



Academic Integrity Procedure

Purpose

The Academic Integrity Procedure outlines and addresses the measures that Victorian School of Commerce (VSC) have taken to promote ethical academic integrity and the processes to ensure that investigation into academic misconduct is fair, equitable and confidential. This document takes into account the framework set out by TEQSA in June 2020.

Scope

The procedure applies to all students enrolled in any course at VSC and to all Staff engaged in teaching and learning and academic activities.

Procedure

Promoting Academic Integrity

- As noted in the Academic Integrity Policy VSC is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and will run academic integrity sessions for students both at Orientation and throughout the semester in each of its classes. All Staff will be reminded on Academic Integrity in their Induction session and in ongoing professional development.
- Academic Integrity will be clearly outlined in the Student Handbook and Orientation materials
- VSC will also provide self-study courses on academic integrity for the students to access and to enable them to complete assignments in an ethical manner.
- Electronic Detection software for plagiarism such as Turnitin will be available for students and all assignments will be submitted to this process before they submit for marking so that Staff may check.
- Students will be taught how to cite from other sources correctly and how to reference their work.

Breaches of Academic Integrity

Breaches of academic integrity include but are not limited to:

Plagiarism – the use of another person's intellectual output, presented without appropriate acknowledgement and which creates the impression that the work is one's own. Examples of plagiarism may include:

- Presenting someone else's work or research data as your own work.
- Copying parts of any work without acknowledging its source:
 - Written texts (verbatim or paraphrasing)
 - Diagrams
 - Formulae



- Sound files
 - Photographs
 - Audio-visual material
 - Graphics
 - Computer-based material
 - Mathematical proofs
 - Art or artefacts.
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- “Washing” techniques which are used to disguise plagiarism, such as using a translation service to translate a plagiarised work into another language and then back into English, disguising that it has been plagiarised.

Cheating and Contract Cheating – a dishonest attempt to gain unfair advantage when submitting work and may or may not include payment to another party. Examples may include:

- Ghost writing – writing under the name of another person
- “recycling” work such as resubmission of work that has been previously submitted for another assessment
- Paying someone to complete work on your behalf, such as using an essay agency or friends
- Other forms of bribery
- Falsifying information
- Falsifying experimental data or observations
- Fabricating data used in an assessment
- Fabricating references

Collusion – submitting work where there has been unauthorised collaboration with other students and then passing it off as one’s own work. Examples may include:

- Allowing another student to copy your work
- Sharing your answers with another
- Asking someone to write or substantially edit (not proofread) your work
- Offering to complete work for another

Falsifying Information – which may include:

- Providing incorrect or misleading statements about your academic qualifications
- Inventing or distorting data which you are using to support an argument
- Falsifying your identity or allowing someone else to falsely claim to be you

Detection of Academic Misconduct in Students

- Initial assessment of the level of academic misconduct is fundamentally the task of the academic staff, as the lecturer is the person most familiar with the student’s work, the student’s abilities and of the requirements of any particular assessment.
- Clear and documented evidence is required before any assumption of academic misconduct can be made.



- Sources of evidence can include:
 - A report from detecting software that highlights similarities in text.
 - Comparison of similarity with another student's work or with work submitted by the student in another assignment.
 - Noticing that required documents for submission of an assessment have not been submitted.
 - A student's behaviour during examinations.
 - An inconsistency or incongruence between student's performance in classes or in other course work and the current submission.
- Where a lecturer suspects there is academic misconduct, they must follow the procedures outlined in this document – *Academic Integrity Procedure*.

There may be occasions where the student's misconduct is reported by another student or non-academic staff. In this situation the Academic Staff member dealing with the case must ensure the confidentiality of those reporting.

Investigation and Assessment of Academic Misconduct of Students

- When academic staff suspect there has been a breach of academic integrity, they must determine the level of misconduct and inform the Dean. VSC takes all allegations seriously and if the student is guilty appropriate actions must be taken by the Institute.
- Where the Dean accepts that there has been a breach of academic integrity, they will use the following process for investigation:
 1. Decide on the level of academic misconduct
 2. Appoint an officer to conduct the investigation
 3. Collate all the evidences required
 4. See if the incident can be resolved informally by inviting the student to a meeting
 5. Allow the student to respond to the investigation
 6. Make a final decision and inform the student

The student's enrolment status must not change during the investigation. The matter must be addressed fairly, equitably and with utmost confidence for those involved.

Decide on the level of academic misconduct

VSC will determine the type of academic misconduct based on its seriousness:

- Type of academic misconduct
- Extent of academic misconduct
- Prior offences

Academic misconduct will be deemed as serious and significant or minor (low level):



Serious or significant - if based on the evidences supplied it is deemed to be or appears to be planned, deliberate or is substantial in scope (for example, copying complete sections or even whole essays from someone else's work or website).

Minor (low level) if based on the available evidence it is not deemed to be serious but an incident that with education can be rectified. It is to be noted that all academic misconduct is serious, as it can damage the reputation of VSC, but first offenders will be given the opportunity to rectify their behaviour and learn from their mistakes.

Student's record will be checked for prior instances of academic misconduct. The extent of the misconduct will be determined on whether there has been a repeat offence or prior offences.

Penalties for Academic Misconduct

- **Initial or "minor" Breach**

Where it is a first-time breach of academic integrity, it is deemed a 'minor' offence, recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register and the student is issued with a strong warning and be provided with academic counselling to ensure it does not happen again.

If it is deemed appropriate the student may also receive:

- A downgrade in their mark or an unsatisfactory outcome for that particular assessment or item. It is important to consider the degree of the academic misconduct for an initial breach. The mark given will be based on the content submitted that was not part of the academic misconduct.
- Or the student may be given an alternative assessment where the opportunity to plagiarism is to be removed.
- The student is given notification that if there is a subsequent breach of academic integrity, the result may be a Fail and more serious penalty.

- **Serious or Significant Breach**

Where it is a more serious breach the incident is recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register and the student will undertake academic counselling to be educated in the process. A formal notice will be sent to the student specifying the details of the misconduct, details of the academic counselling and requesting a response from the student within 14 business days. The student will also be provided with details of available Student Support Services. A more serious penalty will apply given the nature of the Academic misconduct. As in the Minor Breach the student may receive the same penalties. They will also be warned that any subsequent finding of academic misconduct may result in a Fail in the subject, suspension or exclusion.

Any further breaches, whether minor or major, will result in more serious penalties, recorded in the Register and the student warned as above of possible failure, suspension or exclusion.

As VSC is committed to the welfare of the students, they will ensure the student receives further counselling and education so they are clear on the consequences.



Complaints and Appeals

Students who are not satisfied with this process or with the final decision are able to appeal under the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy* and they will follow the procedures outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeal Procedure*

Investigation and Assessment of Academic Misconduct of Academic Staff

Integrity is a core value of VSC and academic staff have a responsibility to adhere to professional and ethical standards in teaching and research. Not only do they have a responsibility to students to ensure academic integrity is upheld, but they also need to ensure they adhere to the principle of integrity

According to the *Academic Integrity Policy*, academic staff at VSC must ensure that they do not claim ownership of writing or work that is not theirs, and that they reference and cite carefully any sources they use in their work, and in their teaching.

Academic Staff must also comply with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* 5.2 which states:

“Academic and research integrity and accountability for academic and research integrity are maintained in arrangements with any other party involved in the provision of higher education, including placements, collaborative research, research training and joint award qualifications”

Any investigation of alleged breaches of academic integrity must be carried out with confidentiality and discretion and the processes are similar in steps to that for students. There must be ample and reliable evidence before any allegation is made. Academic staff will receive a notice in writing with the details of the misconduct including any evidence. The staff will be allowed 14 business days to respond to allegation.

Records Keeping

The Dean will keep detailed records, including electronic records, of all proceedings. These records shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Any coursework or research works within which any academic misconduct is alleged to have taken place;
- All records of any meetings, telephone calls, emails with all relevant parties, or any other details in any way connected with the allegation and inquiry;
- All records of correspondence, including official report allegation, all decisions made in writing and any response from any relevant parties; and
- Any record of appeals or decisions to appeal to external authorities.

Any Appeals made by staff must follow the *Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy* and *Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.



Related policy instruments

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Progression and At-Risk Policy

Assessment and Moderation Policy

Code of Conduct

Course Creation and Development Policy

Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy

External Referencing Policy

Freedom of Intellectual Inquiry Policy

Professional Development Policy

Risk Management Policy

Scholarly Activity Policy

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy

Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Student Orientation Policy

Student Orientation Procedure

Teaching and Learning Policy

Terms of Reference (Academic Board)

Terms of Reference (Learning and Teaching Committee)

Terms of Reference (Course Advisory Committee)

Related documents and legislation

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021– [Domain 5 Institutional Quality Assurance]

Australian Copyright Act 1968

Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy – Victorian State Government – Education and Training.

The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, (Fishman T. (ed).1999)

TEQSA, Good Practice Guide on Contract Cheating (2017)

TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity (Beta Version October 2017)



Administration

Revision History

Version	Approval date	Approval body	Review date
0.1	1/05/2020	Academic Board	
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