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1 PRELIMINARIES

Commencement

This policy and procedure commenced on 14 September 2021.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach of Polytechnic Institute Australia Pty Ltd (PIA) to ensure its students, and faculty members act with integrity in the performance of their academic work. This policy defines academic integrity and various forms of academic misconduct, describes the procedures for investigating allegations of academic misconduct, and outlines penalties that will apply where allegations are proven.

Application

This policy applies to all students enrolled in a course offered by the Institute and all staff employed by the Institute.

The policy does not apply to general misconduct by students or staff, which is dealt with in other policies.

2 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply in this document:

Academic Integrity	Undertaking academic activity in a responsible way to ensure the moral and ethical maintenance of academic standards;
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honesty and rigour in research and scholarship; and avoidance of plagiarism, cheating or collusion.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is undertaking academic activity, either deliberately or imprudently, that can result in unmerited advantage. It may take several forms including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and collusion as defined below.

Cheating

Cheating occurs before, during or after an assessment or examination when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage or assist another student to do so. It includes, but is not limited to:

- bringing items into an examination that are not permitted such as a textbook, notebook, dictionary, calculator, computer, notes, manuscript, bag, mobile phone or other materials or device or means of special assistance, except those items specifically authorised for the examination by the lecturer who set the examination.

Note: valuable items, such as small purses and wallets, may be brought into the examination room but must be left on the floor adjacent to the student's desk for the duration of the examination; the examination supervisor may inspect such items;

- colluding with others either in the examination venue or outside the venue including by electronic means;
- deliberately viewing other students work in an examination, or in other circumstances, without their permission;
- fabricating or falsifying data or inventing references;
- submitting the same work or recycling work without prior permission of the unit coordinator;
- submitting work that is generated and/or enhanced with the use of generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT to the extent where the submitted work isn't a reasonable representation of the student's abilities and/or cannot be considered an original work of the student unless otherwise explicitly permitted by the assessment specification.



Collusion	Collusion, unlike collaboration, which encompasses positive co-learning, is when two or more students, or a student and any other person(s), work together on individual (not group work) assessable work with intent to cheat, plagiarise or engage in academic misconduct.
Contract Cheating	Contract cheating involves a faculty member, or student contracting a third party – paid or unpaid – to prepare or contribute to a research or assessment task or part of assessable work on their behalf. It may also involve the person acquiring or commissioning for services related to the preparation of assessable work with the intention to cheat, misrepresent and/or plagiarise.
File-sharing	The uploading to a website, or direct provision via messaging or social media, of a person's completed assessment tasks for a unit of study (whether they have been marked or not, and whether from the current year of study or earlier).
Generative Artificial Intelligence	Generative artificial intelligence is a technology that uses machine learning algorithms to produce new content based on the prompts it is given. A generative artificial intelligence program mimics output, such as text and images, that has been traditionally produced by humans. It achieves this by combining human-produced data and pattern prediction to generate results.
Plagiarism	A form of academic misconduct involving the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging the original author or source.
Other Academic Misconduct	Other forms of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tampering, or attempting to tamper, with research work, examination papers, class work, grades, class records, or other student documentation;• acquiring, or attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing examination materials or information without the approval of the lecturer;



- impersonating another student, or arranging for anyone to impersonate a student, in any examination or other assessment task;
- altering group assessment work that has been agreed as final by all participating students prior to submission without the collaborating students' consent;
- unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence that is contrary to guidelines published by the Institute and in relevant Institute documentation (e.g. Unit Outline);
- use of recorded lectures (audio and/or visual), PowerPoints, or other class notes in a way that infringes another person's privacy or intellectual property rights - for example, by publishing or distributing a recording without permission from the lecturer;
- unauthorised sharing study materials and assessments (with each other or online) altruistically, and as a contribution to community-building or crowdsourced services such as StuDocu, CourseHero, ThinkSwap, Student VIP, and Chegg.com.
- offering or accepting bribes (money or sexual or other favours) for example, for admission or for grades;
- fabrication, falsification and misrepresentation of information (including research data and source material);
- not meeting required research standards, including conducting research without ethics approval or conducting research in an unethical manner.

Solicitation

Solicitation occurs when an individual offers, encourages, induces or advertises for a faculty member, or student to contract, commission, pay, procure, or complete on their behalf, research or assessment tasks and items that are likely to result in their use for the purpose of cheating, misrepresentation and/or plagiarism.

3 POLICY

3.1 PIA believes that ethical research and scholarship is based on an intellectual environment where academic integrity is highly valued and carefully upheld. PIA will make information about academic integrity available to students in online induction, handbooks, unit outlines and other



relevant teaching materials Academic misconduct is not permitted or tolerated, and any such occurrences will be penalised.

3.2 The PIA Academic Misconduct Register records warnings and the outcomes of any accusations of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or research misconduct. A student's involvement in academic misconduct will be retained on the register while still enrolled in any course and academic staff will have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of academic misconduct. Faculty involvement in academic misconduct will be recorded in the PIA Faculty Academic Misconduct Register and will be available to the appropriate supervisor involved in reviews, appointments or subsequent allegations of misconduct.

3.3 Detection

3.3.1 Any person may report a complaint of misconduct by a faculty member, or student to the lecturer, Unit Coordinator or Head of Discipline, Dean or relevant supervisor. Complaints regarding staff are handled under the Staff Performance Monitoring Policy and Procedure. Although moral and legal copyright to student assessment or research materials is vested in that person as the author, the student, by enrolling in an accredited course, provides an implied consent to PIA which authorises:

- reproduction and storage of electronic material which they may author and submit as part of their course assessment; and
- scanning this material for purposes of detecting, through software processing or other methods, any plagiarised material used in assignments.

3.3.2 All students must submit written assessments through the text matching software used by the Institute. All submissions (including group submissions) with a Similarity Index of more than the percentage determined by the Dean must be investigated and reported by the Unit Coordinator in the Unit Report submitted at the end of each teaching period. Where a prima facie breach is identified, actions will follow the procedures set out in Section XX. Where the Unit Coordinator is satisfied that no breach of academic integrity occurred (ie the similarity was satisfactorily explained) the case will be reported in the Unit Report with no further action required.

3.3.3 Text matching software similarity is not the only method of detecting potential breaches of academic integrity. Staff members must use their judgement and experience where they are suspicious of a potential breach.

3.4 Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action for academic misconduct will be taken in accordance with the following principles:

- allegations will be dealt with promptly;
- processes will be transparent and in accordance with procedural fairness;
- penalties will be appropriate and proportionate;



- judgements of intentionality will be taken into account in determining any penalty that might be applied;
- confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties within the constraints of allegation, investigation and appeal processes, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure;
- anyone accused of academic misconduct has the opportunity to respond and/or appeal decisions, according to the Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy;
- staff involved in misconduct or appeals processes will disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of them.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Dean

The Dean is responsible for administering this policy.

4.2 The Registrar

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining all records relevant to this policy and procedure as part of the Student Management System.

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 Prevention

5.1.1 Staff

Faculty are encouraged to minimise opportunities for the occurrence of academic misconduct within the student body through enhancement and practical implementation of academic integrity. A range of coordinated strategies may include:

- advising students at the time of enrolment of the details of this policy and that submission of assignments is normally in electronic form;
- use of plagiarism detection software in all higher education units;
- explicitly referring to plagiarism and collusion at key stages in courses;
- providing students with opportunities in which to practise writing and referencing skills;
- providing prompt and constructive feedback to assignments and examinations;
- explaining the aims and purposes of assessment tasks;
- providing examples of sound and poor practice;
- monitoring time pressures and timetabling that may adversely affect completion and submission of assignments;
- mixing the assessment tasks of units to minimise risk of plagiarism, contract cheating and collusion and foster positive values and behaviour among students;
- requiring students to provide a disclaimer appended to their assignments which affirms that, where otherwise acknowledged, the material submitted in the assignments is their own.



Faculty are encouraged to conduct research in accordance with both national frameworks governing ethical research, especially where human subjects are involved. This includes the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#). Primary data gathered during faculty research projects should be stored in a PIA provided secure repository for a minimum of five years.

While this policy outlines penalties for different offences, the list of factors is not all-inclusive; other factors may also be relevant. Staff shall exercise their professional judgement on whether the suggested penalties fit the particular case. Sometimes a more lenient or more severe penalty may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances.

5.1.2 Students

- a. All students are required to successfully complete the Academic Integrity Module (AIM) early in their first study period at the Institute. The AIM will be imbedded into a small number of units, typically taken by new students as a hurdle assignment (students must complete but carry no weight towards the result for that unit). The module will also be available during orientation.
- b. Students receiving advanced standing for all units in which the module is embedded must complete the module independently during their first study period with the Institute.
- c. There is no limit to the number of times a student may attempt the AIM.
- d. A student who fails to complete the module successfully by the end of their first study period with the Institute:
 - will have 10 percent deducted from the mark awarded for the first assessment task in the unit in which the AIM is imbedded or the lowest ranked unit in which they enrol during their first study period; and
 - will not be permitted to enrol in any further units until the module has been successfully completed.
- e. The Dean may waive either condition in special circumstances.

5.2 Classification of Academic Misconduct

Breaches of academic integrity will be graded as one of three levels:

5.2.1 Level 1 Academic Misconduct

Level 1 academic misconduct refers to unintentional academic misconduct. This may have occurred from inexperience or lack of knowledge by students of the principles and requirements of academic integrity. The result generally arises from carelessness rather than a deliberate act of deception.



Level 1 breaches are considered primarily an educational matter, allowing the student the opportunity to learn from their mistake and subsequently minimise the likelihood of future breaches.

The characteristics of a Level 1 include situations where:

- misconduct appears unintentional and no attempt by the student to gain any unfair academic advantage;
- the student has not previously been found guilty of substantial academic misconduct or minor academic misconduct while enrolled as a student;
- the misconduct is of lesser scale or scope than Level 2 and Level 3 academic misconduct; and
- the misconduct is of a minimal threat to the integrity of assessment in relation to the unit of study concerned.

For a matter to be classified as Level 1 breach, the student must acknowledge the breach and the circumstances that gave rise to the allegation.

Examples of Level one breaches may include, but are not limited to:

- inadequate referencing; and/or
- inappropriate collaboration; and/or
- poor use of citations; and/or
- poor paraphrasing.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- submission of work in which ideas, words or other work are copied directly or paraphrased from a source, published or unpublished (for example a website, computer program, another student's essay or presentation, a book or journal article, a lecture, a performance piece), and presented as if they are the student's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of the original author;
- recycling, that is, submission of work by a student that has already been assessed in another unit without disclosing that fact;
- unintended failure of a student to appreciate appropriate referencing conventions.

Penalties for Level 1 Breaches

On determination that a student is guilty of a Level 1 breach, one or more of the following may be imposed:

- A formal written warning;
- The requirement for the student to complete additional academic writing and referencing courses;
- The requirement for the student to complete the Academic Integrity Module again;



- Option for the student to correct and resubmit the work, in whole or in part (maximum 50% mark);
- The requirement for the student to submit an additional assessment task (maximum 50% mark);
- Other penalties approved by the Dean.

5.2.2 Level 2 Academic Misconduct

Level 2 academic misconduct is any act of academic misconduct which is:

- a clear or demonstrable intention to gain an unfair academic advantage;
- carefully and deliberately planned, repetitive, organised, or systematic in nature;
- in breach of the principles of academic integrity or professional honesty; and/or
- repeated Level 1 breaches.

Examples of Level 2 breaches include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated Level 1 breaches
- Plagiarism and self-plagiarism;
- Contract cheating;
- Collusion
- Cheating in examinations, tests, and quizzes;
- Sharing assessments or exam/quiz questions, including on online file-sharing platforms (social media, websites, etc.);
- Unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence tools.

Penalties for Level 2 Breaches

On determination that a student is guilty of a Level 2 breach, one or more of the following may be imposed:

- applying a mark of zero for the assessment task;
- applying a fail grade for a unit of study;
- a notation on the student's record to be included on their academic transcript;
- other penalties approved by the Dean.

5.2.3 Level 3 Academic Misconduct

Level 3 breaches represent the most serious breaches of Academic Integrity that:

- compromises the interest of other students;
- the integrity of the assessment scheme itself;
- the reputation of the Institute, and/or
- are significant in scale or scope.

Examples of level 3 breaches include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated Level 2 breaches;
- Breach of academic integrity involving or resembling criminal activity, such as:



- stealing an examination paper;
- impersonation; or
- falsifying documents.
- Breach of academic integrity in research and/or publication(s)

Penalties for Level 3 Breaches

On determination that a student is guilty of a Level 3 breach, one or more of the following may be imposed:

- suspension from the student's course for a nominated period, not more than one year;
- exclusion; or
- other penalties approved by the Dean.

A decision to apply a penalty of a suspension or exclusion must be ratified by the Principal Education Officer.

5.3 Factors to Be Taken into Account

In assessing a penalty to be imposed for a proven breach of academic integrity, the following will be taken into consideration:

Aggravating factors:

- seriousness of the offence;
- degree of premeditation;
- impact on other students and staff;
- extent to which the offence corrupts the assessment process;
- repeat offence;
- extent of assignment involving misconduct.

Mitigating factors:

- first year student;
- offence unintentional or spontaneous;
- role played by the offender if others involved;
- offender under duress, but not sufficient to constitute a defence;
- degree of remorse and cooperation shown;
- willingness to seek assistance to avoid further offences.

5.4 Academic Misconduct by A Graduate

Where academic misconduct has been substantiated after a student has been admitted to a degree:

- the student's record for the unit(s) involved will be changed to "failed";
- conferral of the degree is rescinded;
- the student's name is deleted from PIA's Register of Graduates; and
- the student is required to return the PIA testamur and final academic transcript to PIA.



5.5 Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Academic Misconduct

5.5.1 Level 1 Breaches

Alleged Level 1 breaches should be dealt with by the academic staff member first detecting the alleged breach and Unit Coordinator. The resolution should have an educational focus designed to prevent further breaches by the student.

Processes for dealing with allegations at this level are:

Investigation

- 1) If the alleged breach is detected by an academic staff member other than the Unit Coordinator:
 - a) The academic staff member will advise the Unit Coordinator of the situation.
 - b) With the agreement of the Unit Coordinator, the academic staff member will contact the student to discuss the alleged breach.
 - c) The allegation will be recorded in the Student Management System (SMS).
 - d) The academic staff member will report their findings and recommendations to the Unit Coordinator for approval or modification. Recommended action must be in accordance with Section 5.2.1.
 - e) The Unit Coordinator will determine any actions or penalties, in consultation with a person appointed by the Dean, in accordance with Section 5.2.1. Where a modification is approved, the reason for the modification must be recorded.
- 2) If the alleged breach is detected by a Unit Coordinator:
 - a) the Unit Coordinator will contact the student to discuss the alleged breach.
 - b) The allegation will be recorded in the Student Management System.
 - c) The Unit Coordinator will determine any actions or penalties, in consultation with a person appointed by the Dean, in accordance with Section 5.2.1.

Determination and Notification

- 1) Where a Level 1 breach is confirmed, the Unit Coordinator will provide a formal written decision to the student and advise of any subsequent action.
 - a) The breach will be recorded as a Level 1 breach in the Academic Integrity Register.
 - b) A Level 1 breach will not appear on the student's academic transcript.
- 2) Where no breach is found, the student will be advised accordingly with an appropriate notation in the Student Management System.

5.5.2 Level 2 Breaches

Investigation



- 1) If the alleged breach is detected by an academic staff member other than the Unit Coordinator:
 - a) The academic staff member will advise the Unit Coordinator of the situation.
 - b) With the agreement of the Unit Coordinator, the academic staff member will contact the student to discuss the alleged breach.
 - c) The allegation will be recorded in the Student Management System.
 - d) Where the result of the investigation is a Level 2 breach, the Unit Coordinator will refer the matter to a person appointed by the Dean with recommended action.
- 2) If the alleged breach is detected by a Unit Coordinator:
 - a) the Unit Coordinator will contact the student to discuss the alleged breach.
 - b) The allegation will be recorded in the Student Management System.
 - c) Where the result of the investigation is a Level 2 breach, the Unit Coordinator will refer the matter to a person appointed by the Dean with recommended action.

Determination and Notification

- 1) In determining whether a Level 2 breach has been made, a person appointed by the Dean will consider the facts of the case and the procedural fairness of the process.
- 2) Where it is determined that a Level 2 breach has occurred:
 - a) the student will be provided with a formal written decision, including a notice of penalty. All academics involved in the matter will also be informed.
 - b) The breach will be recorded as a Level 2 breach in the Academic Integrity Register.
 - c) A Level 2 breach may appear on the student's academic transcript if this is determined as part of the penalty.
- 3) Where no breach is found, the student and all academic staff involved will be advised accordingly with an appropriate notation in the Student Management System.

5.5.3 Level 3 Breaches

Investigation

- 1) If there is an alleged Level 3 breach, the Unit Coordinator will prepare a report and refer the matter to the Dean or a person appointed by the Dean for investigation.
- 2) The Dean or a person appointed by the Dean will contact the student to discuss the alleged breach.



- 3) The allegation will be recorded in the Student Management System.
- 4) If the Dean or a person appointed by the Dean determines that a Level 3 breach has occurred, a report and recommended action will be referred to the Dean.
- 5) The student(s) will be invited to present their case. The students will be given at least five days' notice of the scheduled meeting.
- 6) Where it is determined that a Level 3 breach has occurred:
 - a) the student(s) will be provided with a formal written decision, including a notice of penalty.
 - b) All academics involved in the matter will also be informed.
 - c) The breach will be recorded as a Level 3 breach in the Academic Integrity Register.
 - d) A Level 3 breach will appear on the student's academic transcript.
- 7) Where no breach is found, the student and all academics involved in the matter will be advised accordingly with an appropriate notation in the Student Management System.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Institute Documents

- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
- Course Progression Policy and Procedure
- Staff Performance Monitoring Policy and Procedure

Applicable External Standards and Codes

This policy and procedures support compliance with the following

Standards/Code	Standards/Clauses
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	5.2
Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research	
Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research	
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research	

7 FEEDBACK

PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au for such feedback to be incorporated into a future review.



8 POLICY MANAGEMENT

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority / Owner (Role)	Academic Board
Administrator / Responsible for Implementing	Dean
Approval Date	12 July 2023
Next Review Date	12 July 2026

Document History

Month and Year	Version	Amendments
September 2021	1.0	Policy created and endorsed by the Board
July 2023	4.2	The minor changes were made.
May 2024	5.3	The formatting was updated, including the addition of the document history.