colleagues.

4.3.4 The following procedures shall apply to the adoption and use of similarity detecting software in the University.

- (a) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall assess and evaluate available similarity detecting software and shall fund and support one such product per modality (text, code, image) for use in the University.
- (b) Only the similarity detecting software funded by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) shall be supported in the University.
- (c) The use of similarity detecting software in a faculty shall be subject to the approval of the dean after consultation with the faculty.
- (d) The dean of a faculty, after consultation with members of the faculty, may require that similarity detecting software shall be used in all units of study offered in the faculty.

- (e) Where the use of similarity detecting software has been approved in a unit of study, the unit of study coordinator should, in the unit of study outline or equivalent:
- i. describe its purpose;
 - ii. insert the following text:

““Students should note that all / a random selection of assignments submitted in this unit of study will be submitted to similarity detecting software.”

and
 - iii. describe its use and the expectations of its use for the disciplinary culture of the unit of study.
- (f) Students in a unit of study which has use of similarity detecting software incorporated into its design, who then use that software shall:
- i. agree to the terms of use of the similarity detecting software; and
 - ii. use the similarity detecting software in accordance with the guidelines provided by the unit of study co-ordinator.

4.4 Compliance Statements

- 4.4.1 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) a University assignment cover sheet;
- (b) a University electronic form; or
- (c) a University written statement;

certifying that no part of the work constitutes a breach of this policy.

4.5 Academic Board Reporting

- 4.5.1 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; and
- (c) steps taken by the faculty to promote compliance with this policy, including maintenance of a register of units of study or groups of units of study in which similarity detecting software has been used.

Part 5 – Procedures for Handling Allegations of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism in Coursework

5.1 Application

- 5.1.1 These procedures apply to the enquiry into, and determination of, allegations of academic dishonesty or plagiarism by coursework students.
- 5.1.2 A faculty may only impose a penalty on a coursework student for academic dishonesty or plagiarism in accordance with these procedures.

5.2 Procedural Fairness

- 5.2.1 The University is committed to dealing with allegations of academic dishonesty and plagiarism by students in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, including the rights of students to:
 - (a) be informed of the allegations against them in sufficient detail to enable them to understand the precise nature of the allegations and properly to consider and respond to them;
 - (b) have a reasonable period of time within which to respond to the allegations;
 - (c) have the matter resolved in a timely manner;
 - (d) be informed of their rights under this policy and these procedures and under Chapter 8 of the By-law;
 - (e) invite a support person or student representative to any meeting regarding alleged academic dishonesty or plagiarism;
 - (f) impartiality in any enquiry or investigation process; and
 - (g) an absence of bias in any decision-maker.

5.3 Preliminary Assessment and Enquiry into Allegations

- 5.3.1 An examiner who suspects academic dishonesty or plagiarism by a student must report the suspicion to a nominated academic in the relevant faculty.
- 5.3.2 Where a nominated academic becomes aware of an allegation of academic dishonesty or plagiarism the nominated academic must, in consultation with the examiner:
 - (a) formulate a clear expression of the alleged conduct; and
 - (b) form a preliminary view of whether the alleged conduct would, if proven, constitute any of negligent plagiarism, dishonest plagiarism or some other form of academic dishonesty.
- 5.3.3 If the nominated academic forms the preliminary view that the alleged conduct, if proven, would not constitute any of negligent plagiarism, dishonest plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, the nominated academic and the examiner will take no further action, and the work will be assessed on its academic merit.

5.3.4 If the nominated academic forms the preliminary view that the alleged conduct, if proven, would constitute any of negligent plagiarism, dishonest plagiarism or some other form of academic misconduct, the nominated academic will:

- (a) inform the student in writing of:
 - i. the allegation as formulated under clause 5.3.2 (a);
 - ii. the preliminary view of the nominated academic;
 - iii. an appointed time and place for the student to attend an interview to discuss the allegation;
 - iv. the names of the people proposed to be present at the interview; and
 - v. the student's entitlement to invite a support person or student representative for the interview;

and

- (b) provide the student with copies of:
 - i. any supporting documents necessary for the student to understand and reply to the allegation; and
 - ii. a copy of this policy and these procedures.

5.3.5 The interview required by clause 5.3.4 must be appointed for a time which provides the student a reasonable opportunity to consider the allegation and any supporting material provided. A faculty may determine by resolution a standard period of time for this purpose.

5.4 Determination of Allegations

5.4.1 The nominated academic will consider:

- (a) the allegation as formulated;
- (b) any supporting material, copies of which have been provided to the student; and
- (c) any submissions or responses made by or on behalf of the student.

5.4.2 The nominated academic will then conclude whether the student has engaged in:

- (a) no impropriety;
- (b) negligent plagiarism;
- (c) dishonest plagiarism; or
- (d) some other form of academic dishonesty.

5.5 Conclusion of No Impropriety

If the nominated academic concludes that the student has engaged in no impropriety, the nominated academic will inform each of the student and the examiner of this conclusion, and take no further action, and the work will be assessed on its academic merit.

5.6 Conclusion of Negligent Plagiarism

5.6.1 If the nominated academic concludes that the student has engaged in negligent plagiarism, the nominated academic will inform the student of this conclusion and provide counselling, including explaining referencing guidelines and referring the student to services, such as courses on academic writing skills, for assistance.

5.6.2 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 or mark penalty to all or part of the work.

5.6.3 The nominated academic will make and keep a record of the counselling and any other action taken.

5.6.4 The nominated academic will inform the examiner of the outcome of the matter.

5.7 Consideration of Potential Student Misconduct

5.7.1 If the nominated academic concludes that the student has engaged in dishonest plagiarism or some other form of academic dishonesty, the nominated academic will then form a preliminary view of whether the conduct, if proven, would be sufficiently serious to constitute student misconduct.

5.7.2 In forming this preliminary view, the nominated academic will consider:

- (a) the extent of the conduct when measured against the student's original contribution to the work;
- (b) the capacity of the conduct adversely to affect the student's peers and or teachers;
- (c) the capacity of the conduct adversely to impact on the actual or perceived academic standards of the University; and
- (d) whether the student has previously received a written warning and, if so, the content of that warning.

5.7.3 If the nominated academic forms the view that the conduct would, if proven, be serious enough to constitute student misconduct, the nominated academic will refer the matter to the Registrar.

5.7.4 The Registrar will consider the matter referred, form a view as to whether the matter warrants an investigation and make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor.

5.7.5 The Vice Chancellor will consider the referral and the recommendation and determine either:

- (a) to direct the Registrar to conduct an investigation; or
- (b) to remit the matter to the faculty for finalisation under this policy and these procedures.

5.8 Conclusion of Dishonest Plagiarism or Other Academic Dishonesty Less Than Student Misconduct

5.8.1 If the nominated academic forms the conclusion that the student has engaged in dishonest plagiarism or some other form of academic dishonesty, the nominated academic will:

- (a) inform the student of the conclusion reached;
- (b) counsel the student by (where relevant) explaining referencing guidelines and referring the student to services for assistance; and
- (c) issue a written warning about the consequences of any subsequent breaches of this policy and these procedures.

5.8.2 The nominated academic will sign and date the written warning and invite the student to do so as an acknowledgement of the information provided. The failure or refusal of the student to sign and date the written warning will not affect its validity.

5.8.3 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;
- (d) applying a fail grade to all or part of the work; or
- (e) applying a fail grade or mark penalty to the unit of study.

5.8.4 The nominated academic will make and keep a record of:

- (a) the counselling provided;
- (b) any other action taken; and
- (c) the written warning.

5.8.5 The nominated academic will provide a copy of the signed and dated written warning:

- (a) to the student; and
- (b) to the Registrar, for inclusion on a central file.

5.8.6 The nominated academic will inform the examiner of the outcome of the matter.

5.9 Appeals

An appeal by a student against a decision made under clauses 5.6.2 or 5.8.3 of this policy and these procedures will be handled by the University in accordance with the *University of Sydney (Student Appeals against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006* (as amended).

Notes

Date adopted:

Date commenced: 1 January 2012

Administrator: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Review date: 1 January 2016

Related documents: University of Sydney Act 1989 (as amended)
University of Sydney By-Law 1999 (as amended)

University of Sydney (Student Appeals Against Academic Decisions) Rule 2006

Academic Board Policy: Assessment and Evaluation of Coursework

Amendment history

Provision

Amendment

Commencing