

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to promote the principle of mutual respect by educating staff and students about standards Southern Cross Education Institute considers appropriate; to discourage behaviour Southern Cross Education Institute considers inappropriate; to implement fair and rigorous procedures for addressing possible cases of academic misconduct; and to provide for the enforcement of penalties in cases of academic misconduct.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all staff and students of Southern Cross Education Institute.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Integrity	The capacity to undertake training and assessment in a manner appropriate to the standards expected of vocational learning.
Academic misconduct	The intentional or reckless conduct by which a student seeks to gain an unfair or unjustified academic advantage in a course or unit of competency. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to cheating, or attempting to cheat through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collusion b) inappropriate collaboration c) plagiarism d) misrepresenting or fabricating data or results or other assessable work e) inappropriate electronic data sourcing/collection f) breaching rules specified for the conduct of examinations in a way that may compromise or defeat the purposes of assessment
SCEI	Southern Cross Education Institute

POLICY

SCEI is committed to outstanding teaching and learning experiences for its staff and students. It seeks to foster an academic environment that promotes the most rigorous standards of independent scholarship, critical inquiry, and academic integrity. All staff and students at SCEI are responsible to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in their work.

For students, penalties for academic misconduct vary according to the severity of the case, and may include the requirement to do further work; change in results; an award of zero marks for examinations; failure of a unit of competency or course; suspension from a course; exclusion from SCEI; non-award of a credential.

The Campus Manager or Training Manager will impose the penalties prescribed where, in the opinion of the staff member, a student is guilty of misconduct and the imposition of a penalty is warranted.

Severity of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct at SCEI is defined for students on three levels.

1. Minor Academic Misconduct
2. Moderate Academic Misconduct
3. Major Academic Misconduct

PROCEDURE

Minor Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are considered minor where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to result from careless practice and/or neglect of specific guidelines relating to assessment requirements by students, whose outcome compromises the purpose of an assessment to a limited extent only.

In this case, misconduct does not include relatively trivial breaches by a student in the initial stages of study in a course, which in the opinion of the relevant trainer and course coordinator may occur in the course of commencing learning.

Examples of minor academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- I. minor plagiarism such as inadequate or inconsistent referencing, paraphrasing too close to the original; and/or
- II. minor copying of material, such as copying one or two sentences including copying where a student utilises a verbatim transcription in their notes and presents it as their own words.

Moderate Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are deemed moderate in circumstances that includes (but is not limited to):

- I. moderate plagiarism;
- II. fabricating or falsifying data, results or sources of information in an assessment task;
- III. colluding with another student to produce assessable work and representing that as individual work when such collusion has not been authorised.

Major Academic Misconduct

Instances of academic misconduct are considered major where the misconduct may be reasonably judged to be a serious breach of assessment principles and rules of evidence and includes (but is not limited to):

- I. cheating in examinations, including:
 - a. using unauthorised material in an examination, including (but not limited to) written notes, formulae or other prompts whether stored on or within some object or device, or on paper or on the student's body; and/or
 - b. communicating (or attempting to communicate) in an unauthorised manner with others during examinations (verbally or other means).

All may lead to penalties for unsatisfactory course progress.

Major, Second instance

For a second instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a Not Yet Competent result for a unit of competency in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Campus Manager or Training Manager who will initiate an investigation to all other submitted assessments from the same student and may apply an unsatisfactory result for other assessment tasks.

Major, Third instance

For a third instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a Not Yet Competent result for a unit of competency in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be referred to the Campus Manager or Training Manager who will initiate an investigation to all other submitted assessments from the same student and may apply an unsatisfactory result for other assessment tasks. However, in addition, the Campus Manager or Training Manager may exclude a student from enrolment in the relevant course and all units of competency offered by SCEI for a period of up to one academic year or that a student's current enrolment in any course or unit of competency be cancelled.

Further instances of Major Academic Misconduct may result in consequent expulsion from SCEI or non-award of a credential to which the student would otherwise have been entitled.

Subsequent Instances

If a student who has committed a more significant instance of academic misconduct then commits a subsequent, but less significant, instance, that subsequent instance will not be considered as a first offence. In such cases, the subsequent breach will automatically be treated as at least a second breach for that more significant level, and will attract the appropriate penalty.

Concurrent Instances

In cases where students submit items for assessment concurrently in different units of competency, and those items are found to exhibit evidence of academic misconduct, such collective breaches should, for the purposes of a penalty, be treated as a single instance only. Such leniency should only occur if it is clear that the student as a result of a concurrent or near concurrent submission schedule has not been in a position to benefit from counselling, has not previously received counselling for an earlier instance, and is likely to have committed the breaches without intent.

Plagiarism

The following scale has been adopted across SCEI for the purposes of preliminary classification in cases of plagiarism:

- less than 10% - minor
- 10-25% - moderate
- more than 25% - major

The extent of plagiarism will be calculated to include both unattributed word for word copying; work in which minor amendments have been made to unattributed source material (through substitution, transposition or exclusion of words); and the paraphrase of the words and/or specific ideas of another person.

Major Academic Misconduct (Major)

Major, First instance

For a first instance of Major Academic Misconduct, students will usually be awarded a Not Yet Competent for the unit of competency in which the academic misconduct has occurred, and will be warned that further breaches will be referred to the Campus Manager or Training Manager and may result in the award of an unsatisfactory result for all other assessment tasks submitted.

Mitigating Circumstances

In the process of determining the level of academic misconduct that has occurred and the appropriate penalty to be applied once a case has been established, appeals may be made to the Campus Manager or Training Manager to take into account one or more mitigating circumstances that are deemed to bear upon the case.

Such factors may include, but not be limited to:

- I. differing educational, cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds of students at entry level;
- II. documented medical or personal circumstances of a nature to indicate serious impairment of responsibility at the time the academic misconduct occurred.

Principles Relating to the Handling of Alleged Academic Misconduct

The following principles are to be observed in all cases of alleged academic misconduct:

- Cases of alleged and established misconduct must be treated confidentially by staff. Discussion of cases should be limited to those who have a direct line of responsibility in such matters (Campus Manager, Training Manager,

Training Coordinator, Course Coordinator, Trainers and Assessors and other staff at SCEI who are responsible for overseeing procedures relating to academic misconduct).

- Lines of responsibility for investigating cases of suspected misconduct must be rigorously adhered to throughout SCEI.
- Course coordinators must advise students that they are suspected of committing academic misconduct no later than when assessment items are returned to other students. This advice must be confidential and coupled with procedural information so that the student understands what will occur next.
- Established protocols for recording academic misconduct must be adhered to across all courses and campuses at SCEI.

Student Appeal

A student can challenge the decision by lodging an appeal according to PP11 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. All appeals lodged will be processed in accordance with the PP11 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. This application should be submitted within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the academic misconduct incident.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

PP11 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
PP77 Assessment Policy and Procedure
PP79 Student Rules Policy
PP95 Examination Policy and Procedure

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015: Clauses 1.8 and Standard 6
National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007: Standard 10
Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000: Section 19

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Campus and Training Managers are responsible for the development, review and implementation of this policy and procedure. Responsibilities for actions under this procedure are detailed throughout this document.

All records relevant to this document are to be maintained in the student's academic file and on the SCEI's Student Management System by Administration Department.

Author	Compliance Manager
Approved by	CEO
Effective date	22 October 2016
Version	1.1
Review date	October 2018